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Love One Another!

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John 15:12



Pray constantly!
Give thanks
in all circumstances

(1 Thessalonians 5: 17-18)

Love One Another!

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Dear Readers!

In June 2022, the Editorial Board of *Love One Another!* made the bold decision to defend the charism of our magazine and save it from absolute dissolution. Despite the fact that we had been deprived of all of our financial funding, we managed to revive the publication of *Love One Another!* all thanks to Divine Providence. The same team makes up the current Editorial Board, which now operates under the JPPI Publishing House, under the patronage of Reverend Bishop Krzysztof Włodarczyk. We will continue our mission of spreading the Gospel in faithfulness to the teachings of the Catholic Church, which is the foundation of the eternal moral order. Its nature depends on our faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the

sacraments of penance and the Eucharist. Our most important task in life must be to remain in a state of grace as well as to enter into a personal relationship with Christ who is present in the Eucharist. The Lord Jesus calls us, as much as it is possible, to attend Holy Mass daily, and to be in His presence in the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. Those who endure in these practices will experience healing from all addiction and enslavement, and a pure love will be born in their hearts.

Dear Readers, it is thanks to your generous support that we will be able to publish *Love One Another!* in English and in other languages, and to send them to missions around the world. We are presently printing our magazine in Polish, Chinese, German, Hungarian, Slovakian, Latvian, and Ukrainian. We are counting on your spiritual and material support



Photo: LOA archives

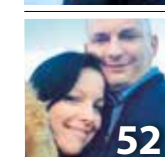
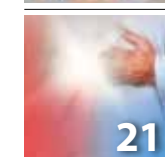
in this extremely important work of evangelization. We are also asking you to try and recruit new subscribers to the magazine. We in the editorial board enfold you with daily prayers through the Holy Mass, the rosary, and the *Chaplet of Divine Mercy*. May the Almighty God bless you with love and peace.

I bless you with my whole heart!

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChr
with the Editorial Board ■

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The Conversion of Malcolm Muggeridge

Malcolm Muggeridge's reception into the Catholic Church in 1982 made resounding headlines in the mass media. He was one of Britain's most famous journalists, a best-selling author, consummate satirist, and producer of some of the best television programs of the twentieth century.

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChr

Malcolm Muggeridge was both a star of the "small screen" and a brilliant wordsmith whom many compared to G.K. Chesterton and C.S. Lewis. His conversion was not a sudden event like that of Saint Paul. As he stated himself, until the moment he joined the Catholic Church, he had had to "fight against something he knew would ultimately captivate and capture him."

Childhood

Malcolm Muggeridge was born in London on March 24, 1903. His father was an agnostic, co-founder of the Fabian Society, and a member of the Independent Labor Party. At home the religion of socialist progress replaced that of Christianity. God was unnecessary as far as the Muggeridges were concerned. From his father, Malcolm took the conviction that man was capable of building a socialist paradise on earth - a just, peaceful, and prosperous society.

As a boy, Malcolm, unbeknownst to his parents, acquired a copy of the Bible and read it "surreptitiously,

"Christianity is to life
what Shakespeare is
to literature; it envisages
the whole"
(M. Muggeridge)

as it might have been some forbidden book." Guilt-ridden and shamefaced, he would read the Gospels, while making sure that nobody knew what he was reading. His reading of the biblical texts brought a mysterious new world previously beyond his ken. He even took the Scriptures to bed with him. He would pause over the fragments of text that touched him especially, most of these dealing with the passion and death of Christ. Another book that made a great impression on him at this time was Alighieri Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

Cambridge

Malcolm began undergraduate studies at Selwyn College in Cambridge. There he befriended an influential seminary student by the name

of Alec Vidler. The two men would become life-long friends. Thanks to their friendship, Malcolm was able to spend two terms in residence at the Anglican Oratory of the Good Shepherd, where he experienced the richness of religious community life. His daily activities included reading the holy office, attending Divine service, serious intellectual study, and manual labor in the gardens. Malcolm desperately sought help in matters of the Faith. He wanted to know what faith was and how he should acquire it. He prayed fervently for a visible sign of eternal life, but received no such sign. He had yet to learn that faith was an arduous journey engaging the soul in a fierce struggle with evil, which enslaved man and dulled his perception of the spiritual world. The brief religious experience would later enable Malcolm to understand that, "the ways of abstinence lead to happiness, while self-indulgence, especially in the area of sexuality, lead to unhappiness and remorse. To put aside worldly ambition, lechery, the ego's clamorous demands, what joy! To succumb, what misery!"

Loss of faith

Toward the end of his studies, Muggeridge lost his faith and abandoned Christianity. Science became his substitute for religion. Upon graduating, he accepted a teaching post in India. The same insistent questions about the meaning of life followed him there. His discovery of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam did not diminish his enduring appreciation of the greatness and depth of the Christian faith.

**“True happiness is found in the rejection of the ego, and not in succumbing to it, in turning away from fleshly lusts, and not in gratifying them”
(M. Muggeridge)**

In a letter to his father in 1926, he wrote, “Christianity is to life what Shakespeare is to literature; it envisages the whole.” It was then that he became captivated by Chesterton’s book on St. Francis of Assisi and other works on the principles of faith (*Orthodoxy*, among others). He claimed that he loved Christ, but could not stand the institutionalized Church, since it “killed the living beauty of God.” In reality, however, he was placing all his trust not in Christ, but in the ideas of socialism.

On returning to England in 1927, Muggeridge taught school briefly in Birmingham. He was then convinced that man achieved inner harmony and happiness in a socialist state. “I am a socialist - he wrote - because I believe that the right conditions help man to be good, and only collectivism creates such conditions.” Shortly afterwards, Muggeridge received a teaching post in Cairo. He left for Egypt - this time with his wife. In Cairo he began his career in journalism as a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*.

In love with abstemiousness

Malcolm Muggeridge married Kitty Dobbs in a civil ceremony in the summer of 1927. His wife came from a wealthy family; like him, she was imbued with socialist ideas. Both considered themselves free from religious constraints, and so their marriage amounted to a contractual partnership that could be broken at any time. Their views on sex were ultra-liberal. Only after many years did they discover that their selfish pursuit of sexual pleasure, which led to numerous marital ►

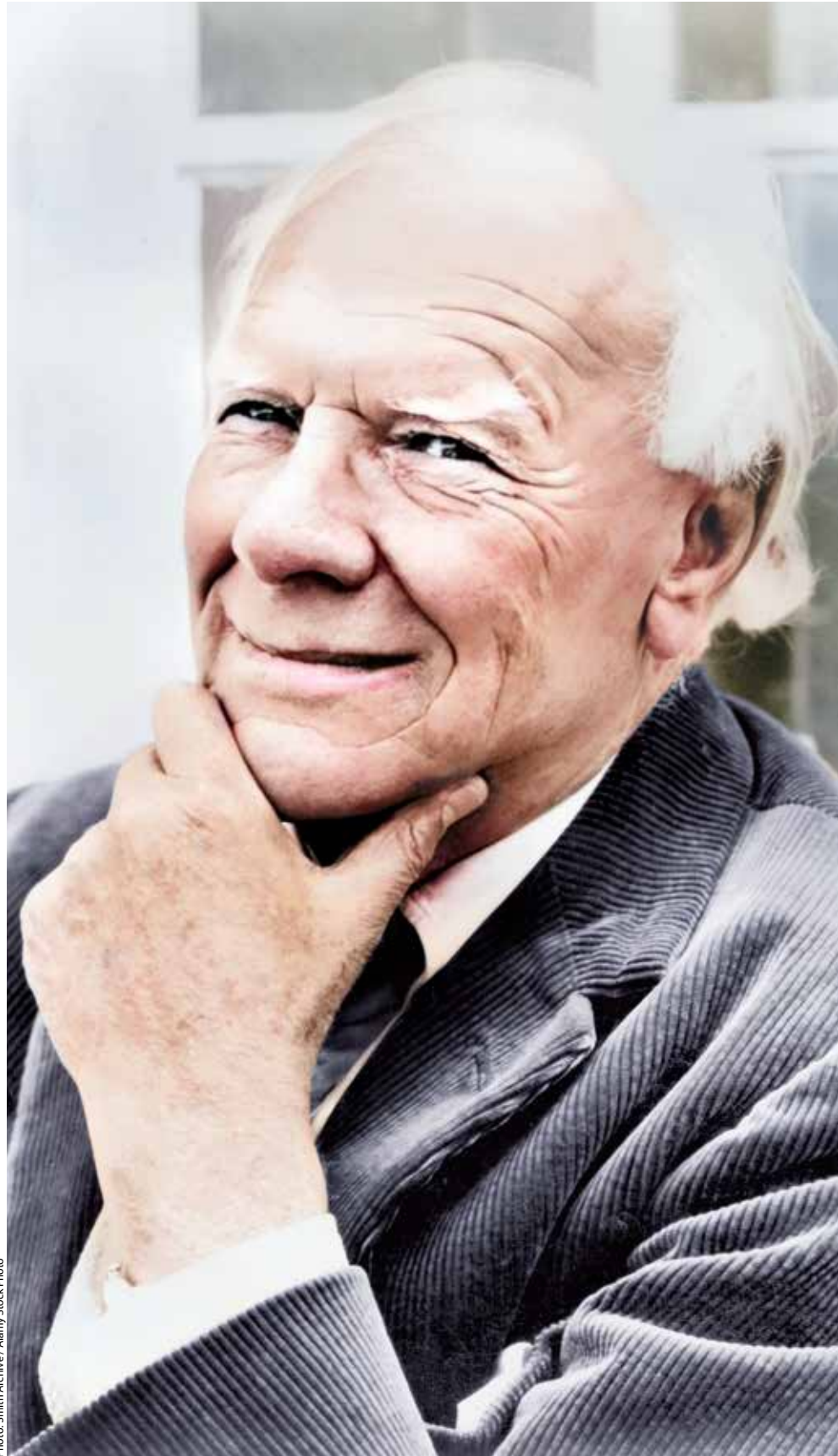


Photo: Smith Archive / Alamy Stock Photo

Malcolm Muggeridge

infidelities, was the cause of immense suffering both for their children and themselves. Whenever Muggeridge was unfaithful to his wife, he felt guilt-ridden. He felt contempt for his unbridled desires and longed for a pure heart. Later he would compare the pursuit of selfish pleasure to chasing after “a young hind, fleet and beautiful. Hunt her, and she becomes a poor frantic quarry; after the kill, a piece of stinking flesh.”

For the greater part of his life Muggeridge struggled with the lusts of the flesh. After each such spiritual struggle with chastity he would turn longingly to Christian principles, which held that true happiness could only be found “in the rejection of the ego, and not in succumbing to it, in turning away from fleshly lusts, and not in gratifying them.” Muggeridge did not silence the voice of his conscience. He did not try to justify his marital infidelities or call them good. He preserved a basic honesty and listened to his conscience. Such an attitude, after years of inner struggle, would lead him to faith and reconciliation with God and the discovery of the full truth in the Catholic Church.

Muggeridge wrote an essay on the sexual revolution, *Down with Sex!* Drawing on his observations and experience, he pointed to the depth of spiritual desolation and depravity caused by breaking the moral norms regulating the area of sexuality. He warned that the life-style promoted by the sexual revolution led to unspeakable unhappiness. On January 18, 1962, he wrote in his diary: “The one desire left to me in life is to extinguish in myself every form of selfishness, pride, lechery, cupidity. I want the dying flame of my existence to burn bright and unwavering and not to flicker out in a final splutter of smoke.” In an interview given in December of 1965, he acknowledged that he had succeeded in mastering his passions. “Man must make a decision: either to curb his lusts or succumb to them. I have conquered mine.”

Thence began the most beautiful period of Malcolm and Kitty’s life together: a period of great peace

For the first time in his life, while attending the Divine Liturgy in Moscow’s churches with crowds of the hungry faithful, he experienced the joyous truth of Christ’s resurrection

and happiness flowing from marital harmony. Both discovered the joys of chaste married life. They began to delight in each other as never before. Abstinence, self-restraint, asceticism, self-mastery in the area of the senses and feelings as a means of achieving spiritual freedom and the full enjoyment of life – all this flew in the face of the universally promoted life-style. Small wonder that Muggeridge’s attitude should have provoked waves of criticism and scorn on the part of the defenders and advocates of liberal sex who promoted hedonistic and permissive behavior.

Muggeridge’s attitude was not a relapse into Puritanism; rather it was the path to freedom and the full fruition of life. “Just now I am in love with abstemiousness,” he noted in his diary. “One should not give up things because they are pleasant (which is Puritanism) but because, by giving them up, other things are pleasanter.”

Transformation

Malcolm Muggeridge was uncompromising in his quest for the truth – both from a moral and intellectual point of view. Even as he fought against his selfishness and unbridled passions, he engaged in an intellectual struggle in the pursuit of truth. Totally imbued with the ideas of socialism in the early thirties, he embraced communism. Upon arriving in Moscow in 1932 as a correspondent for the *Manchester Guardian*, he was convinced he had come to a land where for the first time in human history there was no exploitation, a country in which equality, justice, and happiness flourished.

He was very soon disabused of this fiction. He had placed his belief in a utopia. He discovered that everything in the USSR was built on violence and lies. “In the beginning – he would write acerbically – was the Lie and the Lie was made news and dwelt among us, graceless and false.” Muggeridge came to the personal knowledge that communist ideology, when put into practice in the form of “real socialism,” revealed her true barbaric face: an appalling horror of totalitarian enslavement and genocide. He witnessed the Great Famine in Ukraine, which killed tens of millions of people. The famine had been coldly planned and brutally executed by Stalin to punish the Ukrainian peasantry for their resistance to enforced collectivization.

Meanwhile, the European elites continued to rhapsodize over the Soviet Union. A great many journalists, writers, and intellectuals, succumbing to political correctness and sheer opportunism, chose to deny the facts and wrote idyllic falsehoods about the situation in the communist “paradise.” Muggeridge described this phenomenon of blindness, stupidity, and intellectual dishonesty in his novella *Winter in Moscow* (1935) as “a peculiar sin of the twentieth century.” He was one of the few journalists who had the courage to tell the truth. He was the first to inform public opinion of the appalling crime of the Ukrainian famine. He dispatched his articles to the *Manchester Guardian* by concealing them in diplomatic pouches to prevent their seizure by communist agents.

Muggeridge’s sojourn in the USSR resulted in his utter rejection of the communist ideology, which had spawned totalitarian power, enslavement, and the crime of genocide. The experience prompted him to renew his interest in Christ and the spiritual life. In the great works of Dostoevsky and Tolstoy, he discovered the mysticism of traditional Russian culture. For the first time in his life, while attending the Divine Liturgy in church with crowds of hungry, praying people, he experienced the joyous truth of Christ’s resurrection.

**"Dope and bed! –
the resort of any old
slobbering debauchee
anywhere in the world at
any time"
(M. Muggeridge)**

No power on this earth could overcome Him. Muggeridge felt a great longing to entrust his life, wholly and unconditionally, to Christ, who was all-powerful in His love and yet did not resort to means of coercion. He came to realize the catastrophic consequences of rejecting Christ and His teachings, for then man became unhinged and descended to levels lower than the beasts. Muggeridge felt a deep desire to become a Christian. He wrote: "For me the Christian religion is like a desperate love. I carry its image within me and gaze at it from time to time with wistful longing."

The terrorism of liberal ideology

In 1944, disillusioned with the USSR and liberal ideology, Muggeridge began to consider entering the Catholic Church. He wrote in his diary, "I see the strength and importance of the Catholic Church, but I cannot in all honesty accept her dogmas." Upon his return from Moscow, he realized the extent to which liberalism was destroying European civilization. Liberalism consummated itself in totalitarianism – it was in fact the precursor of totalitarianism. He observed that the insidious lie of liberalism lay in its denial of the fact that "left to his own devices, man becomes cruel, lustful, slothful, and prone to evil. The only way of curbing his evil proclivities is to awaken in him a fear of God or a fear of other people. Of these alternatives I place the former above the latter." What ennobled man and inspired him to live a good life was the awareness of God's justice and the fear that he could by his own choice forfeit eternal life.

Muggeridge defended Christianity even though he was not yet

Photo: LOA archives



While living in Moscow as a foreign correspondent, Muggeridge came to realize that communism is a barbaric totalitarianism

Photo: Internet



Winter in Moscow – a novel by Malcolm Muggeridge

a Christian. He insisted that Christianity's worst enemy was not Stalin or Hitler, but liberalism. He warned that for over a hundred years the civilization of death in the guise of liberalism had been undermining the foundations of Christian civilization, which defended the dignity of every human person, freedom of

conscience, and the right to life from the moment of conception to that of natural death. The ideas of liberalism when put into practice stamped out the Christian ethic and every principle of conduct flowing from it, thus leading humanity to certain self-destruction.

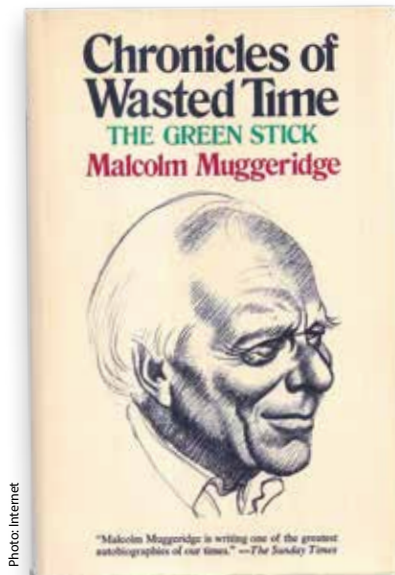
In his autobiography *Chronicles of Wasted Time*, Muggeridge spoke of the destructive influence on European civilization of Freud and Marx's views: "Freud and Marx undermined the whole basis of Western European civilization as no avowedly insurrectionary movement ever has or could. By promoting the notion of determinism, in the one case in morals, in the other in history, thereby relieving individual men and women of all responsibility for their personal and collective behavior." Muggeridge stressed that not Charles Darwin, nor Karl Marx, nor yet Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, but rather Jesus Christ was the foundation of European civilization. Liberalism was a negation of everything revealed to man by Christ. When man rejected Christ, then the search for hope became hopelessness, the pursuit of happiness, ultimate despair, and the will to live—a death wish. ►

Muggeridge fought uncompromisingly against the “soft” terrorism of liberal ideology. In 1968, he resigned from his position as rector of the University of Edinburgh. He resolutely opposed the demands of the students who called for the legalization of LSD on campus and the distribution of the contraceptive pill. In his resignation speech, he derided the students’ demands. He compared the moral state of the times to that of the Roman Empire in its period of decadence. “How infinitely sad, how macabre,” he said, “that the form of their rebellion should be a demand for drugs, for the most tenth-rate sort of self-indulgence ever known in history.” “Dope and bed!” — he added — “the resort of any old slobbering debauchee anywhere in the world at any time.”

The sacredness of life

Muggeridge was always convinced of the sacredness of human life. He understood that separating the creative impulse from procreation wreaked terrible devastation in the moral sphere: in attitudes, behaviors, and interpersonal relationships. It led “to the downgrading of motherhood and the upgrading of spinsterhood, [to] the acceptance of sterile perversions as the equivalent of fruitful lust, [and to] the grisly holocaust of millions of aborted babies.”

In 1978, Muggeridge predicted that in the not-too-distant future European countries would succumb to the temptation of legalizing euthanasia as a means of “liberating” the individual and freeing the electorate from the mounting burden of caring for the sick, the aged, and disabled. He perceptively predicted that while those who had lived through the Nuremberg Trials were still alive it would halt what would become an irresistible pressure to legalize euthanasia. “It takes just over thirty years,” he added, “in our humane society to transform a war crime into an act of compassion.” He underscored the painful fact that abortion and euthanasia represented a kind of “humanitarian



Chronicles of Wasted Time – the autobiography of Malcolm Muggeridge

“Man has created in this century such a fantasy machine as has never before existed. Wherever you find yourself, these fantasies are present, suggesting to you that happiness is achieved through carnality, that fulfillment in life is found in worldly success” (M. Muggeridge)

holocaust,” which was killing many more human beings than in Hitler’s time.

Muggeridge took an active part in the defense of Pope Paul VI’s encyclical *Humanae vitae*. At the 1978 San Francisco conference devoted to the encyclical, Muggeridge stated in his address that sexuality had to be understood as a sacrament of love, the basis of the indissolubility of marriage and the family. He considered *Humanae vitae* as a document of supreme importance to all of humanity. History would bear out the rightness of the Church’s position on the question of contraception. To hold such a position was an act of great civic courage

on Muggeridge’s part. He was after all opposing the dominant propaganda of the time, which saw the legalization of contraception and abortion as a sign of emancipation and the liberation of women.

Muggeridge fought against the contraceptive mindset, defending the sacredness of life from the moment of conception to that of natural death. The Church’s teaching of the sacredness of life, he maintained, provided the only effective antidote to the crimes of abortion and euthanasia (which he called the Liberal Death Wish). On hearing the term “unwanted child,” he would mention how Mother Teresa, when holding up a newborn child she had just rescued from a Calcutta trash-heap, would say with a smile, “See? There’s life in her.”

Almost home

Malcolm Muggeridge was relentless in his pursuit the truth. In this quest he found strong support in the writings of the great convert Saint Augustine of Hippo and that fourteenth-century masterpiece of Christian mysticism, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. But the deciding factor in his conversion was his meeting with Blessed Mother Teresa in the spring of 1969 when he was making a documentary film on the Missionary Sisters of Charity. He would write: “Mother Teresa is, in herself, a living conversion; it is impossible to be with her, to listen to her, to observe what she is doing and how she is doing it, without being in some degree converted. Her total devotion to Christ, her conviction that everyone must be treated, helped, and loved as if he were Christ himself; her simple life lived according to the Gospel and her joy in receiving the sacraments – none of this can be ignored. There is no book that I have read, no speech I have heard, or divine service I have attended; there is no human relationship or transcendental experience that has brought me closer to Christ or made me more aware of what the Incarnation means and what is demanded of us. What, then, is a conversion? The question is like asking,

‘What is falling in love?’ There is no standard procedure, no fixed time.”

