

Sentimental Theology

🕒 October 28, 2004 🧑 [Br. Francis Maluf, M.I.C.M.](#)

“Sentimental Theology” is the famous article by Brother Francis, M.I.C.M. which threw us into the limelight in the late 1940’s. It is as relevant today as it was then, for “Sentimental thinking about religious matters is [still] very much with us today.”

Sentiment is a human thing, and nothing human is either scorned or despised by a Christian. In Christianity there is a place for the exercise of every impulse that God put in human nature. A Christian is not a Stoic who shuns his emotions, nor a Quaker who lets them simmer under the surface of a placid face. He does not pretend to deny the reality of human sufferings like a Christian Scientist, nor does he glut in them like a Jansenist. A Christian finds time for weeping and time for laughter, for gaiety as well as solemnity, for emotion as well as sentiment. Our Lord was not ashamed to show emotion when He wept as He heard of the death of His friend, nor did He hesitate to explode with anger when He saw the wicked and the avaricious desecrate the house of God. He manifested sublime sentiment when He inspired and guided the discovery of the real Cross and made it an object of veneration in His Church. And so, what I am about to condemn in this article is not sentiment, but sentimentality.

Sentimentality is not only a sentiment out of place, it is a sentiment without object. It is like falling in love with love, hoping for hope, or making a sincere effort at being sincere. It is good sentiment to guard the gifts of those you love; it is sentimentality to crowd the house with all kinds of things you throw away. Sentimentality is not even an act; it is just a state of the mind. It is an atmosphere which softens the character, suffocates the mind, and inflicts the will with paralysis. A sentimental mother would let her child die rather than allow a surgical operation to wound his body. In the same way, a sentimental Christian would let his friend miss the opportunity of salvation and go to hell rather than hurt his feelings. Sentimentality is inimical both to charity and to truth. Am I intelligent as a Christian if I allow those who are dear and close to me to incur the slightest danger of losing the friendship of God for all eternity by giving them in return my friendship in this short life? And would I not be endangering my own soul were I to drive this bargain?

I know I am not wasting punches at a straw man. Sentimental thinking about religious matters is very much with us today. A great deal of what is being said by Catholics today sounds in very sharp contrast with the accent of the authentic voice of the Church, teaching, warning, and defining. The sharp weapons of Christ are being blunted, and the strong, virile doctrines of the Church are being put aside in a conspiracy of silence.

While talking to a Catholic group recently, I was shocked to a realization of what is happening to the Faith under the rising wave of liberalism. I happened to mention casually the Catholic dogma, “There is no salvation outside the Church.” Some acted as if I were uttering an innovation they had never heard of before, and others had the doctrine so completely covered with reservations and vicious distinctions as to ruin its meaning and destroy the effect of its challenge. In a few minutes, the room was swarming with the slogans of liberalism and sentimentalism, utterances which are beginning to have the force of defined dogma. Taken in their totality and in the manner in which they were used and understood by their utterers, these slogans constituted an outlook incompatible with the Catholic Faith and with the traditions of the Church. “Salvation by sincerity.” “Membership in the soul of the Church.” “Don’t judge.” “Don’t disturb the good faith of unbelievers.” “It is not charitable to talk about hell or to suggest that anybody may go there.” “Isn’t faith a gift?” And “How about the baptism of desire?” And so on and so forth. I am not concerned with these phrases as they might occur in a theological treatise with sufficient explanations and with only proportionate emphasis. **1** I am rather concerned with a practical attitude of mind which seeks and selects precisely these phrases and builds them into a closed system of thought, ready to justify every act of cowardice, disloyalty to

the Church, or encouragement to infidels and heretics who have set themselves up as teachers of religion.

For example, the statement: “Faith is a gift” is only half a truth. Faith is also a response. It is very evident, from the way Our Lord sought this response and blamed and reprimanded those who failed to give it, that faith is also a response. Our Lord did not say: “I feel sorry for the poor Pharisees because, although they see the evidence of My divinity, yet they are not given the gift of faith.” And yet this is what we are asked to say of our modern Pharisees who, by their own testimony, cannot by ignorant of the divine authority of the Catholic church, but would not submit. To take another example, Franz Werfel [2](#) is supposed to have had the baptism of desire during a long period of time when the sacrament of baptism with water was clearly available.

Are we saved by mere sincerity? If this were the good news Jesus brought into the world, this would be the way to proclaim it: “You shall be sincere and sincerity will bring you to heaven; your own devices may be your way to the Father.” Or at least, “There are two ways to God: I am one and your personal integrity is another.” But, on the contrary, this is the way Our Lord speaks: “You shall know the truth, and the truth will make you free”; “I am the way, the truth, and the life”; “He that believeth not shall be condemned.” And when He proclaimed, saying: “Amen, amen, I say unto you: except you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you,” He did not stop to apologize or to explain or to add so many reservations which can mean nothing to an unbeliever, and which can only add to the weakness and hesitancy of those who believe.

Some Catholic liberals and sentimentalists, who think that it is not very nice to talk about hell, give you the impression, by what they say and do, that humanity divides into two neat classes: those who belong to the body of the Church, and those who belong to its soul. You almost wonder at times whether it isn't nobler and more magnanimous, and perhaps even safer, to belong only to the latter. As a matter of fact, when you seek a responsible theologian on this doctrine, and after he has finished explaining and interpreting and adding reservations, you wonder whether the doctrine was worth announcing to the public at all, and whether it has any real practical application for us. You certainly begin not to wonder at the fact that Our Lord has left these minor and secondary truths to be discovered by the theologians and restricted Himself exclusively to the proclamation of the Christian challenge in unhesitating terms.

Let us consult *An Explanation of the Baltimore Catechism of Christian Doctrine*, by Rev. Thomas L. Kinkead, on the subject of salvation outside the Church:

“Q. Are all bound to belong to the Church?

“A. All Are bound to belong to the Church, and he who knows the Church to be the true Church and remains out of it, cannot be saved.

“Anyone who knows the Catholic religion to be the true religion and will not embrace it cannot enter into heaven. If one not a Catholic doubts whether the church to which he belongs is the true Church, he must settle his doubt, seek the true Church, and enter it; for if he continues to live in doubt, he becomes like the one who knows the true Church and is deterred by worldly considerations from entering it.

“In like manner one who, doubting, fears to examine the religion he professes lest he should discover its falsity and be convinced of the truth of the Catholic Faith, cannot be saved.

“Suppose, however, that there is a non-Catholic who firmly believes that the church to which he belongs is the true Church, and who has never — even in the past — had the slightest doubt of that fact, — what will become of him?

“If he was validly baptized and never committed a mortal sin, he will be saved; because, believing himself a member of the true Church, he was doing all he could to serve God according to his knowledge and the dictates of his conscience ... that person would be saved; because, being baptized, he is a member of the Church, and being free from mortal sin he is a friend of God and could not in justice be condemned to hell. Such a person belongs to what we call the soul of the Church. He would belong to the body of the Church — that is, he would attend Mass and receive the sacraments — if he knew the Catholic Church to be the only true Church.

“I am giving you an example, however, that is rarely found, except in the case of infants or very small children baptized in Protestant sects.”

Suppose you went to a doctor and inquired whether a man with double pneumonia should be placed on the danger list, and suppose the doctor’s reply was: “Well, a man with double pneumonia is not necessarily in danger of death, for if this man had a thorough immunity against all diseases, and if he had never been in serious illness before, and if all his organs are in absolutely perfect condition, and if no further complications arise, and perfect medical attention is given to him, this man might pull through.” Wouldn’t the doctor be of greater practical service to you if he had said, “Yes, a man with double pneumonia is in grave danger”? The same is true of men in any way severed from the unity of the Church and without the divinely established and infallible guidance of the Holy Father; they are in a grave and permanent state of danger as far as their eternal salvation is concerned. If some of them are saved, it would not be because of their heresy, but rather in spite of it, [3](#) and on account of the sufferings of Christ, Who continues to suffer for the salvation of the world in His Mystical Body, the Catholic Church.

I can speak at least for myself with absolute certainty. The qualifications given by Father Kinkead for belonging to the soul of the Church never applied to me as a heretic after I had reached the age of reason. [4](#) Not only one of these qualification failed, which would have been enough, but every single one of them. And yet I met in my life hundreds of Catholics who kept me in the hell of unbelief precisely because they pretended to think that I was sincere and therefore secure. These Catholics did not act with respect to me with supernatural Catholic charity, but with sentimental sociable charitableness. Regarding all my non-Catholic acquaintances, there is not a single person to whom Father Kinkead’s qualifications apply with any show of probability. On the contrary, the evidence is very much on the opposite side.