The witness of Mother Teresa awoke in Muggeridge’s heart a love of the Catholic Church; yet it would take another thirteen years before he would finally decide to become a Catholic. His book *Jesus Rediscovered*, published in 1969, indicated his attempt to consider himself a Christian without affiliation to any particular church.

Muggeridge was now aware that pride, which separated man from God, and sensuality, which bound him to the earth, constituted the worst spiritual diseases. He began to feel remorse over his squandering of the better part of his life. He expressed his regret in the words, “You called me, and I did not come – all those idle years, idle words, idle passions.”

He made a strong resolution to live out more fruitfully the years remaining to him. He supported the mission of Mother Teresa and provided assistance to the mentally handicapped of the L’Arche Community founded by Jean Vanier. He considered Aleksander Solzhenitsyn, Simone Weil, and Jean Vanier to be the most important contemporary Christian writers.

In the mid-1970s, Muggeridge jettisoned his own TV set, telling everyone he had had his “aerials removed.” The television, he maintained, was the “repository of our fraudulence,” the camera, “the most sinister of all the inventions of our time.” “Man – he stated in an interview in 1981 – has created in this century such a fantasy machine as has never before existed. Wherever you find yourself, these fantasies are present, suggesting to you that happiness is achieved through carnality, that fulfillment in life is found in worldly success.”

Muggeridge warned against the dangers of flight into the unreal, virtual world created by the mass media and advertising industry: “Never before in the history of mankind have the banal material aspects of life been presented in such a glamorous light, prompting people to want more and more things, inculcating in them the conviction that joy



Malcolm Muggeridge met Mother Teresa in the spring of 1969

**“To put aside worldly ambition, lechery, the ego’s clamorous demands, what joy! To succumb, what misery!”
(M. Muggeridge)**

and the greatest happiness obtain from carnal things.” Reality, he insisted, was something “we need to penetrate, embrace, and love as our greatest gift,” since present in this reality was the Incarnate God—Jesus Christ; and this was achieved through prayer.

Home at last

Muggeridge’s Catholic conversion was the crowning point of a long process of spiritual maturation. With great humility he accepted all the

truths revealed to man by God and taught in its fullness only by the Catholic Church. He lamented the length of time it took him to reach this point.

Malcolm and his wife Kitty were received into the Catholic Church on November 27, 1982, in the chapel of Our Lady Help of Christians, Hurst Green, Sussex. Presiding over the ceremony was the Bishop of Arundel Diocese, Fr. Cormac Murphy O’Connor. As Muggeridge put it, his conversion came with “a sense of homecoming, of picking up the threads of a lost life, of responding to a bell that had long been ringing, of taking a place at a table that had long been vacant.”

Muggeridge discovered the joyous truth of the good and merciful God, who did His utmost to lead the greatest sinners to repentance. Man was free and could lose contact with God. He could immerse himself in sensuality and exalt himself in ►

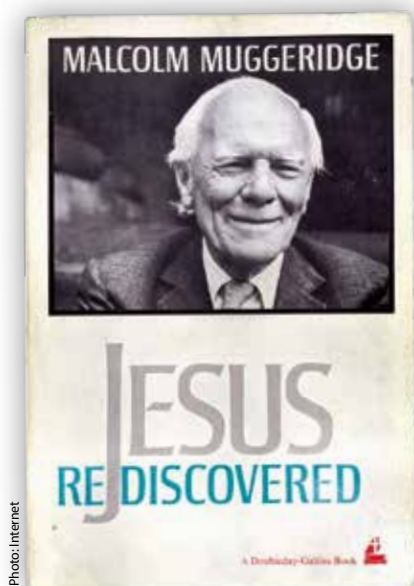


Photo: Internet

Jesus Rediscovered – the book that serves as the testimony of faith of Malcolm Muggeridge

**“I have always felt myself a stranger here on earth, aware that our home is elsewhere”
(M. Muggeridge)**

his pride. He could scorn his Creator. In his folly man could curse God, ridicule believers, and even proclaim that God was dead. But at the end of his earthly life there was only one thing left for him to do: to fall on his knees and entrust himself in humble prayer to the Divine Mercy. If he failed to do so, the terrifying eternity of hell awaited him. If he did so, he would experience the infinite mercy and loving-kindness of God and the indescribable joy of having all his sins forgiven.

Having with all his heart accepted the treasure of faith, Muggeridge proceeded to order the rest of his life to its demands. We read in the Letter to the Hebrews that, “faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). Muggeridge maintained that faith was a special kind of knowledge, since it involved accepting the fact of a veil of mystery separating

time and eternity. Faith enabled us to enter into this mystery and make personal contact with Jesus Christ, who, being true God, became true man that He might free us from enslavement to Satan, sin and death.

After his conversion, Muggeridge fostered a special love of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. Holy Mass became the central event of his day. Increasingly, the spiritual life took on for the Muggeridges a greater reality than that of the sensual world. Together they lived out the rest of their days in silence, without a TV, detached from the world, devoted entirely to God in their long daily prayers. Retiring into mysticism, they prepared themselves for the supreme moment of their meeting with Christ at death.

In 1988, two years before his death, Muggeridge wrote: “I have always felt myself a stranger here on earth, aware that our home is elsewhere. Now, nearing the end of my pilgrimage, I have found a resting place in the Catholic Church from where I can see the Heavenly Gates built into Jerusalem’s Wall more clearly than from anywhere else, albeit if only through a glass darkly.”

In 1989 his health and memory began to deteriorate. God heard his prayer for total purification, “Humble my pride.” Having received the last rites, Malcolm Muggeridge departed this life on November 14, 1990. He passed through the Heavenly Gates. His life was proof that God “is found by those who do not put him to the test, and manifests himself to those who do not distrust him; because wisdom will not enter a deceitful soul, nor dwell in a body enslaved to sin” (Wis 1:2,4).

Sources: M. Muggeridge, *The Spiritual Journey of a Twentieth-Century Pilgrim*, Harper Collins, 1988; M. Muggeridge, *Jesus Rediscovered*, London, 1969; Gregory Wolf, *Malcolm Muggeridge: A Biography*, London, 1995; Joseph Pierce, *Literary Converts*, Ignatius Press, 2000.

I left the movie theater completely converted at heart, but my head, so intellectual, had to make the same journey with my reason concerning the unfathomable Love that I had experienced.

My name is Antonio José Sánchez Sáez. I am a professor of administrative law at the University of Seville (Spain), happily married with three wonderful daughters.

I grew up in a Catholic family. My mother took care of our home and would pray for a long time every evening. On Sundays, we all went to Mass. My father, though, was not very devout. He had an incredible memory and was a very intelligent and sensitive person. When he was young, for some time he would go to nocturnal adorations of the Blessed Sacrament. Later, however, he devoted most of his time to work. Unfortunately, driven by bad anti-Catholic reading and negative experiences he had with people of the Church, he stopped praying and attending Mass, and eventually lost his faith. A few years ago, however, he returned to praying, going to confession and attending Church services.

I am glad that my parents witnessed my conversion.

Arrogant Intellectualism

I had a happy childhood. I liked playing soccer with friends. In exams, I got top grades for all subjects in both grade school and in the Salesian secondary school, where the Salesian Fathers instilled in us a deep love for the Virgin Mary, St. John Bosco and St. Dominic Savio.

Following in the footsteps of my father and two older sisters, I graduated from law school (1992-1997) *Summa cum Laude*, having also studied languages (English, French, Italian and German). Later, for my doctoral dissertation I was awarded a special prize at the University of Seville in 2002. This was followed by other



Freedom from Arrogant Intellectualism

academic prizes at the universities of Seville and Junta de Andalucía.

Unfortunately, from the beginning of my studies, which was from 1992, until my return to the Catholic Church in 2004, I lived as if God did not exist. Although brilliant in class, I was made an enemy of Christian values by believing only in human wisdom, with the subsequent loss of grace. Abortion, homosexuality, euthanasia, divorce, contraceptives and in vitro fertilization and all other abominations and social vices received my support. I call this “arrogant intellectualism” or hubris, which gradually makes you aloof and proud. You go down an invisible slope because you consider yourself very wise and important, only to throw God out of your life in the end. Despite all this, out of habit, I always said the *Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory to Father* before going to bed. Furthermore, each night, I kept a picture of Our Lady of Bon Secours close to my heart.

In 1994, I started dating a very nice young Catholic woman who is now my wife. Alas, I also persuaded her to give up taking part in religious services.

I won a prestigious scholarship for the title of university professor and went on research scholarships to Harvard, Sorbonne, Bologna, Florence, Darmstadt, Limoges and other places. In Oxford, I pursued English Studies. And, voilà, I let myself be drawn into the world of academic vanity that can puff up the ego to an enormous size.

Returning Home

I got married in church in 2002, despite the fact that I did not believe in the requirements of this ▶



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

Professor Antonio José Sánchez Sáez, author of the testimony



Photo: Mondolith Films

Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, a scene from the Mel Gibson film, *The Passion of the Christ*

I remember that as soon as the movie started, the atmosphere of supernatural darkness in the Garden of Olives and the first words spoken in Aramaic captivated me. I was enthralled by the scenes in the film

sacrament. It was then that the story of my conversion and return home began. It was a Saturday or Sunday afternoon in April 2004. No interesting movies were being shown. Suddenly, we saw that *The Passion* was on, directed by Mel Gibson, who had also directed *Braveheart* – a film that I liked very much. On the strength of that we went to see this movie, but I must confess with little enthusiasm on my part.

I remember that as soon as the movie started, the atmosphere of supernatural darkness in the Garden of Olives and the first words spoken in Aramaic captivated me. I was enthralled by the scenes in the film. Never again did this experience happen to me. No detail, word, sound and light escaped my attention. Every sentence spoken by Christ was like an arrow piercing my heart, as if he had spoken directly to me. I recall that from the scene of the *Passion* until the end of the movie I was crying. It was not hysterical weeping, but rather a warm unending stream of tears that soaked my handkerchief, shirt and even the edges of my pants. It was an uncontrollable crying in remorse for my sins and in an unbounded love for Christ, who had suffered all this for my sake.

I recall that my wife was looking at me out of the corner of her eye as if she was saying: “What’s going on?” I could not even look at her; I felt so ashamed of myself. Later, I learned that this was called a gift of tears. I cried so much and was so soaked in tears that I would not get up from the chair when the movie was over. To calm down, we stayed inside the theater until the end of the credits, which included giving the following information, which stuck in my mind: “Based on *The Dolorous Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ* authored by Blessed Anne Catherine Emmerich and the *Mystical City of God* by Venerable Mary of Jesus of Ágreda.”

I left the movie theater completely converted at heart, but my head, so intellectual, had to make the same journey with my reason concerning the unfathomable Love that I had experienced. The next day, I got hold of the book by Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich and read it in one sitting. After buying Ven. Sister Mary of Jesus of Ágreda’s book, I devoured it over several nights, too.

I then went to confession, even though there had been a gap of many years and wept like a small child after receiving God’s forgiveness. Jesus had changed my life.

Since then I have had an insatiable thirst for reading and learning about Christ, Mary and the Church. My life has divided into two parts. Mornings and afternoons I spend teaching at the university, reviewing master’s theses and doing research. However, I look forward to evenings – the reading of the Bible, encyclicals, the Catechism and lives of saints. Two subjects more than others have drawn my attention: Marian revelations and the end times. This is so because from the complete works of Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich, I have learned that she wrote in great detail about this period in history that we are entering now and about which nobody had told me earlier.

My life has taken a complete about-face. Many friends have stopped seeing me because I told them about Jesus. However, I have met some wonderful laypeople and priests, with whom I have become friends. I have stopped watching corruptive programs, quit reading atheist books and journals, and broken off dangerous friendships. My Dad got worried so much seeing my dramatic change that one day he came to visit our house in secret to talk to my wife and to find out what was going on with me. He asked her if I was “in some sect” because I went to Mass every day, prayed a lot and helped in catechism classes. To this, my wife burst out laughing and told him: “Your son has converted.” My conversion owed a lot no doubt to the prayers of my mother-in-law – a very soulful and devout woman.

I have moved from supporting abortion to praying in front of the abortion clinic that is operating in my neighborhood (I continue to do this with a group of friends that I coordinate with), to hosting shows on faith in Television María Visión and joining the Marian Movement of Priests. I adore the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel of perpetual adoration, which Fr. Justo Lo Feudo opened in Seville a few years ago. I also attend nocturnal adorations in the Chapel of Our Lady of Bon Secours at the Salesians.

At the time of my conversion, I felt a strong urge to pray the rosary,



which I had never done before. With my wife, I have started to pray on it daily and in recent years, whenever possible, we pray with our children.

A very “interesting” or rather providential event happened to me in 2013. I was serving then as a Vice-Dean for International Relations at the Faculty of Law in Seville (Spain). My dean asked me to accompany him to the annual meeting of the European Law Faculties Association. When I had asked about the venue of the meeting, he told me that it was Münster (Germany), which left me dumbstruck because it was in that very city that Bl. Anne Catherine Emmerich lived and to whom I owed a considerable portion of my road to conversion. I went to the meeting of course and on one afternoon, we went by train to Dülmen, where she is buried. There, I prayed for a long time and thanked her for that enormous grace of interceding in the matter of my conversion. This was like sealing the credibility of God’s intervention in my life.

Living a Life of Faith to the Fullest

I remember studying in detail the revelations of Our Lady over the last 150 years in the several months after my conversion. They included the revelations in La Salette, Paris (related to the Miraculous Medal), Lourdes, Fatima, Heede, Amsterdam, Prado Nuevo, Akita and Garabandal. I have read especially many books on Fatima and Garabandal. My way of studying revelations is based on scientific methodology, making use of various sources, films, web pages, direct testimonies, etc. Since grace does not change nature and I am still the same researcher as before, I apply my intelligence to study Christ and all that he revealed to us. I have read the pronouncements of Our Lady at Fatima and gone there on pilgrimage. In turn, the more I learned about Garabandal, the more I wanted to visit the place. In the end, I went there with my wife on August 15th 2004. When I had climbed the mountain of revelations, I asked Our Lady for two very specific and



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

The author with his family in the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes

special pieces of evidence, in order that I would have no doubts that she was listening to me. Immediately, incredibly, suddenly and miraculously, the Virgin Mary granted my two requests. Now, I asked her to forgive my insolence and distrust; to forgive my asking her not for one but for two signs to show that she had indeed appeared there. What a wonderful Mother we have who pampers us despite our miserable state!

I find it difficult to share my interest in the Book of Revelation, the end of the world and the Last Judgment with others because few priests and laypeople understand these matters; they rather reject them. I have studied Church Fathers and the most important books on these issues. The Bible, Tradition, Church Magisterium and Marian revelations have become one in my mind. The edifice of the Church, which I have managed to comprehend after so much reading, Eucharistic adorations, prayers and defending the Church (I have served as a catechist for couples and confirmed adults for years), I can only describe as magnificent. My head has finally travelled the road to faith, which my heart had already covered after two hours of watching Mel Gibson’s film *The Passion*.

At the same time, I have passed competitive examinations in Madrid

for the position of university professor and recently, in May on the feast day of St. Dominic Savio, for the position of professor of law.

I am still on the road of continuous conversion, trying not to reject unearned graces. Although no mortal sins burden my conscience, I am a sinner like everybody else. Being aware that we are witnessing the final moments of history, I try to explain this gently to others.

I am grateful to our merciful God and the Blessed Virgin Mary for meeting me halfway on that day in April of 2004 because without their intervention I would have been hopelessly lost. I am grateful for the gift of returning to a living faith just before the birth of my first daughter so that I would be able to raise my children in faith. I strongly identify with the prodigal son of the Gospel parable, which I cannot listen to without becoming emotional. I ask Jesus and the Blessed Virgin Mary for the grace of perseverance in doing their will and defending them in public and private so that many people will return to their faith through me and that hopefully nobody will then turn their backs on it.

*To the greater glory of Jesus,
Mary and St. Joseph.*
Antonio José Sánchez Sáez ■

Faith in the Non-Existence of God Brings Enslavement

The famous French atheist Felix Michaud stated that only the re-growing of an amputated leg would be a miracle that no one could question. According to him, however, such a case has never happened in history, and it will most certainly never happen.

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChr

Likewise, one of the leaders of 19th century anti-religious positivism, neuroscientist Jean-Martin Charcot, mocked the healings in Lourdes, claiming that he had never encountered an amputated limb growing back. In the same vein, the famous French writer Emil Zola traveled to Lourdes with the intention of describing that everything that was happening there was the fruit of fanaticism, illusion, hallucination, or fraud. The writer saw the numerous votive offerings that the people who had been miraculously healed had suspended in front of the grotto of the apparitions of Our Lady, but he supposedly remarked sarcastically: "I see many canes and crutches, but I do not see any wooden leg".

Nineteenth-century atheists strongly believed that science would clarify all mysteries and, over time, eliminate all "Catholic superstition." Only an obvious fact such as the regrowth of a severed leg or arm could convince them of the existence of supernatural forces, as they themselves claimed. They were sure that something like this had never happened and never would happen in

the future. This certainty of the free thinkers was due to their blind faith in the non-existence of God.

However, the belief among enemies of the Church that an amputated leg or bone fragment had never been miraculously restored to anyone was not true. For these people did not realize that exactly the miracles they demanded had been documented in detail by scientific research.

The Healing of Peter van Rudder

One of the most thoroughly researched and documented miracles concerning the regrowth of part of a leg was the spontaneous healing, combined with the instantaneous regrowth of six centimeters (2¼ inches) of bone, of Peter van Rudder, a Belgian gardener from Jabbeke, Flanders. On February 16, 1867, a falling tree crushed and so thoroughly mangled the tibia and fibula of his left leg that the man completely lost six centimeters of his leg's bone structure. The accident resulted in a festering wound. The personal surgeon of the royal family, Prof. Thiriart, along



Peter van Rudder, 1893

In an instant over six centimeters (2¼ inches) of bone in his leg was restored, along with tendons, blood vessels, muscles, and skin

It is certainly an indisputable miracle, exactly as demanded by Voltaire and other atheists – and officially confirmed by a notary public immediately after its occurrence and after hearing testimony under oath from credible expert witnesses

with the medical council, decided to immediately amputate the affected limb. The patient, however, strongly refused and, despite great suffering, for eight consecutive years, he did not agree to have his leg cut off.

During this time, his love for Jesus and the Blessed Virgin deepened more and more. On April 7, 1875, van Rudder, overcoming terrible pain, went with his wife to Oostakker, to a place where a copy of the apparition grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes had been built. When he reached the place, not without great difficulty, he prayed from the bottom of his heart in front of the statue of Mary, asking for forgiveness of his sins and that he should be able to work and provide for the support of his large family. Suddenly, the gardener felt that something strange was happening in his body. Instantly he threw back the crutches, ran closer to the statue and fell to his knees at the foot of the statue of the Mother of God. The scream of his wife standing nearby made him realize that a miracle had just occurred!

Medical examinations confirmed Peter's complete recovery – in an instant over six centimeters (2¼ inches) of bone in his leg was restored, along with tendons, blood vessels, muscles, and skin. Multiple scientific studies have confirmed the fact of the man's complete and immediate healing, including the restoration of the entire missing bone structure of his left leg. Van Rudder's employer – Viscount Alberich du Bus, who was Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge – converted to Catholicism when he saw what had happened. ►

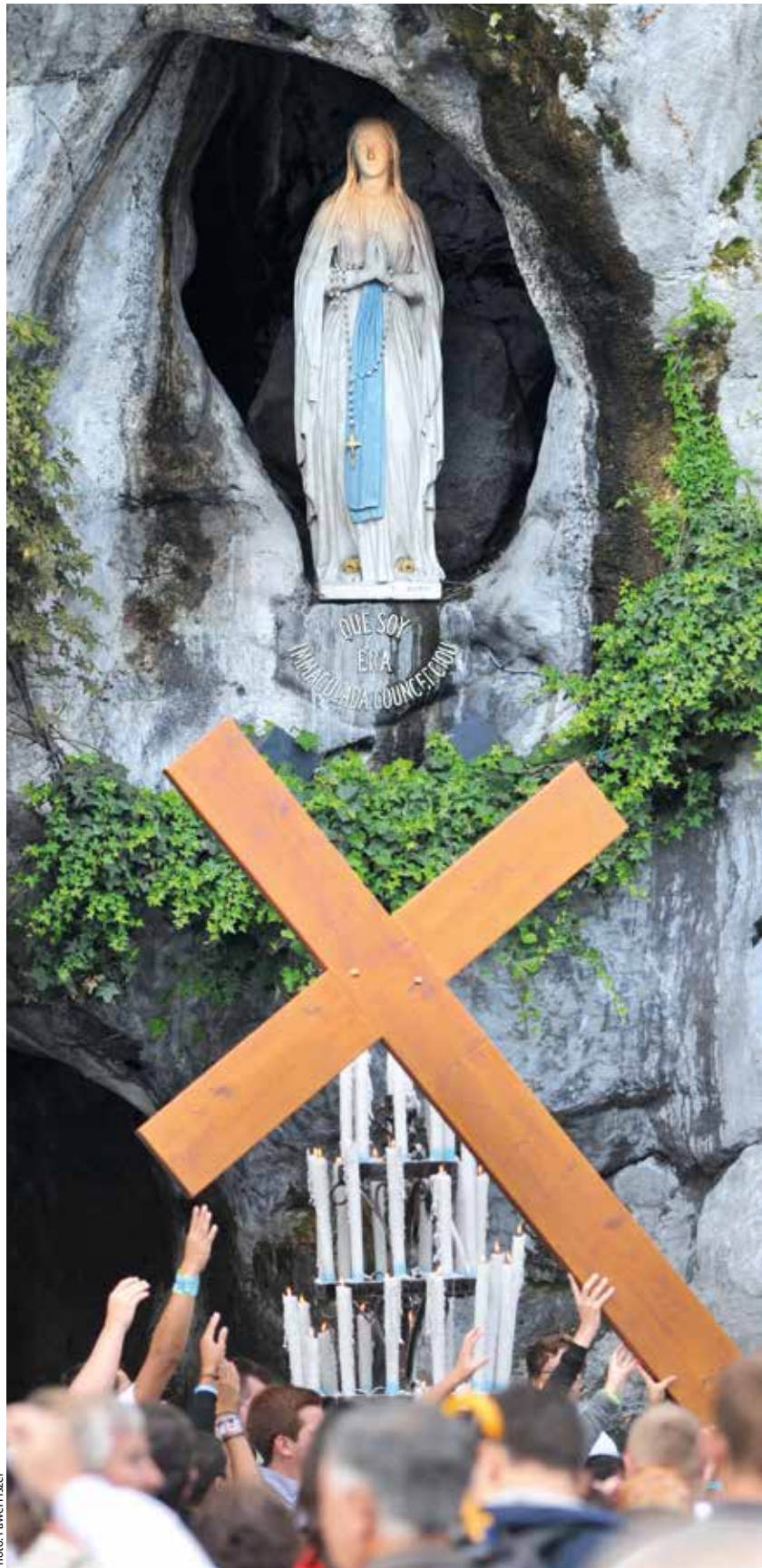


Photo: Pawel Fiser

The Massabielle Grotto in Lourdes, where Our Lady made an apparition



Isabel Guerra, *The Miracle from Calanda*

One of the Most Amazing Miracles Ever

Many other miraculous healings have occurred in the history of the Church. Among them, it is necessary to recall the carefully researched and documented miracle of the restoration of the amputated leg of Miguel Juan Pellicer, more than two years after its removal. This miracle took place in the town of Calanda, 118 km (75 miles) from Zaragoza (Spain), and was called *el milagro de los milagros*, meaning “the miracle of miracles”. The famous Italian writer Vittorio Messori detailed all the documents and events related to this miracle in his book *A Sign for Unbelievers*.