I know that the next slogan to be shouted by the liberals and the sentimentalists is: “You are judging people, and Our Lord said ‘Don’t judge.’” To take the transcendent utterances of Our Lord and to apply them in such a ridiculous fashion is really the limit in misinterpretation. Is it possible that Our Lord could have intended to de-humanize us so thoroughly as to prohibit us from using our highest power, the power of judgment, in any way or manner? And if that were the intent of Our Lord’s injunction, how is it possible that the Church has so completely misunderstood Him, because this interpretation is certainly not compatible with the history of the Church, its practices and traditions, with its militancy for the preservation and defense of truth, with its glorious inquisitions and crusades, [5](#) with its resounding anathemas and excommunications, and with the teachings and polemics of its saints and doctors. Our Lord also said: “By their fruits ye shall know them,” If he intends us never to judge, why should he give us the criteria by which to judge? He also said: “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” He obviously, therefore, intended that we should judge hypocrisy, for how can we beware of hypocrisy if we can never judge that we have a case of it at hand! “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet. Amen I say to you, it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold I send you as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and simple as doves. But beware of men.” (Mt. 10:14-17.) Clearly therefore, any interpretation of Our Lord’s saying, “Judge not, that you may not be judged,” must also take into consideration all these other sayings too. [6](#) Indeed, there is a judgment which we must leave to God, but what kind of judgment?

The person who chose to quote Our Lord's saying "Judge not" was himself judging that a man can get to heaven by sincerity, and also that the heretics he knew were on the whole sincere. Of these two judgments, the first is one which no man could or should make. When I say that there is one way to heaven, and that this way is the Catholic Church, established by Christ and led by His vicar on earth, I am not making a judgment. I am simply submitting to a divine judgment. With my natural mind I could never have reasoned to the beatific vision as man's destiny, and consequently, neither could I have figured out the way to the beatific vision. This is a judgment which I leave entirely to God, and which I accept entirely on His authority. But my antagonist on this issue is the one judging on the authority of human reason that a man's sincerity can earn him the beatific vision. On the other hand, judging that a particular man with whom I am dealing is or is not sincere, is a human judgment and may be made in the light of ordinary human evidence. This is the kind of judgment I am making when I assert that all the non-Catholics I know, with the exception of irresponsible idiots, are and could only be insincere on the subject of religion. Knowing that, I can pray for them, and when they die, I can hope that they repented their insincerity in the last split second of their life. And then, of course, when I can do nothing more for them, I leave them to the mercy of God. But my antagonist is making a judgment even on this issue, although his judgment is hypocritically and — at best — from sentimental motives, flying in the face of the evidence.

When a man dies, we leave him to the mercy of God. This is the kind of ultimate judgment no mortal can take into his own hands. But the public teachings of that man are things we must judge, and if we fail to judge, we are opening the door for future heresy and sowing the seeds of future schism. If I were asked whether Franz Werfel is in heaven or in hell, now that he is dead, I would certainly reply: "I do not know. I can hope that in the last seconds of his life, when he was no more a public issue but a sheer person, he did something opposite to what is known publicly about him, and contrary to the spirit of all his vicious doctrines which are still doing their harm in the world." Franz Werfel wrote: "I am a Jew by religion and have never been baptized. On the other hand, I wish to profess here, before you and the world, that, as is evident from the major part of my work, I have been decisively influenced and molded by the spiritual forces of Christianity and the Catholic Church. I see in the holy Catholic Church the purest power and emanation sent by God to this earth to fight the evils of materialism and atheism, and bring revelation to the poor souls of mankind. That is why, although standing extra muros, I have made it my purpose to support with my modest and humble abilities the struggle which the Catholic Church fights against those evils and for the divine truth." (Franz Werfel in a letter to the Archbishop of New Orleans.)

When Werfel wrote this paragraph, he was clearly on the way to hell and not on the way to heaven. These are the words of a proud messiah to whom evil is something in the world outside. They are not the words of a contrite sinner seeking salvation. There is not even any evidence of "baptism of desire." Baptism of desire is a desire for the baptism of water and not a wish for the baptism of desire. [7](#) Only a man who does not know about baptism, and who has not rejected it explicitly, can be supposed in any sense to have an equivalent or virtual desire for it. If Franz Werfel is not in hell, it must be because he has since reversed his direction. If he is now in heaven, it could only be because he has since regretted the pride he paraded through life, and heartily desired the baptism of water which he evaded when it was available, and belonged to the spirit of the Church by doing all that was possible to him to be incorporated in its body. As far as we are concerned, there is evidence only to the contrary, and to his obstinacy to the very end. [8](#)

If for any sentimental considerations we are going to fail to utter these truths, then our Catholic children are going to think that it is all right for them to read the books of Franz Werfel, C.S. Lewis, Mortimer Adler, John Wild, Charles Malik, P.A. Sorokin, Lloyd C. Douglas, Evelyn Underhill, Robert Maynard Hutchins, Nikolai Berdiaev and Russell Janney. And if our Catholic children continue to read these proud, deliberate and unrepentant heretics, they will lose their faith. The writings of these men, when they give occasionally a convincing semblance of orthodoxy, are the closest human approximation to that diabolic trick whereby Lucifer is said to make himself an angel of light. This semblance of orthodoxy cannot be an overflow from the abundance of the heart; it cannot be the fruit of a living faith which these individuals do not possess. It

can only be the artful effect of intellectual trickery. This matter can be judged a priori, that is, from cause to effect, from person to writings. A Catholic has no need to study the works of these individuals in order to reach this conclusion. How can anybody be edified by an argument which sounds convincing when it did not convince even its utterer?

But, says the sentimentalist, is it not possible that these men will be converted? Of course it is possible; but why not wait until it happens before we take them into our Catholic schools and into our Catholic homes? When these men have retracted their obstinacy, and when God has changed His mind with regard to them, I will change my mind too. The Church does not send its fattened calf to the strange country, but waits for the prodigal son to come home, and waits at home. If and when these men are really converted, you will see that they themselves will be telling you at least as much as I have said about their pre-conversion period. From the days of Saint Paul, this is that every real convert has done. Saint Augustine did not come into the church to chant the eulogies, nor even the apologies, of his sinful days outside. To the end of his life, Saint Augustine was still confessing and retracting the hangovers of heresy which continued to cloud the brilliance of his thoughts even after he had become the great saint and doctor of the Church. The world will never forget his resounding, exclamation: “Too late have I come to know thee, O my God!”

But wouldn't our profession of faith in such uncompromising terms make non-Catholics unhappy? Would it not disturb them to know that we think they are not on the way to heaven? Well, it could disturb them only the moment they begin to believe the Christian story, and then they need not remain worried. The Catholic Church does not proclaim the exclusive salvation of one race or one class of people, but invites every man to the great joy of being united with Christ in the communion of saints.

The Catholic truth is not a sad story for which we need to apologize; it is a proclamation of the greatest good news that could ever be told. No matter how sternly its message is phrased, it is still the one and only hope in the world. Only love and security can afford to be severe. When we say that outside the Church there is no salvation, we are also and at the same time announcing that inside the Church there is salvation. The world already knows the sad part of our story, because the world finds no salvation in the world. The Church does not have to tell the unbelievers that they are in sin and in despair; they know that in the depth of their hearts. What is new to the world in the Christian story is that, through Mary, the gates of heaven are opened, and that we are invited to become brothers of Jesus in the Eternal Kingdom of God. This is not a story which can be told with the subdued and hesitant voice of sentimental theology.

1 Today, as in 1947, our primary concern in this regard remains the same. After intense studies during the intervening years, however, we have developed increasingly greater concern over theological abuses of some of those phrases.

2 Franz Werfel, who was Jewish, first gained international attention with his novel *Forty Days of Musa Dagh* (1933), which told of an Armenian village's heroic struggle against invading Turkish Moslems. His biography of St. Bernadette of Lourdes entitled *Song of Bernadette* — on which the award winning movie of the same title was based — made him popular in Catholic circles.

3 The author in no way here intends to imply that persons holding heretical opinions are saved, but that God, Who is not outdone in generosity, would give them the grace to see their error clearly so that they might repent of it. For no one can enter heaven in schism or heresy.

4 The author was raised as a Presbyterian and joined Freemasonry in early adulthood. He converted to the Catholic Faith in 1940.

5 Anti-Catholic “historians”, having monopolized the field of history since the Protestant Revolution, have so distorted the actual character and history of both the crusades and the inquisitions that virtually all Catholics

today share some sort of collective guilt complex in their regard. This is especially so where the inquisitions are concerned. Reading a true historical account, such as William Thomas Walsh's Characters of the Inquisition, would show the propriety of the term "glorious" in referring to these frequently misunderstood episodes in Catholic annals.

6 Besides, it is a law of the Church that we "admonish the sinner." Clearly this law necessitates that a judgment first be made of a sinful act or matter before the sinner can be admonished.