Pellicer had a serious accident while driving a two-wheeled cart: he fell asleep and then fell from the mule to the ground in such a way that one

The severed leg, which had been completely decomposed after more than two years of being buried in the ground, was brought back to life by God’s direct intervention and re-joined with the rest of his living body

of the wheels ran over his right leg, crushing his tibia. The wounded man was immediately taken to a hospital in Valencia. Their archives still contain the date of his admission: Monday, August 3, 1637.

The stay in the hospital did not bring any improvement, but Miguel strongly believed that doctors from

Zaragoza, 300 km (185 miles) away, in the famous Royal and General Hospital of Our Lady of Graces, would help him.

In the Zaragoza hospital, doctors diagnosed the man with advanced gangrene in the broken right leg. In order to save the patient’s life, it was necessary to amputate the limb immediately. The decision to remove the limb, swollen and blackened from gangrene, was made by the chairman of the medical council, Prof. Juan de Estanga, along with surgeons Diego Millaruel and Miguel Beltran. The same doctors performed the surgery to remove Pellicer’s right leg “at the height of four fingers below the knee”. After the amputation, the surgeons cauterized the stump with a red hot iron. They gave the severed leg to a young trainee assisting in the operation, Juan Lorenz García, who, together with a friend, buried it in the cemetery, in a marked place, in a hole 21 cm (8¼ inches) deep; even this small detail was included in the trial documentation. In those days, the human body was so highly respected that all of its amputated parts were buried in the cemetery. Pellicer had to stay in the hospital for several months before the wound from the severing of the leg healed. He was released in the spring of 1638, after which he received a wooden prosthetic right leg and crutches.

The 23-year-old man without a leg was unable to earn his livelihood, so he received official permission to collect alms at the entrance to the Basilica of Our Lady of Pilar in Zaragoza, which meant that he would become a beggar.

On Thursday, March 29, 1640, while staying at his parents’ home in Calanda, Pellicer left his wooden prosthesis and crutches in the kitchen after dinner at around 10 p.m. and went to bed, hopping on his left leg. After saying his prayers, he quickly fell into a deep sleep.

When Miguel’s mother entered the room where her crippled son was sleeping, she sensed “a wonderfully heavenly fragrance”. She picked up the oil lamp and noticed that not one, but two feet, folded on top of each other, protruded from under the cloak that covered her son. She called her husband, and seeing their son asleep

When confronted with the fact of the Calanda miracle, the atheism, which is characterized by intellectual arrogance, dogmatism, and intolerance towards the views of believers, loses all rational and logical support and indicates that it is not faith in God, but rather atheism that is based on delusions

with two healthy limbs, the Pellicers realized that a great miracle had occurred: their son had regained his right leg! They woke Miguel and said to him, "Look, your leg has grown back!" One can imagine the man's amazement and joy when he saw and felt that he did indeed have two legs and that he was no longer an invalid.

Everyone in the house looked closely at his miraculously recovered leg under the light of the oil lamps. It showed one large scar from the tibia fracture from the accident, as well as three smaller scars: one from a dog bite that he had suffered in his childhood, one from an excised boil, and one from a gash he had received from a thorny bush. These scars clearly indicated that it was the same leg that had been amputated and buried in the cemetery two years and five months previously. So there was a miraculous restoration of the severed leg! A copy of the local newspaper *Aviso Historico* from June 4, 1640, has been preserved, which says that research was carried out in the hospital cemetery in Zaragoza and that no trace of the amputated leg was found at the place where it had been buried.

News of the unusual event spread quickly around the area. People who went to the poor rural Pellicer house prayed loudly and thanked Jesus and the Mother of God for this great miracle. All those gathered sensed a wonderful "heavenly" fragrance that lingered in the room for several days. In the morning of the next day, the parish priest, Fr. Herrero, along with



Photo: LOA archives

Our Lady of the Pillar, Zaragoza in Spain

the mayor and the highest ranking representatives of the local government, and two surgeons examined Juan's right leg for a long time - all of them wanted to officially and "scientifically" confirm that everything that had happened was true. By March 30,

the day after the miracle, the judge of first instance, Martin Corellano, who was responsible for maintaining public order in Calanda, drafted the first official document about this extraordinary event. Additionally, less than 70 hours after the miracle ►



Photo: LOA archives

The location of the miracle in Calanda, on which a church was built

occurred, a notarial act narrating the amazing fact, and attributing it to “Divine intervention”, was prepared by representatives of church authorities, secular authorities, and a doctor. It was drafted by a notary public and confirmed by 10 witnesses.

The severed leg, which had been completely decomposed after more than two years of being in the ground, was brought back to life by God’s direct intervention and re-joined with the rest of his living body. This is surely a sign and foreshadowing of the resurrection of our bodies on the day of Christ’s return.

Professor Estanga - one of the surgeons who amputated Miguel’s leg and for two years treated the wound that remained at the point where the limb had been severed,

**“Serve Christ, because only He is the only good and merciful Lord who does not enslave, but offers true freedom”
(Saint Ambrose)**

was among the most shocked. Now he could see with his own eyes that the part of the leg that he had removed had been restored such that it was now functioning just as it had been before the accident, which was completely inexplicable in medical terms. The doctors assisting the professor and the entire hospital staff experienced a similar shock.

It should be emphasized that on May 8, 1640, Zaragoza’s secular authorities initiated the opening of an official hearing to clarify all the circumstances surrounding the Calanda miracle. The city council appointed two famous professors as its representatives, along with King Philip IV’s attorney general. It was a public trial and followed all official rules. The court records show that the miraculous restoration of the amputated leg of Pellicer was so obvious and certain that no voice of objection or doubt rose against him. **On April 27, 1641, after 11 months of work on the part of the judiciary, the Archbishop of Zaragoza issued a decree in which he stated that the restoration of Miguel Juan’s amputated leg was possible only thanks to the miraculous intervention of God.** It is undoubtedly one of the most amazing wonders in history, and it was confirmed by all the inhabitants of Zaragoza, Calanda, and the surrounding area.

The miracle of Miguel Pellicer’s restored leg became a fact so well known throughout Spain that it was reported to King Philip IV. After the trial was over, and the miracle was officially announced, His Highness called the healed Miguel to an audience in October 1641. The entire diplomatic corps attended, including Lord Hopton, the ambassador of England. It was he who sent the English King Charles I a detailed account of this

audience. Its text has survived to our times. King Charles I, who was also the head of the Anglican Church of England, was so convinced of the miracle that he defended its credibility against outraged Anglican theologians.

During the meeting with Miguel, Philip IV was moved to tears and said that in the face of such obvious facts, there is no longer any need for meditation and further discussion, but one must joyfully accept and celebrate the mystery of God’s intervention. Then he rose from the throne, went to the healed man, and knelt in front of him. He then asked Miguel to expose his right leg, and he kissed it where it had been cut off. It was a touching tribute to his subject - the ruler of a world empire, King Philip IV, on his knees before an illiterate beggar.

The spontaneous restoration of Pellicer’s amputated leg was a spectacular manifestation of God’s action - a miracle unheard of in history. This incident is certainly a sign of the baselessness of the atheists’ claims that no one has ever been known to grow back a severed leg or arm. It is certainly an indisputable miracle, exactly as demanded by Voltaire and other atheists - and officially confirmed by a notary public immediately after its occurrence and after hearing testimony under oath from appropriately qualified witnesses. Ernest Renan, who was an agnostic and bitter enemy of Christianity, wrote that only one credible miracle would suffice to combat atheism. In his ignorance, he was sure that there had been no such extraordinary intervention by God in all of history.

The miracle in Calanda shows us that anything is possible with God. This event points to the action of not some undefined God, but the action of the Divine Person of Jesus Christ, of the Triune God whom He has revealed to us. This miracle is a divine confirmation of the teaching of the Catholic Church, the sacraments celebrated in it, its traditions, and veneration of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, and the power of her intercession. “Mary did there what she did not do in any other nation.” This is how the faithful continue to pray each year during the *Milagro* (Miracle) festival in Calanda and Zaragoza.



Photo: LOA archives

Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar, Zaragoza

The miracle of Calanda is a sign that calls us to conversion and faith in the resurrection of our bodies. The leg, which was rotting due to advanced gangrene, and therefore had to be amputated and then buried in the ground in the cemetery, came back to life after 29 months and was then miraculously transported some kilometers to the owner, thanks to a special intervention on the part of God. This wonderful and one-of-a-kind fact points to the truth of faith in our resurrection, and the same will happen with the bodies of all people on the day of the Last Judgment.

The fact that a leg that had been amputated two years earlier was restored to life and health refutes all the elaborate arguments of people, such as Richard Dawkins for example, who question God's existence. He is the most famous contemporary atheistic polemicist who, in his book *The God Delusion*, tries to convince readers that people who believe in God are victims of a very dangerous

For all Christians, faith in Christ is connected with faith in the great miracles that were Christ's birth and resurrection

delusion. When confronted with the fact of the Calanda miracle, the atheism, which is characterized by intellectual arrogance, dogmatism, and intolerance towards the views of believers, loses all rational and logical support and indicates that it is not faith in God, but rather atheism that is based on delusions.

Enslaved by the Ideology of Atheism

A believer in God, when he encounters events and facts that have the hallmarks of a miracle, does not close himself to the supernatural dimension of reality, but is open to developing an ever deeper understanding of

the Mystery, and thus retains freedom when further searching for the Truth. Whoever wants to come to know the whole truth must, as St. John of the Cross said, "Believe in the existence of a God who is not subject to reason, will, imagination, or any of the senses. In this life God cannot be understood. Even the highest sensation or knowledge of Him is infinitely far, both from what He really is, and also from possessing Him completely." Therefore, it is only on the difficult path of faith that a person experiences a process of his spiritual development and the discovery of a supernatural reality that is inaccessible to natural cognition. On the other hand, an atheist who denies the existence of God and the very possibility of the occurrence of miracles becomes a slave to the doctrine in which he believes. In this way he limits his scope and freedom in the search for the Truth, because he presupposes that there can be no supernatural reality that is capable of eluding human empirical experience. ►

Atheists become slaves of their own ideology because they are closed to the ultimate knowledge of the Truth. Many of them have fervently led, and are still leading, the crusade against faith in God, against religion, and against believers. By being enslaved by the ideology of atheism, they want to soothe the tormenting anxiety of their conscience by radically rejecting the possibility of discovering the spiritual dimension of reality, the knowledge of which is offered by faith. Therefore, atheists with great determination, deny the existence of miraculous facts that have occurred in human history and anything else that might challenge the foundations of their worldview. They argue, for example, that the emergence of life and the micro- and macrocosm is due to chance, caused by blind forces of nature. **In the context of recent scientific research, such a claim is completely absurd, and Prof. Antony Flew, who abandoned atheism, described it as “just a load of rubbish”.** It's like believing that after a typhoon has passed through a scrap yard, from the scattered debris a passenger plane will then emerge ready to fly.

Let us remember that in every cell of the human body there is a DNA code that contains a genetic record of information. There are three trillion items of information in the human genome, stored in a cryptographic four-letter code. Reading at a rate of three letters per second, it would take 31 years to read them all. Scientific research unequivocally states that the information contained in the DNA molecule is separate from it, and that the molecule is only its carrier. So there is intelligence in the DNA code, and the information it contains is neither matter nor energy. This information is an ingenious record of thoughts, indicating the existence of the personal intelligence of God.

The recent discovery of the DNA code shows that atheism has no logical basis and that it is a blind faith in the accidental emergence of life and the entire universe.

Being aware of how wonderfully we were created, with a body and an immortal soul, we should give glory to

The recent discovery of the DNA code shows that atheism has no logical basis and that it is a blind faith in the accidental emergence of life and the entire universe

the Almighty God with every deed and thought, and boldly defend the right to life of every human being right from conception to natural death.

Unlike atheists, people who believe in Christ are free from ideological enslavement. Their faith comes from accepting the great miracle that was the incarnation and resurrection of Christ. Another great miracle is the creation and continuing existence of the universe - with its perfect harmony, natural laws, mystery of life on Earth, and mankind that is sentient and free. **Unrepentant atheists who declare that they consciously reject God, cannot justify themselves** because, as we read in the Scriptures, **“From the creation of the world, his invisible qualities - his eternal power and divinity - become visible to the mind through his works, so that they cannot excuse themselves from guilt.”** (Romans 1:20)

The atheistic ideology forces its adherents to constantly deny the reality of the supernatural and the possible existence of all miraculous signs. In history, facts constantly appear that undermine the foundations of atheistic ideology. These are manifested in scientific research and all kinds of miraculous signs and events, through which God indicates the existence of a supernatural dimension of reality. Miracles are a specific “speech” of God; they are an appeal addressed to people enslaved by atheistic ideology to reject firmly that ideology and to open themselves to accepting the mystery of His love.

For all Christians, faith in Christ is connected with faith in the great miracles that were Christ's birth and resurrection, and in the miracles that Jesus performed during His public ministry, and after His death

and His resurrection, with faith in the signs and miracles that the risen Lord continues to perform through the intercession of his Mother Mary and the apostles and saints. The Lord Jesus says: **“If you do not see signs and wonders, you will not believe”** (John 4:48) and points to the meaning of the miraculous signs he performs. “The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. Blessed is anyone who does not stumble on account of me.” (Matthew 11:5-6) Miracles and supernatural signs constantly accompany God's action in the history of salvation. There are miracles that Christ works in the spiritual realm: the forgiveness of sins in the sacrament of penance; His real, personal presence under the Eucharistic species. Every conversion or occurrence of faith and love in the human heart, the forgiving and loving of one's enemies - are always miracles of God's grace in the human soul. Jesus Christ performs miraculous healings also in the human body. Through these extraordinary signs, He wants to strengthen or inspire faith in people, so that they can open their hearts to His omnipotent and humble love and mercy.

Let us reiterate that the only foundation and source of faith for every Christian is the acceptance especially of the miraculous facts of Jesus Christ's birth and His resurrection. Anyone who rejects these facts and does not believe them cannot be a Christian. All the other miraculous events are designed to enliven and deepen faith in the Real Presence and salvific action of God, who became a true man in the womb of the Virgin Mary, in order to achieve our salvation through His suffering, death and resurrection. Saint Ambrose wrote: **“All those who reject the living God, kneel before the “god of nothingness.”** He urged: “Serve Christ, because only He is the only good and merciful Lord who does not enslave, but offers true freedom.”



How Does One Confess?

“Each time, I confess the same sins.” “I don’t need confession for God to forgive me.” “What will the priest think of me?” The temptations and justifications that are offered as reasons to give up the sacrament of reconciliation vary. However, you should not yield to them. For behind a well-done confession, there lies a sea of grace.

Maria Zboralska

All kinds of experiences with confession often hide what is absolutely crucial about it, specifically – as St. John Paul II preached – the joyful encounter of a prodigal son with the merciful Father. (Luke 15: 11–32) In the sacrament of reconciliation, a contrite sinner experiences God’s love, which is seen in the forgiveness of sins. It is for this reason that the Polish pope called the confessional “a special and blessed place from which, with divisions wiped away, there is born a new, uncontaminated and reconciled individual – a reconciled world!” (*Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, 31, 1984) What has to be done so that this comes to pass? In other words, how does one make a good confession?

For centuries, the Church has reminded penitents about the five ►



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conditions of a good confession: examination of conscience, contrition, a strong resolution to improve, confession of sins and atonement to God and neighbors. Although these conditions may seem familiar to us, it is worthwhile to look at them through the eyes of the saints in order to rediscover their essence and see that they are a key for us to have a transforming encounter with God.

Examination of Conscience

The first stage on the road to reconciliation is to stand in truth about yourself, to make yourself aware of the evil you have done since the last confession. "You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." (John 8: 32) There is a reason why St. John Paul II believed this sentence to be the most important in the Scriptures. Without a sincere admission that you have committed sins, you can hardly speak of having them forgiven in a confessional. A genuine preparation for the confession of sins was something that St. Padre Pio insisted on. Many people who lined up to have him hear their confession did so not out of desire to reform but rather driven by an unhealthy curiosity to see the famous stigmatic. The saintly Capuchin friar, who had the gift of being able to read human souls, many a time sent such people away from his confessional, telling them to examine first their conscience genuinely and show contrition for the evil they had done.

While examining our conscience, we picture venial and mortal sins. The latter concern grave matters, but to qualify as mortal sins they have to be committed willfully and consciously. Mortal sins break off our friendship with God and bring about spiritual death, and they must be mentioned in confession, including the kind of sins, their frequency, and any important aggravating circumstances. However, the Church also encourages people who have not committed mortal sins, to go to confession to confess venial sins. As St. Faustina taught: "We should derive two kinds of profit from Holy Confession: One, we come to confession to be healed. Two, we come to be educated - like a small child, our soul has constant

"Serious sin is a tormentor of God and a killer of souls. It tears us away from heaven and casts us into the abyss of hell. Yet, we take delight in it! What a madness!"
(St. John Vianney)

need of education." (*Diary*, 377) The secretary of Divine Mercy herself, although she did not commit mortal sins, confessed often; so did St. John Paul II, who went to confession every week and before major feasts and important liturgical periods.

Contrition

You must be sorry for the evil that is revealed in an examination of conscience. Saints were repulsed by sin because they knew it was an insult to God. The Curé of Ars, to whom penitents came to confess from across wide parts of France in the 19th century, said: "Serious sin is a tormentor of God and a killer of souls. It tears us away from heaven and casts us into the abyss of hell. Yet, we take delight in it! What a madness! If we were well aware of this, we would feel so strong a revulsion at sin that we would be unable to commit it."

Another "martyr of the confessional", Fr. Leopold Mandić, knew how important contrition was. He was known for hearing confessions for 12-15 hours a day. On many occasions, he would forgo meals during the day to hear all those waiting in line for absolution. "A person told me - as related by one of the witnesses in the canonization process of Fr. Mandić - that during confession with Fr. Leopold, after the confession of sins, the priest

"When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul"
(*Diary*, 1602)

rose and intended to ask him to leave the confessional without absolution. He said: 'Get out, please.' The penitent insisted but the father repeated the same words. When, however, the man started crying and fell to the floor saying that he was sorry for his sins and that he was prepared to do anything lest he should relapse into sin, Fr. Leopold raised him and drew to himself, saying: 'Now you are my brother,' and gave him absolution."

We can be moved to contrition by reminding ourselves of the immense suffering Jesus took upon himself during his Passion and death on the cross to redeem us and conquer our sins. This was practiced by St. Faustina. In the *Diary*, she wrote: "I will call to mind the Passion of Jesus at each confession, to arouse my heart to contrition. Insofar as is possible, with the grace of God, I will always practice perfect contrition. I will devote more time to this contrition. Before I approach the confessional, I shall first enter the open and most merciful Heart of the Savior." (*Diary*, 225)

Strong Resolution to Improve

A well-experienced contrition creates a desire to shun evil in the future. "Why, we know," St. John Vianney explained to a certain penitent who had relapsed after confession into drunkenness and debauchery, "that true contrition cannot be detached from a strong resolution to sin no more. If the desire to improve is sincere, you will really avoid sin and evil, mean and indecent thoughts, you will keep away from any situations leading to sin, and you will use all means available to quit bad habits. Hence, my friend, your desire to improve must have been very dubious and merely apparent since you are again seen in bars and in (bad) company in which you have often scored lapses. I can't see any serious caution in your conduct and you still live a frivolous life, just as you have before. It's hard not to suspect that your confession was false and your contrition suspect."

A strong resolution to improve means not only repulsion towards sins, but also a desire not to commit them in the future. In practice, it means most of the time a real effort

**“Should you sin again after going to confession, rise from the fall as soon as possible. The longer you postpone it, the harder it is to improve”
(St. John Vianney)**

is needed to work on eradicating one or several misdeeds from your heart. In this effort, talking to the priest during confession may help.

Instructive, in this respect, is the story of a penitent of Fr. Pio's. When this man went to confession to the Capuchin for the first time, he admitted that he occasionally had skipped a Sunday Mass. The Capuchin told him “Go away!” The man thus went to another priest to hear his confession. After two months, he returned to Pi-etrelcina and again lined up to Father Pio's confessional. When asked about the Sunday Eucharist, the penitent said he already was now attending Mass regularly. “Did you go to Holy Mass yesterday?” asked the friar who could read in human souls. “But Father, yesterday I was travelling to see you,” the pilgrim tried to excuse himself. “Go away, but then be back. On Sunday - Mass comes first.” Since that day, the man never again missed the Sunday Eucharist and, what is more, joined a prayer group set up by St. Father Pio.

Confession of Sins

After examining your conscience, being contrite, and making a strong resolution to improve, it is time to avail yourself of the sacrament of reconciliation. Many people find it difficult to confess their sins before a priest. Jesus responds unequivocally to these worries in Sister Faustina's *Diary*: “When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul.” (*Diary*, 1602) It is worthwhile, as the secretary of Divine Mercy did, to pray beforehand for the Holy Spirit to enlighten the confessor.

In the confessional, you should confess all the sins committed since



Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Return of the Prodigal Son*

**“Were a soul like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. Oh, miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy!”
(*Diary*, 1448)**

the last confession, without holding back any. When confessing your faults, do not be proud and do not try to present yourself in a better light by blaming your misdeeds on others or on circumstances. You should name your sins in simple language, avoiding

unnecessary words. It helps, too, to heed the advice given by St. Faustina: “And again, I would like to say three words to the soul that is determined to strive for sanctity and to derive fruit; that is to say, benefit from confession. **First word - complete sincerity and openness.** Even the holiest and wisest confessor cannot forcibly pour into the soul what he desires if it is not sincere and open. An insincere, secretive soul risks great dangers in the spiritual life, and even the Lord Jesus Himself does not give Himself to such a soul on a higher level, because He knows it would derive no benefit from these special graces. **Second word - humility.** A soul does not benefit as it should from the sacrament of confession if it is not humble. Pride keeps it in darkness. The soul neither knows how, nor is it willing, to probe with precision the depths of ►



How to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy

1. Make the Sign of the Cross, then say once each:

The Lord's Prayer
The Hail Mary
The Apostles' Creed

2. On the Lord's Prayer Beads of the rosary say:

Eternal Father, I offer You the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.

3. On the 10 Hail Mary Beads say:

For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world.

(Repeat steps 2 and 3 for all five decades).

4. Conclude with:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, have mercy on us and on the whole world. (Three times)

5. Then say: Jesus, I trust in you! (Three times)

Divine Mercy

"A soul that is insincere and reticent is risking great danger in its spiritual life" (Diary, 113)

its own misery. It puts on a mask and avoids everything that might bring it recovery. **Third word - obedience.** A disobedient soul will win no victory, even if the Lord Jesus himself, in person, were to hear its confession. The most experienced confessor will be of no help whatsoever to such a soul. The disobedient soul exposes itself to great misfortunes; it will make no progress toward perfection, nor will it succeed in the spiritual life. God lavishes His graces most generously upon the soul, but it must be an obedient soul." (Diary, 113)

After the confession of sins and listening to the priest's instruction, the crucial moment of the sacrament of reconciliation takes place - the absolution, or the remission of sins. This is when our encounter with merciful God culminates, which was compared by St. John Paul II to the kiss with which the father greeted his prodigal son in the Gospel parable.

Atonement to God and Neighbors

Walking away from the confessional, you should thank God for the sacramental grace you have received. St. Faustina wrote: "When I leave the confessional, I shall rouse in my soul great gratitude to the Holy Trinity for this wonderful and inconceivable miracle of mercy that is wrought in my soul. And the more miserable my soul is, the more I feel the ocean of God's mercy engulfing me and giving me strength and great power. (Diary, 225)

Finally, we are left with the last element of confession: atonement to God and neighbors. It involves above all doing penance imposed by the confessor. Some priests, for instance, St. Leopold Mandić or servant of God Fr. Aleksander Woźny, sometimes imposed light penance on their penitents while they themselves fasted, prayed and followed penitential practices to atone for the sins of these people.

St. John Paul II advised us not to reduce atonement to only saying certain prayers, but to make it encompass acts of Divine worship, charity, mercy and compensation. Atonement is to show our commitment to

turn over a new leaf. How your life is to look after such a turn is best explained by Padre Pio: "What are you to do to persevere in good and not return to sin again? In the first place, do not trust yourself and stay cautious. Second, be very careful to avoid any opportunities to evil and bad company. Otherwise, your reform will be only illusory. Third, have recourse to prayer because Christ says: 'Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation'. Finally, should you sin again after going to confession, rise from the fall as soon as possible. The longer you postpone it, the harder it is to improve. Any person who avails themselves of these means, will certainly recover spiritually. The ailments of the body cannot always be cured - in this case, often no medication can help. However, of the gravest ailments of the soul you can be cured and you can fully recover."

May those who postpone going to confession for years listen to the emotional appeal made by Jesus and related by St. Faustina: "Tell souls where they are to look for solace; that is, in the Tribunal of Mercy (the sacrament of reconciliation). There the greatest miracles take place and are incessantly repeated. To avail oneself of this miracle, it is not necessary to go on a great pilgrimage or to carry out some external ceremony; it suffices to come with faith to the feet of My representative and to reveal to him one's misery, and the miracle of Divine Mercy will be fully demonstrated. Were a soul to be like a decaying corpse so that from a human standpoint, there would be no hope of restoration and everything would already be lost, it is not so with God. The miracle of Divine Mercy restores that soul in full. Oh, how miserable are those who do not take advantage of the miracle of God's mercy! They will call out in vain, but it will be too late." (Diary, 1448)



They Waited for a Priest to Save Them

Franek ... started screaming that he could see the devil, and that demons were pulling him towards the gates of hell, tormenting him with various instruments of torture. At the same time, his soul was being burned by the crimes he had committed. He now confessed to these crimes, desperately calling out for a priest, all the while holding on to the nurses, as if to shield himself from the attacks of evil spirits.

I was working in a hospital in Lviv (Ukraine), during the Second World War, when I met Franek N. He was a hardened criminal, whose crimes were revealed when he was nearing death. Before the war, he was working as a driver for a hospital for the terminally ill. When war broke out, he left his job and joined a band of thieves. The fact that he was converted can only be due to the intercession of the Virgin Mary. For six years, Sr. Zamysłowska of the Sisters of Charity prayed the rosary every day for his conversion. She was the head of the hospital in which Franek worked, but which he had later deserted, much to her distress.

The Conversion of Franek

Franek was brought to the hospital for surgery in 1945. He was in a critical condition: he had tuberculosis

and tuberculous pleurisy (infection of the lungs). He was in hospital for three months. During that time, he said confession and received Holy Communion three times. In his third month in the hospital, his condition suddenly became worse. On October 31st, 1945 at 3.00 o'clock in the afternoon, a time in the day when we would usually change the beddings and change the position of the bedridden patients, Franek suffered a severe pulmonary hemorrhage. The bed and the floor were covered in blood, and so were we - the two nurses who were caring for Franek. We were bloody from head to foot.

In spite of this, Franek survived, but he started screaming that he was seeing demons coming out of the gates of hell, trying to pull him down with evil-looking hooks. At the same time, he felt his soul being burned by the crimes he had committed.

When he had finished and received absolution, he became calm, and he reached out his arms as if to embrace some good friend and he called out, "Thank You, Mary! You saved me!" After which he folded his arms on his chest and passed away

He confessed to these crimes while crying out, "A priest!!! I need a priest!" He hid behind the nurses, holding them in front of him, as if to shield himself from the demonic attacks. His legs gave way from under him and he was convulsing in absolute terror. He felt he was near death and was not calmed by words of



Photo: Paweł Fiszler



trust in Divine Mercy, nor by praying the *Act of Contrition*. The chaplain lived a kilometer away from the hospital, at the Parish of St. Anthony, and there was no other priest available at that time.

I asked Franek to let me go so I could go look for a priest, but he said, “I can’t! They’ll come and get me!” I gave him a rosary and said, “Hold this. It will protect you from the demons. Let me go.” I left the room, desperate, and suddenly, a miracle! At that moment it happened that a Carmelite father was coming down the corridor, bringing dinner for a sick brother of the order. I asked him to come and see Franek. He entered the room to give absolution to the dying patient. I helped him with the stole and the holy oil.

When the priest entered the room, the demons and the gates of hell disappeared. Franek’s body relaxed and he was able to straighten out his legs. He began to confess to the priest a long list of crimes, sins, and acts of sacrilege, all of which the other patients in the room had already heard before. The priest listened to him, all the while asking him to speak more quietly, but Franek firmly said, “I will not be quiet! Before God’s judgement the whole world must know of the crimes I committed!” And he continued spilling out all of the sins that had been tormenting him. When he had finished and received absolution, he became calm, and he reached out his arms as if to embrace some good friend and he called out, “Thank You, Mary! You saved me!” After which he folded his arms on his chest and passed away.

A Six-Hour Confession

Together with another sister, we then took care of the body of the deceased, and disinfected the bed and the floor to prevent further infection. We also washed, changed, and went on to do our other chores. Sr. Cecylia went to room 10, and I went to room 5, where Franek used to be, along with eight other seriously ill men. To my surprise, the patients were not on their beds, but rather under the beds, covered with pillows

The priest listened to him, all the while asking him to speak more quietly, but Franek firmly said, “I will not be quiet! Before God’s judgement the whole world must know of the crimes I committed!”

and blankets. Even the patient who was in a traction with a fractured knee and a seriously wounded thigh was under the bed, having broken free of the steel wires that secured his leg. When I saw his face, he had changed beyond recognition: wild-eyed and white-haired from terror. He held the pillow over his head and was screaming for a priest to come immediately. Everyone else cried for a priest as well.

I sent a nurse to post a sign at the front gate of the building that the presence of a priest was needed immediately. The other nurses helped me to bring the patients back to their beds. Everyone called for a priest like drowning men who were desperate for a lifeline. The chaplain, Fr. Woroniecki, came at 5:15 in the afternoon. I stood guard in the hall to make sure that no one would go in, not even for supper or for the doctor’s visit. At 11:15 pm, the priest finally came out, pale and covered in sweat. He asked what had earlier happened with the patients, and then he suddenly fainted. Two Russian nurses saw this and came running to help me save him. We laid him on a hospital bed until he finally came round. Two porters brought him back to the presbytery.

In the room all the patients were crying. They did not even think of food. They asked me to help them fulfill their penance and to give thanks together with them that they were given the chance to go to confession before the demons could drag them down to hell. I spent the whole night with them praying and preparing them for Holy Communion.

In the morning, when they saw the priest enter the room with Jesus Christ, they wept like children. Their tears must have pleased Our Savior, whose mercy has brought so much victory. The men did not want breakfast but wept and gave thanks for the blessings of the previous day. I did all that I could do for them and then

I went on to prepare the entire ward for the doctors’ visit at 8 am.

The Doctors’ Visit

When the doctors entered room 5, the head physician looked over the room and frowned. The other doctors also did the same. After some moments of uncomfortable silence, the head physician turned to me and said sternly, “Sr. Anna, I have repeatedly asked you to let me know ahead of time when you are to make changes in the ward.” I said, “I don’t understand what you mean, doctor.” He replied accusingly, “You changed the patients in this room without informing anyone!” I told him, “But doctor, these are the same patients as yesterday. Nothing has changed!” He said, “I don’t recognize even a single one of the patients!” The assistant physician, Dr. Liebhart, whispered in my ear, “Please don’t insult the professor, Sr. Anna. We can see these are not the same patients as yesterday. Anyway, how did you get these eight patients in without the doctors’ knowledge?” I had to show them the patients’ charts, records, diagnoses, as well as the steel rods that one of the patients removed from the traction before they could be convinced that I was telling the truth.

The professor asked how the patients had changed so radically, with their hair turning white overnight? I recounted to them what happened the previous day, the hellish scenes that occurred before and after Franek’s death. What they saw and felt terrified the patients, but it also led to their conversion, which is why they might have appeared so different. The doctors did their rounds in silence, and afterwards, in the corridor, they asked me to describe the events in greater detail. I recalled the main points of what happened: that Franek was dying and screaming in fear, calling out for a priest; that a priest had miraculously appeared;



Photo: Paul Morris / stocknapic / Paweł Fiszor



that as soon as he had confessed, he died. The head physician, Dr. Karawanow, said, "This is another proof that God exists, and that man has an immortal soul."

After the doctors' visit, three doctors came to me: two Poles and one Ukrainian. They asked for prayer books and also to get someone to stand in for their shifts the following morning. They explained that they might be late the next day as they wanted to go for confession and to receive Holy Communion, which they had not done since high school. When they came in to work the next day, they were pensive and changed, just like the patients in room 5. They received rosaries and Miraculous Medals with joy.

What Did They See?

Later in the afternoon I had some time to talk with the patients in room 5 about their experience. They all admitted that there were good reasons why they would go to hell. It was a miracle that they were not dragged there by the demons. They said that they had not gone to confession for many years. One of them had not gone for forty years.

They all admitted that there were good reasons why they would go to hell. It was a miracle that they were not dragged there by the demons. They said that they had not gone to confession for many years

The oldest patient, whose legs were lost from a grenade explosion, wept with joy that he had escaped hell that day, saying that he certainly would have deserved it. After receiving Holy Communion, he started praying for a quick death so that he would no longer offend God and always have Him in his heart. The old man's prayer was pleasing to the Lord God and his wish was granted - that same evening he passed on to eternal life, painless and in peace. Upon learning of the old man's death, the other patients cried that they also wanted to die that day. They calmed down, retracting their pleas when they were reminded of their duty to do penance and to amend their evil lives.

I asked them what satan looked liked. They covered their faces with their hands as if in fear of seeing the image again. One of them, an engineer, said that it was impossible to describe him. Satan is more intelligent than all the scientists on earth put together, and his appearance is so terrifying that it is better to bear all the earthly tortures than to fall under his power. The images of satan in art are silly jokes when compared to the real thing.

It is worth noting the circumstances of Franek's final confession. The confession was heard by a Carmelite monk who was newly ordained, and had come to Lviv for his studies. He was sent to the hospital to bring his Carmelite brother's lunch at noon, but he was delayed and did not arrive until around 3 p.m. This was providential because he arrived at the exact time that Franek had called out for a priest. Evidently, his steps were directed by the Most Blessed Virgin Mary.

*Sr. Anna Grzybowska
Noted by Sr. M. Dorota Trybula CR,
14 February 1996 ■*

“Do Not Invite Death by the Error of Your Life”

(Wisdom 1: 12)

Death is the most important moment of man's life on earth because at that moment their salvation or damnation is decided for the rest of eternity. **This ultimate judgment depends on the choices of good or evil that a specific human being made during his or her entire life on earth.**

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChr

We read in the Scriptures: **“If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh; but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.”** (Galatians 6: 8) God wishes to forgive all sins but man is free and may accept or reject his mercy. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* reads: “To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice. This state of definitive self-exclusion from communion with God and the blessed is called ‘hell’”. (CCC 1033)

The harshest punishment for sin is its very consequences. The fruit of sins are the foretaste of the reality of hell. Failure to reform or keeping oneself shut off from the gift of Divine Mercy is setting out on the road to eternal perdition. All those who stubbornly persist in sins such as “fornication,

impurity, licentiousness, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, anger, quarrels, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these Those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.” (Galatians 5: 19-21) **“Do not be deceived! Fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, male prostitutes, sodomites, ... none of these will inherit the kingdom of God.”** (1 Corinthians 6: 9-10)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church reads: **“To die in mortal sin without repenting and accepting God's merciful love means remaining separated from him forever by our own free choice”**

When persisting in sin, men reject life and love, and choose death and self-destruction instead. They become enslaved by sin. This is particularly visible today when people who are enslaved by the neo-Marxist gender and LGBT ideologies hate Christ and his system of values, while seeking to deprave people with incredible zeal, in particular young adults and children. Enslaved by sin, they call evil good and do everything they can to make others think and behave likewise. Removing God from human life always engenders a special kind of obduracy in perversion when evil is treated as good. For instance, the killing of unborn children is treated as the right of a woman to a free choice; euthanasia, an expression of mercy, etc. The attitude of obduracy in perversion and living a life as if there were no God are special instances of the presence of hell during life on earth.

It must be remembered that God fully respects the freedom of his creation even when it opts to reject his love. Hence, hell is not an unpredictable or unjust punishment. The individual, choosing sin, proceeds on his or her own responsibility along the road to hell. There is hell because there is sin. The truth about hell reminds us that if sin is treated as good, if the Divine Mercy is held in contempt, it introduces us into the reality of eternal damnation.

The fruit and crowning of man's entire life on earth will be eternal hell if he has freely surrendered to the captivity of evil.

St. John Chrysostom explains: “Why will not all of us be saved? Because not all will want this. Grace, which is free, saves only those who desire to be saved, while those who do not, it does not”

St. John Chrysostom explains: “Why will not all of us be saved? Because not all will want this. Grace, which is free, saves only those who desire to be saved, while those who do not, it does not.”

In addition, *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* reads: “**The affirmations of Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church on the subject of hell are a call to the responsibility** incumbent upon man to make use of his freedom in view of his eternal destiny. **They are at the same time an urgent call to conversion:** ‘Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few!’ (Matthew 7: 13-14).” (CCC 1036)

St. Leo the Great, pope, writes that: “Rightly is this blessedness promised to purity of heart. For the brightness of the true light will not be able to be seen by the unclean eye; and that which will be happiness to minds that are bright and clean, will be a punishment to those that are stained. Therefore, let the mists of earth’s vanities be shunned, and your inward eyes purged from all the filth of wickedness, in order that the sight may be free to feed on this great manifestation of God.” (*A Homily on the Beatitudes*, Matthew 5:1-9)

God wishes to forgive all sins but man is free and may accept or reject His mercy

Photo: R. Gino Santa Maria / Shutterstock, LLC / Dreamstime.com





Jesus, You Take Over!

When you are 27 and full of life and energy, you don't expect to hear: "You have cancer. It's acute leukemia. You have a 50-50 chance of survival." I heard this diagnosis on November 5th, 2020.

It was the end of September of that year and I was working more than usual. I was planning to buy an apartment, so I thought it would be a good idea to save some money for a down payment and renovation. I would finish one job and go to another, which often included Saturdays and Sundays. It goes without saying that on my weekends off, I would relax with a bottle of beer... or five or six or something stronger, like in the song: "You drink a lot and sleep little." I would often hang out with friends. I was rather an outgoing person and one who will not stay still in one place for too long. At the beginning of October, I went to a huge party, after which my body seemingly wanted to stop working.



Sebastian, author of the testimony

Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony



On the evening of the day when I heard the diagnosis, when my emotions had subsided, suddenly a Bible verse appeared in my head: “In everything give thanks.” (1 Thessalonians 5:18) I couldn’t understand it. How could I give thanks for something like that, for disease, for cancer?

Initially, I had a cold and fever. As it later turned out it was covid. I was forced to stay in isolation at home with my parents for several days. I only had mild symptoms, but being locked up inside four walls annoyed me terribly. I couldn’t sit still. I was irritated and counted down the days until I could break free from my parents and leave the house. Finally, the isolation period ended. I was reasonably well so I returned to work and my daily responsibilities. With each day after the end of the isolation, however, I felt a growing fatigue.

It was a deep exhaustion like I had never experienced before. I struggled to get onto the second floor of my apartment building. At work, everyone told me that I was white as a sheet. Elevated pulse, dizziness, eye floaters – these were among some of the strange symptoms that I hadn’t had earlier. I thought that it must have been due to the after effects of covid. I’ve heard that people sometimes recover after two or three weeks, so I was hoping that a few more days and everything would go back to normal.

I remembered that I hadn’t had a beer or anything like it for a long time, so I thought that if I had a drink, it would definitely improve my circulation and I’d feel better. And so I did as I’d decided. I went over to my friend for a game, I drank three beers, some liqueur, and immediately felt and looked better. I was back in shape. I went to



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

I am an outgoing person, and one that would not sit still in one place for too long

Next, I went back to the hospital for four weeks, during which time I celebrated my birthday, Christmas and New Year’s Eve. I had to learn how to celebrate these special occasions in a new, unique way – in a hospital bed, hooked to medical equipment

bed content with the thought that the old proven ways were the best after all. But that wasn’t the case. The next day the symptoms were

back, and with each passing day I felt even worse. After walking 300 meters, I was panting like an old steam train and I felt as if I had just run a marathon. I got pale again. My pulse was rapid and I felt constant excruciating fatigue. The second thought that came to my mind then was the lungs – after covid, some people have issues with their lungs. I decided it was time to have mine checked. But work, responsibilities, social life got in the way. “I will call tomorrow,” I thought to myself. And so I delayed my visit, deep down hoping that the symptoms would fade on their own.

At that time, my dad called his doctor friend and arranged an appointment for me. I thought



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

The Lord Jesus admonished me in no uncertain terms

Whatever happens in your life, for example if there is something you don't know how to deal with, or when you are faced with difficult choices, keep repeating: "Jesus, You take over!"

that since the visit had already been scheduled, I might as well go. The doctor examined me and took an x-ray of my lungs. Everything was fine, no abnormalities. But the doctor wondered about my pale skin, so he gave me a referral for a morphology, thinking it might be anemia. It was November 3rd. I did blood tests in the morning. After a few hours, the clinic called. I was informed that the results were significantly abnormal, not to say terrible. The next day I was rushed to the haematology ward for further tests. On November 4th, I was admitted. They did my blood tests again. It turned out that my hemoglobin level dropped to 4.5 units. The standard

for an adult male ranges between 13 and 17, about 3 is considered lethal. I thought to myself, "Well, well ... I escaped the ax!"

That day they gave me a blood transfusion of several units. I felt an incredible surge of energy and strength. I guess this is how you feel after taking drugs. I thought: "Maybe one more day or two of tests and I'll get to leave." The next morning, on November 5th, they took me for a bone marrow biopsy. Around 10.00 am the doctor came over, closing the door carefully behind her. From her movements and the way she closed that door (to convey a difficult message to me in a discreet manner) I understood that the

situation must be grave. Her words only confirmed it: "You have cancer. It's acute leukemia. You have a 50-50 chance of survival."

Sometimes, in a movie or when listening to other people's stories, I wondered what it would be like to hear such news, how I would react, how I would live with the idea that in six months or a year I might not be here. But usually, it was just a brief thought. For me it was a totally unexpected experience to have to face this news so quickly in real life ... but now, all of the sudden, without any warning, any preparation ... bang!