7 As has been shown in other writings from St. Benedict Center, all allusions by the popes, the councils and learned doctors of the Church to this subject matter agree, that only an explicit desire for the actual Sacrament of Baptism can affect justification. What is disputed is whether such desire is sufficient for salvation. We hold with many of the saints the same literal meaning of Our Lord's words: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be condemned." (Mk. XVI:15)

8 To many, Werfel's sentiments as quoted in this article may seem, at worst, only a trifle misguided if not entirely benign. Thus, the author's appraisal of those sentiments and the man may seem strongly worded. Indeed, perhaps he would express himself differently were he discussing the same subject today. But saints have used much harsher terms to unmask and chastise such subtle and, yes, damnable pride posturing as humility and virtue before others. It is self-evident that God had given this man sufficient grace to know and embrace the true Faith, and yet Werfel continued to stand "*extra muros*," (outside the walls) *extra ecclesiam*.

Nevertheless, both Father Feeney and the author always insisted that God surely does reward authentic good will in non-Catholics, though never by means of an end-run around His own Ordinances. Evidently, Franz Werfel finally proved himself truly a man of good will; we have learned on good authority in more recent times that he was baptized a Catholic before his death in 1944.

16 Comments

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defiant12314 • 5 years ago

Whilst I understand that Brother Francis was writing in reaction to indifferentism, and that the Pure Faith given to us by Our Lord must not be contaminated by error; I sometimes wonder if the Truth could be proclaimed in a somewhat gentler tone.

It is my experience that tone in which the Truth is delivered can affect the way in which it is received, when talking to Catholics who subscribe to indifferentism I would use a gentler tone than Brother Francis as I suspect that many indifferentists have been poorly catechised and that *Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus* affects them personally as they cannot bear to entertain the notion that non Catholic loved ones (perhaps resulting from the relaxation of the restrictions regarding Mixed Marriages) are in hell.

Bishop Fellay once said that the problem with modernists was you could not tell who was maliciously distorting the Truth, and who was innocently mistaken, I suspect that many of the people Brother Francis was referring to at the start of his article fall into the latter category.

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 Philip Maguire • 5 years ago

I am a traditional Catholic but I condemn in the strongest possible terms this uncharitable and judgmental assessment of the author, Franz Werfel.

"When Werfel wrote this paragraph, he was clearly on the way to hell and not on the way to heaven. These are the words of a proud messiah to whom evil is something in the world outside. They are not the words of a contrite sinner seeking salvation. There is not even any evidence of "baptism of desire." Baptism of desire is a desire for the baptism of water and not a wish for the baptism of desire. 7 Only a man who does not know about baptism, and who has not rejected it explicitly, can be supposed in any sense to have an equivalent or virtual desire for it. If Franz Werfel is not in hell, it must be because he has since reversed his direction. If he is now in heaven, it could only be because he has since regretted the pride he paraded through life, and heartily desired the baptism of water which he evaded when it was available, and belonged to the spirit of the Church by doing all that was possible to him to be incorporated in its body. As far as we are concerned, there is evidence only to the contrary, and to his obstinacy to the very end. "

Who is Br Francis Maluf to make such a judgment?

30th January 1953

1 ^ | v • Reply • Share ›

 **Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.** Mod → Philip Maguire • 5 years ago

Mr. Maguire: If you reread the paragraph, you will see that Brother Francis was stating that Werfel could not have been saved as an unbeliever, which is what the man was -- at least at the time he "wrote this paragraph" in question. He most assuredly was an "unbeliever" according to the way St. Thomas used that word in the Summa, for instance. Brother even said that if Adler was in heaven, it was because he accepted the faith.

Brother was reacting against the indifferentism which was popular -- even in those days -- and which said that one's religion did not matter: you could be saved anyway, in any religion.

You will perhaps be consoled to learn that Brother Francis was very happy when he heard news concerning Werfel from an unusually well informed friend with connections to the Mekhitarist Monastery of Vienna, Austria. This friend had a letter from the Abbot there which related that Werfel died an Armenian Rite Catholic.

Werfel had pleased two groups of people: Catholics (with his Song of Bernadette) and Armenians (with his Forty Days of Musa Dagh). Both groups were courting him for conversion. If the account from our Armenian friend is true, it was not the Armenian Apostolics that ended up "getting" Werfel, but the Armenian Catholics. Deo Gratas!

Years, before, Father Leonard Feeney had corresponded with Werfel in the hopes to win him over to the faith, as he had won over other Jews to conversion.