Although the first day was hard, I put on an act in front of the doctor (who was quite young and attractive, I didn't want to upset her). But as soon as I was alone in the room, thousands of thoughts per second swirled in my head, mainly existential ones: "How much time do I have left? Will I even leave the hospital on my own or will I be carried away? Will I ever see my family, girlfriend, or other friends again?" Then there were more practical questions: "How will the treatment go? How will I look if I go bald? How will I feel after chemotherapy? After all, people sometimes look and feel very bad. I wonder how it will affect me." Later, the following thoughts gave me some hope: "Maybe I can overcome it, maybe it won't be so bad, maybe God will work some miracle, after all, from time to time you hear stories about people who were terminally ill but suddenly recovered."

The treatment started the next day - pills and IV a few times a day, injections, punctures, biopsies. My first hospital stay lasted five weeks. During this time, I lost 16 kg, and I have never been overweight. You could count my bones. That was the aftermath of the illness, medication, and chemotherapy. In early December, I returned home for two weeks. Next, I went back to the hospital for four weeks, during which time I celebrated my birthday, Christmas and New Year's Eve. I had to learn how to celebrate these special occasions in a new, unique way - in a hospital bed, hooked to medical equipment. The next two weeks I got to



spend at home, after which I went to the hospital again, this time for seven weeks. Exactly 50 days in one room, in one bed. In the haematology ward, you can't walk out into the corridor. You can't even open the window. With strong chemotherapy, the patients' immunity is very low, so they have to be careful not to catch any bacteria and viruses. Some say that being there is worse than being in prison, because in prison at least you can go to the yard.

This intensive treatment lasted from November 2020 until April 2021, half a year. 180 days had gone by, during which about 130 of them I spent in the hospital and 50 at home. Luckily, I was able to enter into remission, which is a withdrawal of the disease, and now I am in so-called supportive care. It can last a year-and-a-half, if the results continue to be good enough. If they decline, I will have a bone marrow transplant.

During the treatment itself, I felt good overall. However, there were days when I was extremely fatigued. I was overcome by a total lack of energy. Everything hurt, I felt nauseous, had no appetite and I couldn't sleep. I would lie down with my eyes closed and wait until it's all over. Next to me were patients with various conditions. Some couldn't even get out of bed, some cried, others prayed or, on the contrary, cursed their fate and asked constantly, "Why me? Why has this happened to me?" When the test results improve, there is a moment of joy and hope, one begins to believe that they can make it. When something doesn't go well, doubts - whether the treatment makes sense, whether anything makes sense at all - quickly creep in.

I could end the story here, but then it would not be very optimistic. And most of all it would be incomplete because apart from the earthly issues, i.e. the physical aspects of disease and treatment, there is also the inner experience at the spiritual level, which, I think, is even more important.

Faith and religious practices have always been an important part



When we are successful and good things happen to us, who remembers to say, "Thank You, Lord Jesus!"?

Everyone would like to experience a tangible miracle in their lives. One that is indisputable. But the key is to have faith. And that's what my story is about

of my life. I belonged to and participated in various parish groups. In recent years, however, God began to "bug me" more and more. I focused mainly on myself, on my plans, on getting the most out of my life. I started putting Him on the back burner. I would still go to church every Sunday, but it was more out of habit and to silence my conscience. I thought that, after all, being in church every week for Mass was enough. Sundays usually looked as follows: I woke up after a Saturday party and I was looking forward to the day's quick end, not to meet Lord Jesus. My prayers were also kept to a minimum. I was reaching for alcohol more often. I started giving in to various bad habits and temptations, and as a result my conscience - this inner voice of God - began to be drowned out. The line between good and bad began to blur.

On the surface, it seemed to me that everything was fine. I was

successful both in my private and professional life. When I had something planned, I was usually able to carry it out. I had no reason to complain about anything. But deep inside I felt that this was not how it should look like, that something was missing. I felt the lack of meaning and fulfillment. On some evenings I would recall a prayer and ask Jesus to pull me out of this apathy, and that's how I was able to regain joy of heart and peace of mind.

And the Lord Jesus asked for me. He did so very firmly. It is not like He is sitting up in heaven with an intention of sending illness onto someone at random. The way I see it is that He allows us to live through all kinds of experiences in order that they might bring us to Him. We have a tendency at times to accuse Him: "Why have you not done anything to stop this disease? Why do you allow all these misfortunes? Why do you allow this

Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony



I don't know what else awaits me in this life, but I know that whatever it is, I can always say: "Jesus, You take over!" And He will



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

I can't waste the time and the opportunity to become closer to Jesus

suffering?" But when we succeed in something, and when good things happen in our lives, who then says: "Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the fact that I have succeeded. Thank you that everything has fallen into place." We often blame God for misfortunes in our lives, however, when something good happens, we forget about Him completely. But that's not how it should work. Our life is made up of ups and downs, and the key is to experience it alongside with Jesus.

The value of these bad moments - suffering and difficulties that are lived together with Christ and offered to Him - is truly priceless. While in the hospital, I came across the *Testimony* of Alicja Lenczewska, where the following words of Jesus were written: "When assessing the world, God's judgment, the true judgment, is different from human judgment. It is often the contrary. Suffering, persecution, and injustice when given to Me have an enormous value that enriches the soul.

This is the most perfect food for its development. This is the gift that the loving Father gives in a special way to His chosen ones, because He wants to sanctify them and keep them close to Him ... Suffering is neither a punishment nor misfortune. It is a sign of My special love and vocation to be close to Me." (*Testimony*, 529) After reading this passage, I knew I could not waste the time and chance given to me to get closer to Jesus. I became aware that the time of this "hospital retreat" could bear a lot of good fruit in my life and in the lives of my relatives.

On the evening of the day when I heard the diagnosis, when my emotions had subsided, suddenly a Bible verse appeared in my head: "In everything give thanks." (1 Thessalonians 5:18) I couldn't understand it. How could I give thanks for something like that, for disease, for cancer, for the fact that I had to stay in the hospital who knows how long, not knowing what will happen with me? But despite all this there was this one thought in my head: "Give thanks in every situation." So I started praying and thanking God, even though I was reluctant on the first day. In the days that followed, I didn't panic anymore, I wasn't afraid of what would happen to me. Many negative thoughts were replaced by complete peace and confidence that whatever takes place, the Lord Jesus knew what He was doing. Every evening I thanked Him for my illness, which helped me to re-establish a living relationship with Him. I also thanked Him for every person I met in the hospital, for the care of doctors and nurses, for my good mood, for all the people who prayed for me, for my family. I also remembered the time I was under isolation at home during the previous October, and



feeling annoyed for being stuck in the apartment with my parents. While in the hospital, I began to appreciate this time and I would often think to myself how much I would give to have dinner with them again, sit down and have a simple conversation, and just be. Every day we really have a lot to thank God for, but we don't, because we always focus on ourselves, only concerned with what we see in front of us, on what we don't have yet and how unhappy we are because of it. How much time is wasted on phone conversations, pointless browsing on social media, which do not bring anything useful to our lives, and which only increases greed and the desire for money, fame, and a comfortable and easy life at any cost. Suddenly, I started to appreciate what I had previously taken for granted and what I had at my fingertips. While watching the Holy Mass online on the phone in the hospital, I missed Jesus present in the Eucharist, the smell of old wooden church pews, the sound of the organ and people with whom I could pray together.

Every day I tried to give my illness - the difficult moments and suffering that resulted from it - to Jesus through the hands of Mary. I offered these difficulties in my intention, my family's and all the people who are far from God. Soon I began to see the good fruit of this act of devotion. My old friends would start contacting me. They were often far from God. They said that they also prayed for me, that they kept me in their thoughts, that my illness made them think about the important things in life. When a serious disease begins to affect you or someone close to you, you begin to realize that life on earth lasts only a few moments, because whether someone will live up to the age 30 or 80, one day they all will still have to cross to the other side into eternity.

During a stay in hospital, there is a lot of time to think and reflect on life. You can use this time in two ways. You can get angry and annoyed, worry about what the future might bring, curse and ask why this has happened to you, or

Prayer for the Offering Up of Suffering

Lord Jesus, thank You for taking up all of my suffering; that you were nailed to the cross for my sins and scourged for my faults; that in Your passion, death and resurrection You forgave me all my sins, opened the road to heaven, and turned human suffering into a path to salvation. I offer You my pain and unite with your suffering for the salvation of all sinners. I renounce everything that leads to evil and all sin so that I may live in freedom as a child of God. I renounce Satan, who is the root of all sin. Lord Jesus, I ask for the grace of unconditional forgiveness for all who hurt me and caused me pain. I lay all of my physical pain and spiritual torment into Your wounds. Thank You for this experience. I ask You to free me from fear, resentment and despair. I wish to join in Your suffering; all of my pain I offer to the Heavenly Father for the following intentions: for the conversion of pagans and atheists; for the pope, our bishops and priests; and for new religious vocations. (You can add other intentions.) Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I am Yours. Amen.

you can calmly give everything to Jesus, Mary and let Them act. This is not easy. I'm not saying that I got it all in one day or that I'm fearless. It's actually a daily struggle. There are days of doubt, it's tough, especially when your health deteriorates or something goes wrong. I would like to get a lot of things resolved in a snap: to be completely healthy, to be certain that the disease would not come back, to be able to go hiking, jogging, playing again. But my body is weak, I still feel the effects of the treatment and there's a long way to get back into shape. Plus, there's no guarantee. It is in moments of doubt that my trust in God gets validated. This is when I say to Him: "Lord Jesus, today I'm having a worse day, I am not able to be thankful, I feel anger and doubts."

"But I give it to You. You take over!" There is this beautiful prayer

written by an Italian priest, God's servant Fr. Dolindo. I received it from a lady who fervently prays for me and often asks how the treatment is going and how I feel. This prayer is quite extensive, but it can be shortened to this one sentence: "Jesus, You take over!" Whatever happens in your life, for example if there is something you don't know how to deal with, or when you are faced with difficult choices, keep repeating: "Jesus, You take over!" I began to say this prayer and thanks to it I regained the peace of heart that I was missing. There might come more difficult moments - they always do - but now I feel that Jesus is really taking care of my problems, He often intervenes, although not always the way I would have expected.

As you can see, this is not some spectacular story; no sensational miracle has happened (yet) in my life that could be described in the newspapers. Sometimes I read stories of miraculous healings and I even bargained with the Lord Jesus more than once: "Maybe we could do without this chemo? Maybe it could be done faster? Maybe if I go for the tests tomorrow, they will turn out miraculously good and that I won't need any further treatment, I won't have to go through all this anymore?" Everyone would like to experience a tangible miracle in their lives. One that is indisputable. But the key is to have faith. And that's what my story is about. It is about the way of the cross and the way to trust God. I know that if it is necessary and good for me, a miracle will happen. However, my faith and my relationship with Jesus is not dependent on it. I see little miracles, things that others might call coincidences or accidents. They happen every day but we also can initiate them because God works through people. He reveals Himself through our hands, feet and mouth.

I don't know what else awaits me in this life, but I know that whatever it is, I can always say: "Jesus, You take over!" And He will. Praise the Lord!

Sebastian ■

Overt and Covert Totalitarianism (Part 1)

French revolutionaries bore out yet again the rule known from history that **those who talk a lot about the “separation of Church and State” actually want to decide all the crucial matters of the Church.**

Grzegorz Kucharczyk

The First Step to Totalitarianism - Denial of the Truth

In the encyclical *Centesimus Annus* (1991), St. John Paul II wrote: “As history demonstrates, a democracy without values easily turns into open or thinly disguised totalitarianism.” (*Centesimus Annus*, 46) What are these values? They stem from a fundamental human right, which is the right to follow the truth. In the same encyclical the Pope expounded: “No authentic progress is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and to live according to that truth. The exercise and development of this right includes the right to discover and freely



Peasant Carrying a Priest and a Nobleman, political satire, 1789

to accept Jesus Christ, who is man's true good.” (*Centesimus Annus*, 29)

Hence, the deepest root of evil, which is called totalitarianism in history, is the rejection of the Truth. This “denial of all foundations and the negation of all objective truth,” St. John Paul II called a “nihilist interpretation” in the encyclical *Fides et Ratio* (1998). This interpretation,

being a “destructive critique of every certitude ... has been justified in a sense by the terrible experience of evil which has marked our age.” (*Fides et Ratio*, 91) In this way the Pope referred to 20th-century totalitarian regimes (especially Communism and German Nazism).

Nihilism bears not only on intellectual cognition (especially in such

“No authentic progress is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and to live according to that truth” (St. John Paul II)

fields as philosophy and theology). It brings also its horrible consequences for society because it is “a denial of the humanity and of the very identity of the human being.” (*Fides et Ratio*, 90) The hallmark of the latter is human freedom, whose roots lie in seeing man as having his own dignity as a child of God, redeemed with the blood of God’s Son. “Christ has set us free in order that we should remain free,” the Scriptures remind us. (Galatians 5:1) However – as St. John Paul II argued, “Once the truth is denied to human beings, it is pure illusion to try to set them free. Truth and freedom either go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery.” (*Fides et Ratio*, 90)

The Second Step – We Can Get Saved on Our Own

The rejection of the Savior means that the need to be redeemed is rejected as well. This, in turn, entails another lie, taking the form of the conviction that man can create an earthly paradise. St. John Paul II explains about the sliding into a totalitarian reality in *Centesimus Annus* in the following words: “Man, who was created for freedom, bears within himself the wound of original sin, which constantly draws him towards evil When people think they possess the secret of a perfect social organization, which makes evil impossible, they also think that they can use any means, including violence and deceit, in order to bring that organization into being. Politics then becomes a ‘secular religion’ which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world. But no political society – which possesses its own autonomy and laws – can ever be confused with the Kingdom of God.” (*Centesimus Annus*, 25, 1991)



Storming of the Bastille (Anonymous), showing the capture of the Bastille and the arrest of the governor, Mr. De Launay, from July 14, 1789

The deepest root of evil, which is called totalitarianism in history, is the rejection of the Truth

One of the greatest gains to civilization that Christianity gave to Europe was the fact that – as St. John Paul II underscored in the European Parliament in Strasbourg in 1988 – “after Christ, it is no longer possible to idolize society as a collective greatness that devours the human person and his inalienable destiny. Society, the State, and political power belong to the changing and always perfectible frameworks of this world. No plan of society will ever be able to establish the Kingdom of God, that is, eschatological perfection, on this earth The structures that societies set up for themselves never have a definitive value; they are unable to seek for themselves all the goods to which man aspires. In particular, they cannot be a substitute for human conscience or for the search for truth and the absolute.”

The Third Step – Self-Attribution of Powers of Creation

The denial of this truth by rejecting Christ, and the Church he founded, leads – as St. John Paul II wrote in *Memory and Identity* – to yielding to a “demiurgic temptation”, or the setting in of the conviction that man not only is the creator (demiurge) of social reality, but also takes on the role of the Creator – he is the Lord of life and death, determining what is good and what is evil. For the first time this way of thinking captivated a considerable portion of European intellectual elites in the 18th century, in the Age of Enlightenment. As written in *Memory and Identity*, “rejecting Christ, in particular his paschal mystery – the cross and resurrection ... they objected to what Europe had become as a result of evangelization.”

The repudiation by Enlightenment mentality of “this great drama of salvation,” St. John Paul II continued in *Memory and Identity*, “there are those who believe that man is alone: alone as the creator of their own

history and civilization; alone as the one who decides what is good and evil Since man alone, without God, may decide what is good and evil, they may also decide that a certain group of people should be annihilated."

St. John Paul II described thus the major steps leading from the repudiation of God (often under such lofty slogans as "struggle to liberate human reason" or "struggle to liberate men from the shackles of fanaticism and intolerance") to totalitarianism, which is quick to justify the genocidal extermination of those who are "enemies of freedom".

French Revolution, or "Totalitarian Democracy"

"It is within our power to create the world anew," a Jacobin deputy, representing the most radical wing of the revolutionary faction, pronounced in the parliament of revolutionary France. These words can be considered an illustration of what St. John Paul II wrote in the context of the demiurgic temptation and its horrible consequences. They follow from the denial of the truth that the only road for man to achieve the Kingdom of God is the acceptance of the paschal mystery - the passion, death and resurrection of the one and only Redeemer of mankind.

Several decades ago, an Israeli historian, Jacob Talmon, published a book on the history of the French Revolution, under the interesting title *The Origins of Totalitarian Democracy*. It stressed the ambitions of the revolutionaries to completely change the reality around them. Their aim was not only to create a "new France" and "new Frenchmen", but also it was seen as only the beginning of a long process towards the creation of a "new man".

What was to happen, however, to those who would not submit to the plan of creating a "new France" and "new Frenchmen" and would not submit to the "rule of virtue" announced by the Jacobin dictator Maximilien de Robespierre? For them, "citizen guillotine" awaited. The very source of revolutionary terror was the totalitarian temptation to "begin the world anew." Louis de Saint-Just,

"Truth and freedom either go together hand in hand or together they perish in misery" (St. John Paul II)

Robespierre's right-hand man and the author of the sinister maxim that "there is no freedom for the enemies of freedom," stressed at the same time that the republic proclaimed in 1792 was to be something more than merely a political system of government without a king. Indeed, it was to be a "zealous community" or a *sui-generis* para-Church. This way of thinking - as the contemporary French historian R. Secher observes - assumed that a man could not rebel against the republic and that "non-humans may not own any property or territory."

The first to be excluded from the republican "zealous community" of "new Frenchmen" were those who seriously believed in Christ and accepted the truth about his (and not the man-made republic's) redemptive work. The Christophobia of the French Revolution was not an accident or a product of radicals who, fighting against Christ and the Church he founded, betrayed the lofty humanistic ideals of the French Revolution. On the contrary, the Christophobia lay at the very core of the revolutionary project. It was a *sine qua non* of the success of the plan to overhaul France globally. First, it was necessary to obliterate her Christian visage, her Christian (Catholic) cultural identity, so that she would the more easily accept a new "redeemer", which was a republican "zealous community" founded on a new secular religion (i.e. revolutionary ideology).

The first to be excluded from the republican "zealous community" of "new Frenchmen" were those who were fervent believers in Christ

Total Dechristianization

Already in 1789, revolutionaries - as did all earlier and later enemies of the Church - decreed the confiscation of property and land owned by the Church. Such lands, donated or left in wills to the Church by rulers or private individuals had provided for many centuries for the poor or others who were in need of assistance. When there was no universal health-care system or one providing for the retirees or elderly, at hospices ran by monasteries (such hospices served then as both hospitals and shelters) many poor people found food and shelter. This was possible because the Church owned real estate (including fields where food, subsequently distributed, was grown).

The real estate not only made aid to the poor possible, but also was a material guarantee of the Church's independence from the State. Owing to it, the clergy did not have to draw a salary from the State but had independent livings. This can hardly be overestimated, if only for purely pastoral reasons. This independence, however, was a thorn in the flesh of the revolutionary promoters of "new France". In 1789, they voted the confiscation of Church property into law. The move meant that the poor of France did not benefit at all, as historians found out already a long ago. Instead, the confiscated Church property was to be used to secure paper currency issued by the revolutionary State.

In reality, however - as is always the case with the confiscation of Church property (the same thing happened in the period of the Protestant Reformation) - the property was redistributed. In other words, the State, to raise new revenue when faced with a fall in the value of the paper currency, sold the confiscated lands to new purchasers. They were dominated by people who had been rich already before the Revolution (burghers and some noblemen who came down on the side of the Revolution). There were also others who made themselves rich in this way during the Revolution. Adopted in 1789 by the revolutionary Parliament, *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* proclaimed the inviolability of ownership. The manner in which



Photo: wikimedia commons / public domain

Church property was treated, which had been a source of aid to the poor, showed what such lofty declarations were actually worth.

Simultaneously, the exalted slogan “Liberty, Equality, Brotherhood” was chanted. Shortly after voting for the looting of Church property into law, still in 1789, the revolutionary Parliament adopted a law banning religious vows in France. The purpose of the law was to get rid of monastic life from the country. The architects of “new France” knew very well that religious orders had always been a sign of spiritual vitality of the Church. Those French women and French men, who of their own will, guided by their calling, intended to join one of the many religious congregations active in their country prior to the Revolution, were deprived by the law of the liberty to live their lives as they chose. Liberty was fine, but it was the revolutionary State that “knew better” what would serve the citizen best.

The ban on religious vows was a preliminary to further restrictions. In February 1790, the revolutionary National Assembly decreed the dissolution of all religious orders in France and on August 15, 1791 (it was not an accident that the day of a great Church

Liberty was fine, but it was the revolutionary State that “knew better” what would serve the citizen best...

holiday was chosen for this purpose) priests were forbidden to wear cassocks in public.

What the “Separation of Church and State” Meant

In July 1790, the revolutionary Parliament enacted the so-called *Civil Constitution of the Clergy*. Edmund Burke, an Anglican, observing developments in revolutionary France, wrote: “This new ecclesiastical establishment is intended only to be temporary and preparatory to the utter abolition, under any of its forms, of the Christian religion, whenever the minds of men are prepared for this last stroke against it, by the accomplishment of the plan for bringing its ministers into universal contempt. They who will not believe that the philosophical fanatics who guide in these matters have long entertained such a design are utterly ignorant of their character and proceedings.”

The author of the *Reflections on the Revolution in France* made no mistake. The *Civil Constitution of the Clergy* was a declaration of war by the revolutionary State on the Catholic Church in France and heralded a successive wave of persecutions. This legislation was in reality an attempt to set up a schismatic church in opposition to Rome because under it the pope was deprived of his prerogative, as the visible head of the Church, to appoint bishops. From that time on, bishoprics were filled by popular *département*-wide elections (in which everyone could take part regardless of whether they were believers or not). The boundaries of dioceses were changed to coincide with those of the new administrative subdivisions of France.

Thus, French revolutionaries yet again bore out the rule known from history that those who talk a lot about the “separation of Church and State” actually want to decide all the most important matters of the Church – from diocesan boundaries to appointments to the highest Church offices.



Photo: YouTube / 40 Days for Life

Anthony Levatino, scene from the film *Unplanned*

After the Death of His Daughter, He Stopped Performing Abortions

Performing abortions was quite profitable for Anthony Levatino. The doctor was convinced that he was supporting women in their right to their freedom of choice. It was only a personal tragedy that made him realize the reality of what abortion is.

Małgorzata Sołtyk

Anthony Levatino, an obstetrician-gynecologist, performed around 1,200 abortions, of which approximately 100 were “late term” abortions in the second trimester (up to 24 weeks). Not only was he satisfied with this job financially, but he was also convinced that he was helping women exercise their right to choose. There were no signs that anything in his life would cause him

to reconsider his values in regard to his medical practice.

The Death of a Child

It was Saturday. The Levatinos were enjoying a quiet summer afternoon. Their six-year-old daughter Heather was playing outside. Then a terrible accident happened: the girl ran into a passing car! Anthony immediately

dashed out to the child and began to try to revive her. An ambulance was also called, but all attempts to save the girl proved unsuccessful. The loss of their daughter was a terrible blow for the Levatinos, which left a permanent wound in their hearts. However, the doctor never dreamt how much his life would change after this tragedy. In the story below, he describes the groundbreaking events as they happened.

Anthony realized that the size of the baby did not matter. Both in the cases of larger, more developed babies and in relation to an extremely small one, he came to realize that abortion is the same evil

"During these nine years, I have saved hundreds of women whose pregnancies were lifethreatening Over the years, the number of children I had to kill deliberately has been zero"
(A. Levatino)

"What do you do after such a catastrophe? You take a few weeks off and then you go back to your regular life. I showed up in OR 9 at Albany Medical Center, as I had hundreds of times before, to perform a 'late' abortion. It was nothing special for me. I had other problems on my mind. It was just routine for me, part of my job. There is a surgical tool [used in abortion - ed.] called Sopher Ovum Forceps They are inserted into the womb to tear off an arm or leg. I've done this more than a hundred times. It was routine. But after I had removed it, I was literally staring at that limb in the tongs. Performing this kind of abortion, you have to carefully arrange the baby's parts on the table and - gruesome as it is, but absolutely true - you have to 'put the baby back together' to make sure that nothing is missing, that you have two arms, two legs, and all the other parts. If you don't, your patient will come back with an infection, bleeding, or dead.

So I finished this abortion. I know it sounds weird, but after all these years, after 1,200 abortions, after over 100 'late term' abortions, I really **looked at this pile of body parts lying on the table and, for the first time in my life, I didn't see the supposed 'woman's absolute right to choose' or that I was a wonderful doctor to help a woman deal with a 'problem'. I didn't even see the \$800 I made in 15 minutes. I only saw somebody's son or daughter!** Suddenly it hit me! I had just buried my own daughter, and here someone came to me, offering money in order to kill her son or daughter, and I agreed to do it."



Photo: YouTube / Unplanned Movie

Cecelia Levatino with daughter Heather

"I had just buried my own daughter, and here someone came to me, offering money in order to kill her son or daughter, and I agreed to do it"
(A. Levatino)

Dr. Levatino was convinced that these new thoughts and the shock would pass, but they did not. Soon the doctor stopped performing "late term" abortions. Then he realized that the size of the baby did not matter. Both in the cases of a larger, more developed babies and in relation to an extremely small one, he came to realize that abortion is the same evil. Thus, in 1985, Anthony Levatino stopped performing abortions completely.

The First Doubts

The first objections to the legitimacy of abortion arose in Levatino even before his daughter Heather's tragic death, and more precisely in connection with the circumstances in which the girl entered the life of the Levatinos' family. This was at a time when they wanted to have a child. They

learned they had fertility problems. A specialist diagnosed that they had no chance of conceiving naturally. So they decided to adopt. More adversities developed. It turned out that there were very few children available for adoption. It was then that Dr. Levatino doubted for the first time the legitimacy of abortion. Exactly at the time of disposing of the so-called "medical waste" after performing an abortion, he thought, "My God, I'm throwing this baby in the garbage. Here I am trying to adopt a child, and at the same time I throw such children into the trash. It's people like me that make it so difficult to adopt in the first place." The doctor saw an amazing paradox. **How many children's lives have abortionists taken? And yet there are married couples - such as himself and his wife - who want to accept and love the child. Many children are denied a chance to live, and at the same time there are many people who suffer from infertility, but who wish to experience parenthood and have a child to love, but who are deprived of hope.**

These first doubts did not, however, persuade the doctor to abandon the practice of abortion. Instead, they provoked him to spread the word among his colleagues from the medical staff that he and his wife ►



Cecelia and Anthony, who are involved in the defense of life, share their testimonies

were looking for a child for adoption. Finally, one of the nurses informed them that there was a 15-year-old girl who was under the care of her parents who had come to give birth, and who wanted to put her child up for adoption. Thus, after making so many efforts, the Levatinos became Heather's parents. A month later it became known that Mrs. Levatino was pregnant herself, and she soon gave birth to a son. The doctor and his wife opened their hearts to parental love and were graced more generously than they expected.

Adopt an Abortionist

Not only in the area of family life was Levatino involved in events that touched his conscience concerning abortion. It happened that one day a pregnant woman came to his office for a follow-up visit. After a routine examination, she asked if she could speak with him a little bit longer. The doctor agreed, not expecting anything special. The woman announced that she had a message for him. It was as follows: **"Jesus loves you and cares for you. He doesn't want you to continue performing abortions. Please stop!"** Levatino thought he needed to get this nut case out of his office as soon as possible. He did so too. A year later, the same woman

"We hear all the time that abortions, and especially 'late term' abortions, are necessary to save women's lives. Nothing could be further from the truth. I worked nine years in a hospital dealing with high-risk pregnancies. During these nine years, I have saved hundreds of women whose pregnancies were life-threatening"
(A. Levatino)

came back for a checkup and the whole thing happened again. At the end of the visit, the patient gave the doctor a message that reminded him of the event of the prior year. He also realized that in the last 12 months he had received several postcards at work with the same message. Later, Levatino found out that the woman was active in the pro-life movement; she participated in prayers for the conversion of those working in the abortion industry, and what she did - contacting him as a patient and relaying messages to him - was called "adopting an abortionist".

Abortion is a grave sin, but God's love is greater. God does not cancel anyone, He always offers a chance for anyone to change his life

At first, Levatino thought the pro-lifers were crazy, but their presence, largely based on silent prayer, could not be ignored. Through people and events, God moved the doctor's conscience. Over time, Levatino became convinced of what kind of people the defenders of life really are. He met many of them personally and finally joined the pro-life movement himself. Drawing on his own experience, to this day he appeals to people, especially women who defend life, not to avoid contact with doctors who perform abortions. Levatino argues: "If you want someone to change their mind, you must first develop some kind of relationship with them in order to start a dialogue. This woman was very clever. She became my patient. Believe me, doctors listen to their patients."

Activities in Defense of Life

Using the knowledge and experience he acquired, Dr. Levatino now takes part in many pro-life activities. He narrates videos on the Internet in which he explains abortion in the first, second, and third trimesters of pregnancy from the medical point of view. He debunks pro-abortion myths by showing reality. **Abortion is not a humane end to a child's life, or any kind of act of mercy when a child is killed by an injection of poison or torn to pieces.**

Another frequently raised argument in favor of abortion presents it as a necessity when pregnancy endangers a woman's life. Dr. Levatino, denies it. He worked for nine years in a center for women whose pregnancies threatened their mothers' lives. He also emphasizes that saving a woman's life in the event of termination of an ectopic pregnancy is not an abortion. The doctor testifies: "We hear all the time that abortions, and especially 'late term' abortions, are necessary to save women's lives. Nothing could be

Prayer for the Healing of the Effects of (or the Participation in) Abortion

Thank You, God, for forgiving me for the sin of killing my child (participation in the killing of a child). I ask You to heal me of all the effects of the abortion of the child whom You have loved for eternity. Take away from me the mental, physical, and spiritual weight of this sin. I surrender up to You my inner turmoil, confused thoughts, regrets, pessimism, and depression. Free me from fear, anxiety, sadness, and despair. Take away from me the emotional unrest and heal me of my brokenness and inner emptiness. Release me from the pressure and difficulty of forgiving myself of this sin. Purify my conscience and clear it of the constant self-condemnation and blame despite having been forgiven in confession. Help me to accept Your Divine forgiveness. Let me understand that in Holy Confession You have washed away my sins with Your blood, and that You have taken them from me. You, oh Jesus, have cleared me of my debts. Let me love my child and I look forward to being reunited with him in heaven. What name do You want to give him? Dear Lord, please tell (the name of my child) that I am most deeply sorry and that I ask for forgiveness. In return, I commit to the spiritual adoption of an unborn child and to give glory and praise to You, my God, for Your mercy and for the miracle of Your infinite love. Amen.

further from the truth. I worked nine years in a hospital dealing with high-risk pregnancies I have seen hundreds of cases of serious pregnancy complications: various types of cancer, heart disease, incurable diabetes, pregnancy toxemia [manifested by high blood pressure and damage to various internal organs - ed]. During these nine years, I have saved hundreds of women whose pregnancies were life-threatening. I did this by getting these women to give birth, ending



Dr. Levatino, testifying in the hearing against Planned Parenthood, who were charged with selling the organs of aborted babies for medical research. Here he is seen showing how the baby's skull is secured with the use of a clamp

their pregnancies with labor - whether by induction, or by natural delivery, or by caesarean section Over the years, the number of children I had to kill deliberately has been zero Did all these children survive? After all they were premature. No, but I gave all of them a chance. Most survived."

These facts, together with the testimony of his own life, Dr. Levatino has not only presented in various media, but has also testified to under oath as a witness before the Judiciary Committee of the US House of Representatives in Washington.

To Save Abortion Victims

Presenting the difficult truth about abortion is a call to protect children's lives, to save people burdened with the sin of abortion, and to stop the great evil of abortion. To make this voice heard in the media, Dr. Levatino starred in the film *Unplanned*, which tells the story of Abby Johnson, who was the director of a Planned Parenthood clinic and became a pro-life activist. There are many similar stories of people who left the abortion industry and became pro-lifers. To help ex-abortion workers materially and spiritually, Abby Johnson founded the *And There Was Nobody Left Foundation*. Its action bears concrete fruit in the pro-life movement.

For not only children are victims of abortion, so are all those who contributed to the abortion. Praying for these people is the foundation of the work of defending life

For not only children are victims of abortion, so are all those who contributed to the abortion. Praying for these people is the foundation of the work of defending life. Abortion is a grave sin, but God's love is greater. God does not cancel anyone, He always offers a chance for anyone to change his life. The testimonies of former abortionists show that acting to defend life is, above all, a spiritual fight that must be constantly undertaken.

Sources:

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Contraception – the Other Side of the Coin

“Emancipated, aware of her body, the modern woman.” Producers of hormonal contraception sell this narrative to their customers. It is a pity that leaflets accompanying these popular medical products often lack information that is most interesting to women: how do they actually work?



Photo: Pixelobox / Dreamstime.com

Magdalena Guziak-Nowak

It is 1960. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration puts contraceptive pills on the market. Margaret Sanger, the founder of the abortion giant Planned Parenthood known for her eugenic views, believed to be the mother of the pill, drinks champagne. Does she know what would be later proven by dozens of studies that the unreliability of contraception is one of the most common causes of abortion?

The birth control pill, popularly known as the contraceptive pill, has reorganized the world by excluding the child from it. Aristotle said: a woman is the human being whose child is conceived inside its body while a man is the one whose child is conceived outside its body. Womanhood and manhood have been defined in terms of the child for centuries. Owing to the contraceptive

pill, not only was it possible to separate sex and childbearing, but also the gender division became less comprehensible.

Sixty-one years since hormonal contraceptives were first marketed, the public should be well-informed about them. Instead, they are surrounded by many myths convenient to pharmaceutical companies,

From the physiological state of fertility (it is a sign of good health!) they bring a patient into the pathological state of infertility and, on top of that, cause many side effects

with most misinformation concerning the question: What actually is the so-called pill?

Is it Actually Contraceptive?

Most likely, the pill of the 1960s and 1970s had a contraceptive effect, that is, it prevented conception. The large dose of hormones it contained effectively stopped ovulation and blocked the release of an egg cell ready for fertilization. However, the pill had many side effects. For this reason, producers of contraceptives lowered the hormone content in pills to make them more 'friendly' to female bodies. As a result, oral contraceptives available on the market today not always have only a contraceptive effect. What does this mean? Admittedly, they can block ovulation and change cervical mucus to make it impermeable

All hormonal contraceptives (two-component oral pills, progestogen mini pills, injections or patches) have a potential early-abortion effect

to sperm. An egg cell does not meet a sperm and they do not join each other. What we see is thus a contraceptive effect; a contraceptive operates the way its name suggests.

A hormonal contraceptive may have however, a contra-implantation effect because it happens that it does not block ovulation. In such a case, an egg cell joins sperm, bringing about a new human being, but an embryo (or a human being in its earliest stage of development) cannot implant in the uterus because artificial hormones have changed it to make it “unfriendly” for implantation. Hence, hormonal contraceptives may have an early-abortion effect, resulting in the death of the child after it has lived for about two weeks. It is hard to measure precisely in how many patients this effect will take place. Research shows that ovulations during the use of oral contraceptives occur in a group of several to even 30 percent of women. In some of the women who have unprotected sex, conceptions do occur. Moreover, younger women in their early twenties tend to have ovulation more often despite the use of contraceptives. It is also a known fact that early on in the use of contraceptives, when the body undergoes hormonal shock, they are more effective in blocking ovulation. Later on, however, the human body may develop “resistance” to hormones and despite their constant use, ovulation may occur more frequently. Theoretically, in one woman, a contraceptive may not have an early-abortion effect even once in a year, while in another – for instance three times. No clinical research has been done into this question yet and none is to be expected. Contraceptive producers conduct studies that last only six months although real-life practice

shows that “supplementation” with oral hormonal contraceptives often continues for many years.

Pregnancy or No Pregnancy?

One has to be aware that all hormonal contraceptives (two-component oral pills, progestogen mini pills, injections or patches) have a potential early-abortion effect. The last-mentioned term is surrounded with considerable but intended confusion. The definition of abortion in the *Wielki słownik medyczny PAN* (*The Great Medical Dictionary of the Polish Academy of Sciences*) says “abortion is an expulsion of an ovarian follicle before the 16th week of gestation.” In other words, it is the death of a child, at any time between the moment of its conception to the 16th week of pregnancy. Importantly, pregnancy is the state of a woman from the

moment of the conception of a child. Meanwhile, in 1965, the WHO and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists changed the definition of pregnancy. Now, it supposedly begins with the successful implantation of an embryo. For this reason, medications bringing about the death of a human embryo, which has not implanted in the uterus yet, are called “pregnancy-preventive” or “contraceptive” in spite of the fact that in reality they cause an abortion. Alas, in the case of many products, leaflets for patients do not provide this information; it can be found only in publications for doctors and pharmacists.

The Birth Control Pill

Many newspapers and Internet portals have accepted the new definition of pregnancy published by ►



Photo: Photroller / Dreamstime.com / LOA archives

the WHO. However, this definition is wrong because human life, obviously, does not begin after a completed implantation but with fertilization. Therefore, the legitimate question arises whether the term “contraceptive” is right. In English, we also have the term “birth control pill” (BCP). Indeed, we are not able to “control” conceptions because they do occur. We can only “control” births. In Polish, there is no equivalent for the BCP. Let’s use the term “contraceptives”, keeping in mind the above discussion, and purposefully give up using the terms “pill” or “medication” that suggest a medicinal character of these substances as contraceptives do not cure anything, do they? On the contrary, from the physiological state of fertility (it is a sign of good health!) they bring a patient into the pathological state of infertility and, on top of that, cause many side effects.

Side Effects

I have the impression that everybody has heard something about undesirable effects: that you can put on weight, that headaches are more frequent and more severe. For false comfort, it is better to suppress this knowledge. When a woman receives precise information, a fear of change comes over her: if not hormones then what? In addition, a sense of guilt may appear related to the potential early-abortion effect; after all no woman wants a child to die. If you ever happen to talk to a person about this subject, you need a lot of sensitivity and kindness. The truth is a key but it must not be wielded as a weapon. It can be given with love, but it can also be thrown at somebody, leaving the person dead.

It is true, for instance, that about 50 percent of women give up using the two-component pill due to various complications before a year lapses. Patients complain of headaches, nausea, changing moods, breast tenderness, bleeding from the reproductive organs and reduced libido. The last-mentioned condition is a kind of paradox: we reach for contraception to have sex more often (seemingly) without consequences, while the desire for it simply wanes. Moreover, hormonal contraception raises

Hormonal contraception increases the risk of extrauterine pregnancy – the child implants not in the uterus but in a fallopian tube in most cases and perishes because it cannot be saved

the risk of thrombosis, which may be fatal if dislodgement of the clot results in pulmonary embolism. Other blood circulation complications include a higher risk of cardiac arrest and cerebral stroke. Several years ago, the media reported the story of a 26-year-old British woman who had suffered a stroke due to the use of contraception. Hence, it is unreasonable to believe that such conditions affect only older women. In addition, hormonal contraceptives make women more susceptible to cancer. The most aggressive and resistant to treatment subtype of breast cancer is related to the birth control pill (many studies confirm that hormones are particularly dangerous to young girls). Women using contraception more often fall sick with cervical, hepatic, cutaneous or colonic carcinoma. Please keep in mind that this is not a full list of undesirable effects. What is the reason behind these? The fact is that contraceptives strongly interfere with the delicate hormonal balance in a woman. What is more, if a woman is already prone to a given disease for some other reason, the addition of another factor (contraception in this case) may greatly increase the risk of her falling sick.

However, as any change of a mindset and lifestyle seems difficult, it is easier sometimes to shrug your shoulders and say: “Even Advil for headaches has side effects, doesn’t it?” Granted, but I do not know anybody who would take it daily over several years.

Impact on Fertility

What may happen when we finally come off of contraception and want to invite a child to our life? It was several years ago. My husband and I shared our knowledge with retreat participants, members of a Home

Church community. After the lecture, a lady approached us and told us a story that happened in the family of a friend of hers. The friend, considering herself an open, modern and emancipated woman, took her 17-year-old daughter to a gynecologist and had him prescribe her hormonal contraception. The girl did not intend to have sex, but her mother believed that she would be better off with contraception “just in case”. After all, the daughter could decide any time to have her “first time”. The young girl started taking hormonal contraceptives and continued without a break for about seven years. Then she married, but did not want to become a mother so she continued to use hormonal contraception. After a year, she came off it because with her husband she decided that they were “ready for a child”. But a child would not appear. Months were passing, but a pregnancy test stubbornly showed one line.... The young woman, about 25 years old at that time, went to see a doctor. After a series of tests and thorough examinations, it transpired that she would never get pregnant as she had already gone through menopause. This means that the last ovulation and menstruation in her life had already occurred! The hormonal contraceptives she had taken for many years ravaged her young body. The processes, which usually take place between the ages of 45 and 55 in a properly functioning woman, were already behind her. Drama, tears and hatred towards the mother followed, who bought her the first packet of contraceptives almost a decade earlier.

It is difficult to prove a direct connection between hormonal contraception and female fertility. Pharmaceutical companies, which earn a lot of money on the pills, are not interested in doing such research – because what for? Pro-life organizations, in turn, cannot carry out such research due to ethical reasons. It would be obviously unethical to propose to somebody: “You will use hormonal contraception for several years and then we will find out if this has lowered your fertility.”

It can be proven with complete certainty, however, that artificial hormones have an indirect impact



Photo: Photobyjollita / Dreamstime.com

on the lowering of the probability of pregnancy in a woman who stops using contraception.

First, women who use hormonal contraception statistically decide to have a baby later. Increasingly, women give birth to their first child when they are 30 or 35 years old and the peak of fertility, occurring when a woman is 20–24 years old, is long gone. Be under no illusion – after 30, when fertility lowers for natural reasons, it is harder to conceive a child than when you are 20 or 25 years old.

Second, research shows that women who use oral hormonal contraception are at a greater risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease such as gonorrhea or genital herpes. Particularly dangerous, Chlamydia infections may cause tubal obliteration if they reoccur.

Third, the common use of the pill impairs the fertility of men. How is

The birth control pill, popularly known as the contraceptive pill, has reorganized the world by excluding the child from it

this possible? It turns out that hormones contained in oral contraceptives may cause estrinization of the environment, or its contamination with a higher level of estrogenic substances. This is reflected in a higher incidence of prostate cancer in men. Unfortunately, nothing is lost in nature.

If conception does occur, hormonal contraception increases the risk of extrauterine pregnancy – the child implants not in the uterus but in a fallopian tube in most cases and perishes because it cannot be saved. Another complication

involves a three-times-higher risk of bearing a child with a very low birth weight. What is even worse, study results published in 2002 (*Cancer Causes and Control* 2002, Vol. 13) showed that the use of oral contraceptives by the mother, before she knew that she was pregnant and came off them, increased a risk of acute lymphoblastic leukemia in children, especially small ones. Researchers suggest that exposure to a large dose of hormones early in the prenatal period may be related to an increased risk of this disease.

Thus, contraception harms not only women, but also men and children at the earliest stage of development. How much longer will we believe that hormonal contraception is simply a wonderful pill taking away unwanted fertility?





The Sanctity of the Sacrament of Marriage

At the moment the Sacrament of Matrimony is finalized, Jesus Christ – with his Divine power – unites a man and a woman **“and they become one flesh.”** (Genesis 2:24)

Marital problems and the tragedy of divorce happen when couples do not build their relationship with Jesus and Mary through prayer. When they live in a state of sin, they are willingly giving in to the influence of the powers of evil.

The Lord Jesus says clearly of the indissolubility of a valid marriage: **“What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”** (Mark 10:9) A valid marriage is indissoluble and that is why there is no divorce in the Catholic Church. The constant

presence of Jesus in the sacramental unity of the married couple is the only source of their love. Spouses should always keep this in mind and should be constant in their union with God through daily prayer and the availing of the Sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist.

A necessary condition for love is a pure heart, for it is only then that it can be completely filled with God’s love



Photo: Wavebreakmedia Ltd / Dreamstime.com

What Can Be Done to Overcome Marital Crisis?

First is to radically cut oneself off from all sin and to unite with God in the sacrament of penance. One must plan one's day so as to have time for prayer, work, and rest. The only cure for any and all crises and conflicts is the love of Jesus. This is why problems must be presented to Jesus through Mary. It is very important to pray the rosary (with the family if possible) and read the Holy Bible every day and, as often as possible, attend Holy Mass and go for adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. This is the only way that we can let Jesus take control over our marital problems so that the love and bond in the marriage and in the family can be restored.

Satan attacks the sacrament of marriage and the family with hatred and intensity. In this fight he uses neo-Marxist LGBT and gender ideologies. Marx wrote: **"When the earthly**

The MPHM Prayer of Entrustment

Lord Jesus, we thank you for loving us "to the end" – to the point of offering up your life for us. We thank you for your love that keeps us from evil, raises us up from our greatest sins and heals our most hurtful wounds. We thank you for your presence in the sacrament of matrimony. In you, we can always find the remedy for every evil and the strength to prevail over every hardship and crisis. We offer you our memories, our minds, our wills, our souls, our bodies and our sexuality. Lord Jesus, teach us to love each other and our children with that love which flows from Your Merciful Heart. Grant us a pure heart modelled on yours, that together we may perfect a love that is wise, generous, faithful and free from self-interest, a love that steadfastly upholds your laws and commandments.

We pledge to meet you every day in joint prayer and the reading of Holy Scripture, in the frequent reception of Holy Communion, and in adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. We resolve to make a regular sacramental confession and pick ourselves up promptly from every sin.

We resolve not to buy, read or look at pornographic materials in the form of magazines, television programmes or films. We renounce the use of contraceptives and the contraceptive mentality itself. We pledge always to be ready to accept and raise in your love every child you may wish to call into existence.

Lord Jesus, be master of our hearts. Teach us to control our sexual desires and feelings, that our love for each other and our children may not be subject to our moods and emotional states. Rather, may our love be a continual expression of our care and solicitude for each other. Grant us the gift of pure spousal love, that we may give of ourselves generously. Cleanse our love of all selfishness, that we may always forgive and pray for each other without nursing grudges. Help us to avoid everything that ensnares and enslaves, including narcotics and other addictive substances.

Mary, our Mother, guide us on our journey of faith. Lead us to the very Source of Love – to Jesus, that we may trust and believe in Him alone. After the example of St John Paul II, we entrust ourselves to you: Totus Tuus, Mary! To your Immaculate Heart we confide ourselves totally, all that we are, every step that we take and every minute of our lives. Amen!

The anticonception mentality (the use of birth control) perverts the sanctity of marital intimacy as it destroys the Divine gift of procreation and is an expression of rebellion against God's plan

family is discovered as the secret of the holy family, the former must itself be theoretically and practically destroyed." Gender ideology promotes teaching preschool children how to masturbate. It encourages the use of anti-conception and the killing of unborn children. Its proponents demand the legalization of homosexual marriage and the adoption of children by homosexual couples. They reject the Ten Commandments and Christian morality, and they aim for the destruction of marriage, of the family, and of the Catholic Church. They atheize through demoralization. Their task is to "liberate" people from all Christian ethical norms. In this way they can bring forth the civilization of death, which is characterized by the cult of hedonism, complete egoism, and turning man into a base, sexual animal. Having become aware of these dangers, we must bravely stand up to the wave of demoralization and neo-Marxist indoctrination. We must defend our freedom against neo-Marxist totalitarianism.

A Holy Sign of the Sacrament of Matrimony

Married couples should always remember that their most intimate marital act is a holy sign of the sacrament of marriage. It makes real the power of life-giving love and renews the marriage covenant, in which God may create new life. Just as we cannot receive Holy Communion in a state of sin, couples should also not have intercourse if they are not in a state of sanctifying grace. **"Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled."** (Hebrews 13:4) A necessary condition for love is a pure heart, for it is only ►

then that it can be completely filled with God's love. Sex between the married couple must be an expression of pure, selfless love, allowing them to participate in the life and love of God. It is then that their intimacy becomes a source of mutual sanctification.

About Anticonception and the Defense of Life

The anticonception mentality (the use of birth control) perverts the sanctity of marital intimacy as it destroys the Divine gift of procreation and is an expression of rebellion against God's plan, as well as a brutal intrusion into the ecology of the human body. **The use of birth control is contrary to the natural law and is a profanation of the marriage covenant**, negating the duty of the spouses to completely give themselves to each other.

In creating man in His own image and likeness, God ordered that man and the woman should be fertile and multiply. The unity of a man and a woman in marriage is a reflection of the perfect unity of God in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three Divine Persons give themselves completely to each other in selfless love. The Lord God wants the marital act to be an image of complete and selfless mutual giving of the self to the Divine Person. Thus, each instance of birth control is a perversion of the act, and is a mortal sin. What is more, Jesus Christ made marriage a reflection of the union of Christ with the Church. It is, therefore, clear that when couples willingly do not procreate through the use of birth control, their act of marital intimacy no longer reflects the perfect union of the Three Divine Persons, who give themselves to each other in complete and selfless love.

The Lord God reminds us through the Holy Bible that **children are a great gift and blessing, and that fertility is a mark of health and a cause for joyful thanksgiving to God**. However, fear of conception shows a lack of faith and trust in God. In the Bible, there are no blessings for couples that run away from the difficulties of parenthood and avoid having children. At the moment of

"Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin"
(Pius XI)

conception, God creates an immortal human soul and calls into being a new person, whom he wants to live in community with Him. Married couples should be aware that they are co-participants in the holy act of creation with the Lord God Himself.

When Jesus was conceived in Mary's womb, his body was 0.1-0.15 mm. in size and weighed about 0.004 mg. **It is a scientific fact that the life of each human being begins at the moment of conception**. Jesus also refers to these children who are still in their mother's womb in these words: "I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for Me." (Matthew 25:40) No one has the right to deprive these most innocent and helpless humans the right to life. They cannot, they must not, be killed! Abortion is one of the most monstrous of crimes.

The use of birth control pills, contraceptive patches and implants, and various hormonal postcoital contraception prevents the newly-conceived child from attaching itself to the uterus, leading to its death. IUDs (Intrauterine Devices) work in a similar way. These methods condemn the child to death, and the woman who uses them may not even be aware that she had been pregnant. It must be pointed out that all types of anticonception lead to ecological disaster in the human body and seriously damage the health of the woman, sometimes even leading eventually to her death (high blood pressure, weight gain, nausea, vaginal bleeding, and cancer of the

reproductive organs). Not everyone realizes that the process of artificial insemination leads to masses of "unviable fetuses", which simply means that many of the children who were conceived through artificial means are fated to die, as they are not able to attach to the woman's uterus. Even those who conduct in vitro fertilization admit that only about 5% of the children conceived are brought to term. The male sperm, which is used as part of this procedure, is obtained through masturbation, which the Church also condemns as a seriously sinful act. If a couple have a genuine reason for delaying the conception of a child the Church teaches that they can have recourse to the use of Natural Family Planning.

Pope Pius XI, in the encyclical *Casti Connubii* (1930) wrote: "Any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin." The Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith in the documents *Donum Vitae* (1987) and *Dignitas Personae* (2008) have strongly condemned the practice of in vitro fertilization, artificial insemination, and other similar methods of artificial conception.

St. John Paul II reminds us that, "In the Church's Magisterium ... contraception, direct sterilization, autoteroticism, pre-marital sexual relations, homosexual relations and artificial insemination were condemned as morally unacceptable." (*Veritatis Splendor*, 47, 1993) He also writes that, "It is therefore morally unacceptable to encourage, let alone impose, the use of methods such as contraception, sterilization and abortion in order to regulate births." (*Evangelium Vitae*, 91, 1995)

Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples

Spouses are to give each other a mutual love, whose only source is Christ. They will only have love in their hearts when they are in a state of sanctifying grace, when they find time for daily prayer and regularly go

to confession and receive Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The Lord Jesus, with His Mother Mary and St. Joseph, long to enable spouses to live in pure, selfless, and mutual love. This is why He wants to heal the human heart and free it from egoism and all sin. Thus, Jesus would like to invite all married couples to join the community of the Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples.

When and how can you join the community? At any time! First, you have to go to confession, and after receiving Jesus Christ in Holy Communion, give up yourself to Him completely by praying the *Prayer of Entrustment* of the Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples.

We ask you to inform us at the Editorial Board of your decision to join the Movement so that we can send you a special blessing and add your name to the *Book of Pure Hearts*. Pray the *Prayer of Entrustment* everyday, remember the duties contained in the prayer, and enact them in your life. And when temptations appear, turn immediately to Jesus and Mary for help. Remember: "God is faithful and will not let you be tried beyond your strength; but with the trial he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to bear it." (1 Corinthians 10: 13)

Work on building your character every day. Plan your day so as to find time for prayer, work, and rest. **The most important part of your day must be prayer. He who prays and receives and adores Jesus Christ in the Eucharist has love in his heart.** In keeping true to the obligations contained in the *Prayer of Entrustment*, you fulfill the will of God and, with the help of Jesus Christ, you can overcome your egoism and bad habits, and learn to love with a pure heart.

Remember that the formative magazine of the Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples is *Love One Another!* Read it regularly and use it to evangelize the world around you. For your daily efforts in walking the path of faith and bettering yourselves, we bless you from the depths of our hearts.

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChr
With the Editorial Board ■

Photo: Czanner / Dreamstime.com





Nothing is Impossible with God!

One day, while under the influence of drugs and alcohol, I desperately started to cry out to God, asking Him for help. He was the only option left; all other possibilities have failed.

My name is Piotr and I am 44 years old. For 21 years I have been married to Małgorzata and we have two daughters: 16-year-old Amelia and 5-year-old Agata. From an early age, I confess I was a difficult child. I caused a lot of suffering, pain and distress to my parents, especially to my beloved mother. My dad wasn't affectionate, he never told me that he loved me. I had everything I needed financially, but I had no paternal love or a role model in raising children.

Already in primary school, I would skip classes, smoke cigarettes, shoplift, etc. Later it got so bad that I would steal something every day. Stealing was stronger than me. I had back problems, so my mother took me to Gdynia - to a "magician". He "healed" by touching and applying pressure to various parts of the body. The pain was unbearable during this session. There



Piotr, author of the testimony, with his wife, Małgorzata

Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

Father Piotr Glas said in one of his conferences that every addiction, be it alcohol or drugs, is a hunger for God. This hunger is the void in the heart that cannot be filled with anything but God's love

was also another person who came to our house. He walked around the apartment with a pendulum and "checked" for so-called watercourses. I also engaged in ghost calling with my peers. While already married, I continued to break the First

Commandment by engaging in the supernatural, magic, and spiritism. My wife and I went for a tarot card reading twice. We were visited by a woman from Russia who allegedly had healing powers and also saw ghosts. On top of it, I went with my



wife to another fortune teller, who said that I must get a divorce as soon as possible, otherwise I wouldn't achieve anything in my life.

By now my marriage was completely ruined. I cheated on my wife several times. I caused a lot of suffering to many people. I wouldn't come home for several days. My wife also cheated on me and I would keep reminding her of it. I held a grudge against her. The house was hell: alcohol, drugs, horrible cursing. My wife and daughter were afraid of me because when I got mad, I wasn't myself; it was as if I had two personalities. Both my wife and I were verbally abusive towards our daughter. At that time, Amelia was 11-12 years old. I beat her a few times for being disobedient. When she was little, she loved Monster High and Hello Kitty dolls. She and her cousin used to play with a voodoo doll. The victim was to be me.

At that time, I was addicted to pornography, masturbation, cigarettes, alcohol, and gambling. I was also selling drugs and I used them 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and sometimes I only slept a few hours a week. Drugs became more important to me than anything else in my life. At night, while I was sleeping, something terrifying happened to me many times. I felt something was pressing my whole body into the bed and choking me. I couldn't even move one finger. I tried calling my wife for help from the other room, but I couldn't get a word out.

I have gotten into many car accidents, from which I miraculously recovered and escaped unscathed. I used to ride my motorcycle way above the speed limit. God saved my life many times. Even though I have played with death in every possible way, I am still alive. Today I am convinced that my mother's constant prayers and the Pompeian Novena for my intention kept me alive. At one point, I lost all hope. I was having suicidal thoughts. My parents were devastated because of what was happening to me. I was a human wreck, physically and mentally. At that time, at 183 cm tall, I weighed just 60 kg.



I was a wreck, physically and mentally; I weighed barely 60 kg, with a height of 183 cm

I don't think there is any addiction that cannot be overcome. You just have to get down on your knees before God, ask Him for help, trust Jesus and Mary completely and make a move

One day, while under the influence of drugs and alcohol, I desperately started to cry out to God, asking Him for help. He was the only option left; all other possibilities have failed. I decided to quit drugs and go for therapy. The slow process of my conversion had begun. I went through detox and started the treatment phase. That's where I really started looking for God. I used to go to a little church that was open during the day. I prayed in faith, listening to prayers for healing and deliverance online. I found peace of heart and joy, not only in church but also during my stay in the rehab center.

I also started reaching out to my wife; we were separated at the time. We talked on the phone for hours. God began to pour His amazing love into our hearts. At that time, God

set me free from my drug addiction. I lost my desire for it in the blink of an eye. The amount of drugs I was taking before my stay at the center was enough for a normal person to probably die within minutes. You can't give up such a powerful addiction simply with your own strong will, single-handedly.

I was already drug free, but there was another addiction that was destroying me and everything around. I would constantly drink, starting in the morning. I prayed persistently to be set free from alcoholism, because I wanted to save my family and for my daughter to have a sober, loving father. I gave myself completely to God, I gave Him my free will - and then another powerful miracle happened. I was set free. It's now been almost three years ►



Photo: from the archives of the author of the testimony

I am a living testimony to the works of the Lord God

I gave myself completely to God, I gave Him my free will – and then another powerful miracle happened. I was set free

since I last drunk alcohol and I don't desire it. I'm free. Today I know that God has shown me His great mercy once again. Thank God this complete conversion brought my wife and I back together again.

I don't think there is any addiction that cannot be overcome. You just have to get down on your knees before God, ask Him for help, trust Jesus and Mary completely and make a move. In my case, it was a conscious decision and my heart's great desire to quit my addictions and save my family. I was also healed of life-long illnesses. My liver and intestines were completely destroyed. The levels of triglycerides and cholesterol in my body were extremely high. I was told that my heart could stop working at any moment. I was healed of all of this.

Father Piotr Glas said in one of his conferences that every addiction, be it alcohol or drugs, is a hunger for God. This hunger is the void in the heart that cannot be filled with anything but God's

love. A person who does not experience it tries to fill this emptiness with something tangible. However, it is impossible. That's why people start drinking, taking drugs, cheating on each other or escaping into workaholicism and they forget about our beloved God the Father and our wonderful Mother Mary. We often sacrifice our family life, love, and time with our loved ones for a house, a new car, and so on. It is a satanic plan that draws God's children away from Him with the trinkets of this world and, in the end, leads them to eternal damnation.

In 2016, my wife and I went to Gródek nad Dunajcem for a retreat for married couples that was organized by the community of the Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples. We went there together with our beloved daughter Agata, who was already growing in her mother's womb. This second baby of ours is a miracle that we received following our change of lifestyle and conversion. During these retreats, I made a lifetime confession

with Fr. Piotr Glas. After the absolution, the priest began to pray over me. I was shaking so much that I couldn't stand on my feet. After a short prayer, the priest said that he had a word of knowledge for me. These were the words from the Gospel according to St. Luke about the lost sheep: "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent." (Luke 15: 7)

In 2020, every Wednesday, I offered God a water fast, usually with the intention of repenting for my sins. In my heart I felt a great need to repay for my sinful life. I wanted to offer God much more out of love for Him, because I owed Him so much. Also in 2020, my wife and I prayed a total of eight Pompeian Novenas – four by each of us. We also participated in a 33-day online retreat and on Easter Sunday we both gave ourselves completely to the Mother of God. In August 2021, for the second time, we participated in a week-long retreat of the Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples. It was a beautiful and wonderful time with God. During this retreat, I signed the sobriety pledge not to ever drink alcohol again.

Today I am free from pornography, masturbation, gambling, alcohol, cigarettes and drugs. I no longer struggle with addictions. I am a living testimony of God's action. Changing my life and our marriage is proof that nothing is impossible for God. I would like to thank Fr. Piotr Glas, who was God's instrument in my conversion. His conferences in Gródek nad Dunajcem led me to conversion and a change in the perception of the spiritual world. I would also like to thank the Movement of Pure Hearts and Movement of Pure Hearts for Married Couples, as well as the entire *Love One Another!* Editorial Board for this beautiful time with God, which my wife and I were able to experience together, thanks to their efforts and dedication.

Piotr ■



Photo: Ольга Калинин / Dreamstime.com

The Three Stages of Love

We can divide our life into chapters. Similarly, we can also identify the three stages that we go through when we mature in love. These stages form something like a wheel that is constantly turning. **First is the fascination. Then the difficult second stage: reluctance, disappointment, withdrawal. Then the third stage, in which we decide whether to push ahead and go forward. And the wheel goes around again.**

o. Rafał Skibiński OP

There are three stages of love which repeat themselves, like spokes in a wheel. It is similar in our relationship with God and in our prayer life, just as in our life with our family or with our friends.

Fascination

The first stage is infatuation, the period of fascination when "I only have eyes for you." This obviously brings its own limitations and dangers, in spite of one's good intentions.

A person in love who is fascinated with another frees in himself an abundance of goodness. All of the possibilities, plans, hopes, ideas for the future, all of the best in himself, are suddenly released in one intense explosion. He projects and radiates this great hope onto his beloved. He is like a film projector: his emotions are the images on the film that are then projected onto the screen – the object of his affections. To be more blunt: the other person is merely a stand-in (which does not necessarily condemn their relationship). The naked truth is that man, in loving another, really loves himself. He projects onto her his own image and vision, and sees in her an idealized image of himself, and an ideal future life. And since the whole experience is based on emotions, the situation is rather fleeting. ►



Photo: Ольга Калинин / Dreamstime.com

This requires patience to wait for it to pass. It is natural that emotions fade, grow dim, and eventually die out, and the thing for which a man would have given his life eventually passes.

However one may look at it, as long as a person loves himself in the other, he is an egoist. As long as he focuses only on his own plans and is involved only with himself, he is alone. Love, by contrast, is about becoming united. Love is an active union: it does not love a screen. Thus the first stage of love often ends, suddenly and unexpectedly.

Disappointment

The next stage is resentment and disappointment. If one remains in this state too long, the bile accumulates, forming a puss-filled sac that will, sooner or later, burst.

In such a state, one would only wait for a chance to “take it out” on the other. Discussions and disagreements with this person will often just end up in subtle threats: “Just you wait, I’ll set you straight!” You don’t force the truth, you present the truth. If I wanted to “set someone straight,” I would do better reflecting on the wisdom of forcing the truth on another. “Setting things straight” means explaining an error, settling a dispute. But “setting someone straight” means forcefully convincing someone to agree to our point of view. It carries with it the contradiction of

It is natural that emotions fade, grow dim, and eventually die out, and the thing for which a man would have given his life eventually passes

using force to tell the truth. Though on the surface the intention is good – telling someone the truth – in practice it involves humiliating him. He will not accept the truth, even if he wanted to; he will not be able to.

It is not good to live in bitterness, so I try to deal with the negativity by ignoring it. When the bitterness reaches breaking point, and I see that this is evil, that I am so overwhelmed and frightened, and that it is pushing me over the edge, to a place where I cannot survive, it is then that I run away and avoid the problem. I say, “Let us eat, drink, and be merry.” I isolate myself and use a screen; I don’t want to know, I don’t want to see.

There is another way of “dealing with” the problem. It is connected with a longing for the past, a nostalgia for the time when things were going smoothly. One would want to go back to the stage of fascination because everything seemed to be fine then. But now that things are not going well in the relationship, maybe it’s time to find another partner. This happens

when the level of disappointment is particularly intense, and the couple are immature and lack maturity. They take things too far, like have sex before marriage. The process is as follows: first, living on cloud nine, then retreating into the shadows, followed by disappointment, and when we cannot stand it, we change partners. And the process repeats itself: cloud nine, shadows, disappointment, and we are back in the same place where we started. Being in an extended state of disappointment, we become bitter people; and by insisting on keeping ourselves in the stage of fascination it turns us into infantile creatures.

Determination

These two stages happen naturally. They occur spontaneously and are merely preludes, or overtures, of what can happen in a man’s life. That is why they should not last too long. The third stage, which I would call the Inner Determination, is something much deeper than emotion, mood, or temperament. This is an attitude which one has to work on and develop. It is based on a subtle shift, slowly moving from emotional impulses and fleeting impressions to consistent and lasting consideration for the other person, taken to such a point that it does not waver even in the knowledge of the other’s darkest side, which might involve reprehensible acts such as infidelity.

In the first two stages, all the emotional states that one goes through have the common thread of feeling: “I feel like it,” or “I don’t feel like it.” But if someone were to ask why we like something one day and then dislike it the next, we wouldn’t be able to give an answer. We either like it or we don’t. This is the common element of fascination and aversion.

In the early stages, love leads us on to a wide path. Then the path grows narrow. Further down the road, it will again grow wider, but not in the same way. But first, we have to get through this narrow passage.

The first two stages are taken on wide and well-trodden paths. These are the moments of which songs are sung, poems are written, films are made. But much less is spoken of the

The words “I feel like” or “I don’t feel like” come from our feelings – our inner pressures, tensions, desires – and conflicts, from the chaos of our lives. However, what we want, what we aim to do, is the voice of our will

narrow road, the one less travelled; this is, simply put, faith. Sooner or later, we find ourselves on this path.

It is something amazing that, in spite of our madness, our struggles with good and evil, God in the end asks only one question: “Do you believe?”

I believe that faith is the only way to achieve a strong inner confidence that, no matter what, I will love with determination, and I will be kind, faithful, and abiding in love. There is reason to doubt this confidence when, after a disappointment, or even a series of disappointments and failures, I feel justified in being distrustful and withdrawn. Can I still trust others when I know that they will eventually show their dark side, or abandon me in times of need? This may sound extreme, but when I think that I have to open myself up to another person, revealing to him the most valuable and vulnerable parts of myself, then I would rather be alone. This is especially true if I had earlier been deeply hurt and betrayed. Being alone may be difficult, but at least I will know why.

But the Lord God trusts me. He called me to life and entrusted his treasures to me. He gives me the ability to understand myself and shows me that once I take a step forward, I will come to understand even greater things. He trusts each person just as he trusts me. God trusts. When I realize this, that is when I start to know what the word “trust” means. What is more, I know that even if I am not able to trust another and despite the best intentions we cannot get along, God trusts him and loves him. If I love God with all my mind, heart and soul, then I must also love my fellow man.

Because God is in everyone and everything. But if I fail at this, it simply means I am within my limitations as a human being, who is bound by his passions and weaknesses. Loving God is like turning to the high command: I can trust him to have the full picture of the situation. With God I can love even those whom I distrust and have cause to back away from. If I trust God, I will trust everyone.

A Gift for Loving

God is love. He created us with the ability to love. We have this gift in us. This is akin to a musical talent: we need time and a master teacher to develop it. A talent undeveloped damages the one who has it, but fostering the talent for loving is difficult.

We have the whole gamut of emotions in us and they appear spontaneously. Emotion is the first thing that moves us in various situations. Our emotions move us “for” or “against”

something. Our emotions tell us whether we want or don’t want something. Faith, on the other hand, is cognition: “I believe” means that God is; I know him with my heart and soul. Cognition based on faith touches everything that relates to God and what he says. In accepting this, considering and analysing it with reason, I begin a new phase in life – the state of maturity, of mature love, in which the most important words are “I want” or “I don’t want”. The words “I feel like” or “I don’t feel like” come from our feelings – our inner pressures, ►



Photo: Ольга Каминченко / Dreamstime.com



God is love. He created us with the ability to love. We have this gift in us

tensions, desires - and conflicts, from the chaos of our lives. However, what we want, what we aim to do, is the voice of our will. Emotions are beautiful things, but we must discipline them.

The third stage is to create the proper environment for the sacraments, particularly the sacrament of matrimony. When two people stand at the altar to exchange their marriage vows, they do not say "I love you." They say "I take you to be my wife (husband). I promise to be true to you in good times and in bad times, in sickness and in health. I will love you and honor you all the days of my life. So help me Lord God Almighty in the Trinity, and all the saints." We do not trivialize the vow with a meaningless "I love you" but we say "I vow to love you." This means "I want to love you," and "I will want to always love you." The present tense of the verb, "want", will be binding always. I am able to will myself to love. Even in difficult situations, through sheer strength of will, I can control my feelings so that I will always have love for you. I stand firmly on this: that my decisions will be grounded not on what I feel like, but on what I want.

Our life can be divided into chapters. We can also identify similar stages in our maturing to love. Three stages form a wheel that is constantly turning: fascination, disappointment, retreat. But then we make a decisive choice: 'I will push through, I will carry it out, I will not retreat'. This decisive moment (which can be sparked by a seemingly trivial matter) is grounded on faith. If someone asks us: "What are you counting on? Why are you insisting on pushing on with this?" We can try to avoid answering the question. But if our inner life is in order, then we can ultimately find the answer: "Because there is God."

Source: Rafał Skibiński OP,
Opowieść o miłości,
"Stories of Love" (2010)

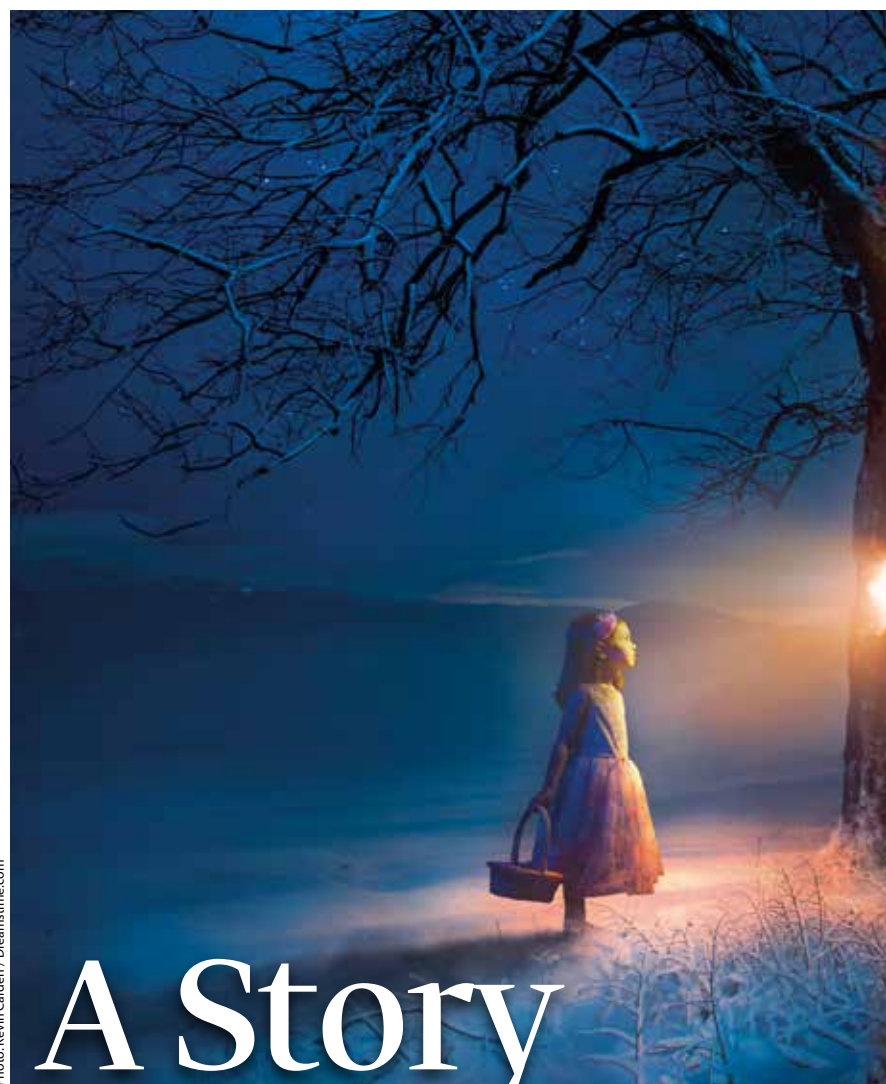


Photo: Kevin Carden / Dreamstime.com

A Story with a Happy Ending

The story of my life perfectly illustrates the battle with the powers of darkness that God fights for each one of us. Jesus continually carries out his "plans of peace and not of loss, in order to provide us with the future we expect." (Jeremiah 29:11) And the adversary is constantly trying to thwart His wonderful plan of love and destroy all that is worthwhile.

In my early childhood, as a small girl, I was a victim of sexual abuse by the older kids that I knew in our neighborhood. I didn't realize it at the time because it was "just for fun". Initially,

I did not feel the consequences. They would appear in my adulthood. The only thing I remember from that period is the panic that, as a child, I will one day have a child myself. Later, many times



I experienced a full self-affirmation that restored my confidence in who I was and for what I was created. I regained the joy of life

That same year, my dad began drinking alcohol. It was the end of our quiet family life. Our house was no longer a safe place. We would anxiously wait to see what time and in what condition dad would return home from work. Our parents would get into fights. I was afraid they would kill one another, since they threatened each other many times. They also pressured us to take sides. I felt a sense of shame and helplessness. I secretly shed tears ... I lived through all these moments together with my Divine Friend. My relationship with Jesus helped me get through this difficult time and to give me the strength not to hate my father. I relieved my stress and tension by participating in the sports that I liked. Gradually, we all got used to this lifestyle, and tried to accommodate our daily tasks with the ongoing family drama. We never talked to each other about what each one of us was going through.

With time, I became insecure, self-conscious and anxious. The fear of meeting other people paralyzed me. I was apprehensive, withdrawn and reserved when dealing with people. I needed a long time to feel at ease with other people. In my adolescence, I had suicidal thoughts, but my faith kept me from acting upon them. When I was approaching adulthood, I was filled with sorrow and fear. I was a sad Christian and this realization was killing me. Some people teased me for being depressed but I couldn't understand where I was going wrong. During all my conscious life I followed Jesus, but instead of feeling the happiness that had been promised to us, I felt as if my wings had been cut off. I was yet to realize that these were the consequences of my wrongdoings and shortcomings, which were now manifesting themselves. ►

In an instant, not only was my inner emptiness filled, but also all the negative effects of my environment that I had carried within me disappeared

I participated in children's "exploring bodies" games. This is how my sexuality was damaged, whereas it should have remained dormant still for a long time. I was saved by my first confession, which I made before the First Holy Communion. As a child, to the best of my abilities, I confessed my sins against the Sixth Commandment, and for many years after that I did not repeat those sins.

My life went on as usual until God tangibly entered my life. At the age of 12, I went from habitual faith to personal faith. I experienced Jesus as someone close to me, who

truly exists and who is love. It was then when my fascination with God began. I was eager to discover the truths of the faith in order to learn as much as possible about Him.

I prayed regularly, meditated on the Scriptures, and used the sacraments to be with the Lord. I tried to live according to God's commandments in order not to hurt my Creator. I started doing everything for the sake of Jesus and for Jesus. Seeing such a sudden change in my behavior, my family anticipated that I would become a nun. However, I was not attracted to this idea at the time.



Photo: Tomasz Tuchowski

I didn't see any future for myself. I would have rather been an old woman who had already lived through her life and who could now leave this world. I was particularly terrified by the prospect of having to take up a job and live independently. At that time, however, God put people along my path who infected me with their spontaneous support. I had the opportunity of gently easing into the job market. Starting with simple physical work, I eventually took up the profession I had the necessary skills for. I made a firm decision to stop running away from my own destiny.

The biggest confusion I felt was in relation to my life calling. Little did I know that I was subconsciously trying to compensate for my parents' failed marriage and lack of family happiness. I wanted to love and be loved so badly. My greatest desire was to get married and start a family. I couldn't imagine it otherwise. But time was passing by and I couldn't establish any worthwhile

Then, completely unexpectedly, God entered my life in a miraculous way. During adoration prayer, he healed me physically and spiritually

relationship. I was plunging into more and more despair. My life seemed like a failure. I felt a sense of meaninglessness, of yawning emptiness. It seemed as if God had departed. My prayer turned into a howl of pain to the Lord. At that time I was in therapy. I also took every opportunity to pray for inner healing. I found the most comfort in praying the rosary, in attending the Holy Mass and in the sacrament of reconciliation. God was "stealthily" healing my wounded heart.

As I got older, my way of thinking and the way I experienced life changed. I came to terms with the fact that my life would not be as

I had dreamed it to be. I tried to find joy in it despite unfulfilled desires. Then the thought that perhaps God was calling me to the religious life resurfaced. I felt quite inclined to do so, but at the same time I found myself unable to respond to God's call. My body was crying out for physical closeness. I couldn't give it up once and for all. After all, maybe there was still a chance of meeting the right man?

Then, completely unexpectedly, God entered my life in a miraculous way. During adoration prayer, he healed me physically and spiritually. In an instant, not only was my inner emptiness filled, but also all the negative effects of my environment that I had carried within me disappeared. I experienced a full self-affirmation that restored my confidence in who I was and for what I was created. I regained the joy of life. My physicality had returned to its original state. For the first time in my life, I felt totally free. Nothing was blocking me anymore. I also realized that I didn't have to do anything for God. It was enough to undeniably recognize that God wants me for Himself and that this is my deepest desire as well. There were no more obstacles that would prevent me from devoting myself completely to Him and to fulfill my calling. I was overwhelmed by a strong conviction that what I was experiencing was the work of Mother Mary.

Soon after, I applied to one of the religious congregations where, after my initial formation, I made my perpetual vows. I am filled with enormous gratitude to God for the vocation I have received and for my ability to fulfill it. God thwarted all the wiles of the Evil one and turned into a blessing what had been a curse. He transformed "wounds into pearls." Thanks to Him I have nothing against anyone. Thanks to His grace, I can live a "transformed life", look at the past with gratitude, live in the present with passion and accept the future with hope. May God be glorified forever!

A Happy Nun ■



Photo: Albus / Dreamstime.com

The Truth About the Homosexual Ideology

The ideology of gender and LGBT is a modern variety of Marxist atheism, which is based on lies, lawlessness and violence. Great courage is needed today to openly speak the truth about homosexual ideology.

The most competent modern-day critics of homosexual ideology are: Paul Cameron, Joseph Nicolosi, and Dr. Gerard J. M. van den Aardweg. Their scientific research shows that homosexual ideology is against reason and science.

There is no scientific confirmation of the theory of the genetic origin of homosexuality. Detailed analyses of studies have revealed that no genetically determined predispositions have been found that would lead to the development of homosexual tendencies in a person. **It has been scientifically proven that in human**

DNA there is no “gay gene”. Rather, it is the negative influence of the environment that leads to emotional instability, feelings of inferiority, and the development of homosexual tendencies.

Activists are particularly intolerant and aggressive towards those who speak the truth about the LGBT community, especially towards gays who have undergone therapy and rejected their homosexuality. **Studies confirm that homosexuality is one of many sexual disfunctions which can and must be treated.** Other studies also show that the gay

community is the most depraved and promiscuous. Sexually active homosexuals are addicted to sex and they often have multiple partners. Their main goal in life is to fulfill their sexual urges. To their mind, man is merely a sexual object. It comes as no surprise that gay people most often commit pedophilia (adults who have sexual attraction to children) and ephebophilia (adults who have sexual attraction to adolescents). Promiscuity and the physiology of gay sex, which is against nature, destroys their health. Additionally, more than 60% of new HIV infections occur ►

In the Holy Bible, homosexual acts are presented as practices that go against nature and deserve condemnation

in men who have sex with other men. Also, most cases of syphilis and other STDs (sexually transmitted diseases) as well as mental disorders occur in homosexual communities.

God decidedly rejects homosexuality and same-sex marriage. In the Holy Bible, homosexual acts are presented as practices that go against nature and deserve condemnation. (Genesis 19:1-29, 1 Timothy 1:10; Romans 1: 26-28; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10) *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* also speaks clearly about the sinfulness of homosexuality, referenced in CCC 2357 to 2359. Our Creator has made it clear that practicing homosexuality will lead to absolute egoism, and the terrifying eternal fires of hell, unless the sinner converts. The Lord God, nature, and science tell us that homosexual acts and same-sex relationships are not a natural and normal form of human sexuality.

Professor Joseph Daniel Unwin, an anthropologist from Oxford, published the results of many years of research in the book, *Sex and Culture*. Prof. Unwin came to the conclusion that if a civilization rejects moral norms, and sexuality is separated from parenthood, being used instead mainly for individual pleasure, this will lead to complete human decadence and the fall of the civilized world. The final stage in this self-destructive process is the acceptance of homosexuality as a natural sexual orientation.

Putting to Death Evil Desires

It is necessary to make an effort each day to submit our life and our sexuality to the ideals of the Ten Commandments and the moral laws that God has given us. Without it, man's life will head towards total enslavement by Satan. Absolute joy and freedom can be attained only when man entrusts his life completely to Jesus through Mary. It is only when we invite the Lord Jesus into our lives that He can heal us and make our hearts pure and able to love selflessly. This is why great effort must be made daily to walk down the road that Jesus has shown us.

The daily hardships of a life of faith with Jesus and Mary are tied to

Prayer of Entrustment of the Movement of Pure Hearts

Lord Jesus, I thank you for loving me with boundless love, which protects me from evil, raises me from the gravest sins and heals my deepest wounds. I offer up to you my memory, intellect, will, body, soul, as well as my sexuality. I promise not to enter into sexual relations until the sacrament of marriage. I promise not to buy, read, or watch magazines and programs with pornographic content. (Girls add: "I choose to dress modestly and not provoke lustful thoughts or desires in others.") I promise to meet You daily in prayer and in the Holy Bible, in receiving Holy Communion, and in the adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament. I promise to regularly receive the sacrament of penance, and not to give in to despair and to immediately rise up after every sin.

Lord Jesus, teach me how to work on myself, especially the ability to control my impulses and emotions. I ask You to give me courage in the daily struggle with evil, that I may never take drugs, that I may avoid everything that leads to addiction, especially alcohol and cigarettes. Teach me to live a life where love is most important.

Mary, my Mother, lead me in the ways of faith to the very source of love: Jesus. Following St. John Paul II, I want to completely entrust myself to you: "Totus Tuus, Mary!" In your Immaculate Heart, I put my entire self, all that I am, every step, every moment of my life. Blessed Caroline, obtain for us the gift of a pure heart. Amen!

self-discipline, asceticism, and mortification of the flesh. In other words, I have to listen to St Paul's words "Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry." (Colossians 3:5) "But I discipline my body and keep it under control." (1 Corinthians 9:27) If I were to live according to the flesh, I will die. But if, with the help of the Spirit, I put to the death the lusts of the body, I will live. (Romans 8:13) "The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace." (Romans 8:6)

The body demands immediate gratification of its sexual desires. These fleshly needs should be ruled by the Spirit, and be subservient to God's law, which states that it is only in the sacrament of matrimony that sexual intimacy becomes a source of holiness, a sign of the sacrament, and an expression of the selfless and lasting gift of oneself to his or her partner. **Giving in to the demands of the flesh - premarital sex, extramarital relations, homosexual acts, pornography, petting, masturbation, and so on - are all acts of mortal sin, which kill love, deepens egoism, and leads to spiritual death.**

He who cannot manage his own lustful inclinations is under the control of his senses, and is enslaved, and thus cannot truly love, thus remaining in a state of spiritual death. Only Jesus can free man from this terrible state, and that is if that individual wholeheartedly desires it, and trusts and believes in the infinite Divine Mercy.

The Lord Jesus says to St. Faustina: "The more miserable a soul's condition, the greater it's right to my mercy." (*Diary*, 1182) You must immediately get back up after you stumble by going to confession and praying for aversion to all sins, and to sins of impurity in particular. To successfully control desires of the flesh, you must get rid of bad habits and acquire good ones. If you commit sin because of pornography, you must radically cut it off from your life. You must plan your day carefully, putting prayer (saying the rosary, reading the

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(Romans 8:13)

Holy Scriptures, adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament) in the first place, followed by hard work and then rest. It is worth getting into the habit of going to bed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest and getting up early in the morning to have time for prayer and physical exercise. For those whose work involves mental tasks, the best rest is to take up sports, preferably outdoors. In moments of laziness, apathy or discouragement, that is when you must especially motivate yourself to carry out your plans and resolutions. This is a practical way of killing "fleshly urges". Controlling the body's libido and putting it under your will and putting to death "sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed" become possible only when united with Christ.

Movement of Pure Hearts

To help "put to death the lusts of the body" and to receive the gift of a pure heart, the Lord Jesus asks you to completely entrust yourself to Him and to join the community of the Movement of Pure Hearts. We are inviting everyone who believes and trusts in Jesus and who sincerely wants to fulfill the obligations, as laid out in the *Prayer of Entrustment* of the Movement of Pure Hearts, to join the community. You can join at any time! You must first go to confession, and after receiving Jesus in Holy Communion, give yourself up completely to Him by praying the *Prayer of Entrustment*. Please let our Editorial Board know of this great event so that we can enter your name into the *Book of Pure Hearts* and we can send you special blessings. Remember to pray every day the *Prayer of Entrustment*. Remember also that *Love One Another!* is the formation magazine of all members of the Movement of Pure Hearts the world over. Read it regularly and

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become a co-evangelizer in your own neighborhood through prayer and example as well as through sharing *Love One Another!* with others.

When you become slack in prayer, sacrifice, and self-discipline, you must ask Mary for help and for the strength of will to fulfill the tasks and obligations you have set out to do. In this way, you will be able to overcome egoism, blind lust, laziness and reluctance towards prayer and work. A strong will requires effort and self-discipline. Practice self-denial on a daily basis



Photo: Paweł Fiszer

Retreat of the Movement of Pure Hearts in Gródek nad Dunajcem

so that your need for pleasure does not get out of control. Otherwise, you will fall under the terrible bondage of sin and the devil.

In becoming true man, Jesus Christ created an amazing community, His Mystical Body, the Church. He is our Head and we are His members. It is only in this community with Jesus that we can overcome the traps of the evil one, learn how to love with a pure heart, and reach heaven.

May the mystery of God's birth, the wonder of His presence, becoming true man to save us from death, be for each one of us the source of everlasting joy. Share this joy with others. We pray for your intentions and we wish that **"You may become blameless and pure, children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky."** (Philippians 2:15)

Fr. Mieczysław Piotrowski SChR
With the Editorial Board ■

The ABC of the Crusade for Love



1.
Respect everyone — Christ resides in everyone. Be sensitive to others — they are your brothers and sisters.
2.
Think well of everyone — think ill of no one. Try to find something good even in the worst circumstances.
3.
Always speak well of others — do not cast a slur on anyone. Repair any harm resulting from an uttered word. Do not provoke strife between people.
4.
Speak to everyone in the language of love. Do not raise your voice. Do not swear. Do not vex others. Do not provoke tears. Reassure others. Show a kind heart.
5.
Forgive everyone everything. Do not hold grudges. Always be the first to extend your hand as a sign of reconciliation.
6.
Act always to your neighbor's advantage. Do good things to others, as you would like them done to you. Never give a thought to what others owe you, but always to what you owe them.
7.
Be actively compassionate in time of suffering. Be quick to offer consolation, counsel, assistance, kindness.
8.
Work conscientiously — others benefit from the fruits of your labor, just as you benefit from the labor of others.
9.
Be active in your community. Be open to the poor and the sick. Share your goods. Try to see the needs of those around you.
10.
Pray for everyone, even your enemies.

blessed card. Stefan Wyszyński (1901-1981)

- You've read this,
- given it some thought,
- prayed for love between people,
- now pass it on!



Love One Another!

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