Brother also rejoiced at the new of Mortimer Adler's conversion. Adler was a Jewish philosopher, who became a Protestant, then a Catholic.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

 **Kaylee Gallagher** · 4 years ago

Br. Francis seems unaware that the Pope John Paul II apologized for the "glorious" crusades and the Inquisition in 2000. Another apologized followed in June 2004, to the Orthodox Church for the crusade on Constantinople. I wouldn't call the Pope sentimental, but it sounds like Br. Francis is still chafing from Vatican II.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

 **GeneDe** → **Kaylee Gallagher** · 4 years ago

Excuse me, but did you proof your comment before you posted? You wrote three-and-a-half lines and show two grammatical errors. The first: "...that THE Pope..." Didn't you mean: "...that Pope..."? Second: "Another APOLOGIZED followed..." I take it you meant: "Another apology..."

JPII apologized for many of the Church's "sins." Of course, this played right into the hands of the enemies of the Bride of Christ.

As for the Crusades, the question begs: if New Hampshire was violently invaded by Massachusetts; pillaging, raping, and destroying all of what Christianity (read: Catholic) had established according to the command of Our Lord to preach and baptize, wouldn't you -- if you lived in New Hampshire do all in your power to drive out the infidels and send them packing to that paradise on earth; that union of the soviet socialist republic of Ted Kennedy and Johnny Kerry, and defeat them so utterly that they would never dare to cross the border into the Live Free or Die State?

One more point: sentimentalism in religion is a destroyer of souls.

I would like to point you in the direction of the book that just may help you to see things in a slightly different light: Seven Lies about Catholic History.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

 **Astrid R** → **GeneDe** · 4 years ago

I hesitate to say this because I'm on your side :) but I wonder how many people have been converted after having their grammar corrected. Maybe many have, I don't know.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

 **GeneDe** → **Astrid R** · 4 years ago



In order for someone to attempt to get their point across, I think it only appropriate that they express themselves correctly. I was simply aiming in that direction. I think there is nothing wrong in helping to get someone to think and write in a way that may help them get to the next level and be able to discourse in an intelligent manner. You are probably correct in implying that some skin is very thin indeed. There has been precedent in correcting comments on this website...

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schmenz → GeneDe • 4 years ago

GeneDe: I think the point trying to be made to you is that there is a tactful way of presenting your thoughts to someone and a non-tactful way.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Astrid R → GeneDe • 4 years ago

It seems you did understand the point being made, unless I misunderstand you.

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Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M. Mod → Kaylee Gallagher • 4 years ago

Kaylee: As the article's brief introduction notes, "Sentimental Theology" was written "in the late 1940's." It would therefore have been impossible for the author to know of those apologies, or of Vatican II.

Whatever those apologies of the late Holy Father meant, they do not implicate devout Crusaders, like Saint Louis IX, or Blessed Charles the Good, son of Saint Knute; nor the many Popes who nobly called for the liberation of the Holy Land from the infidel, like Blessed Urban II, who famously preached the First Crusade in 1095; nor Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, who preached for the Second Crusade.

Brother Francis would not defend the sacking of Constantinople (it was not a crusade) by the Crusaders. The pope of the day, Pope Innocent III, condemned it, concerning which you may read some details here: <http://catholicism.org/russia-...>

There are numerous full-length defenses of the Crusades and the Inquisition. No serious Catholic student of history (including Brother Francis -- RIP) would say that every deed carried out in the name of either of these two glorious endeavors was good and just, but condemning them outright is entirely unreasonable. I would suggest reading some good Catholic literature on the matter, rather than taking the facile position that a couple of papal apologies serve to condemn the Inquisition and the Crusades *in globo*.

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jdumon → Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M. • 4 years ago

■ Brother Andre Marie, yes, you are right but the papal apologies for the Crusades are regarded by ignorant catholic people, atheists and muslims as if the Crusades as a whole should be rejected definitively, likening them as the outdated past wrongdoings of the imperialism of the Roman Catholic Church. In that, these apologies are confusing and sowing the trouble in the frail minds of the catholic people who are swallowing as infallible words everything that is spoken by a pope in every issue..

Besides the fact that they in no way commit the papal infallibility, they are strongly illustrating the prophetic words that Pope Pius XII wrote in 1933 to his friend the Count Galeazzi:

"“I hear around me partisans of novelties who want to demolish the Holy Sanctuary, destroy the universal flame of the Church, reject her adornments, and make her remorseful for her historical past. Well, my dear friend, I am convinced that the Church of Peter must affirm her past, or else she will dig her own tomb.”

I am sad to wonder if the post VATICAN II popes, though unwillingly but only with the aim to "please" the world, aren't helping in digging the RCC's tomb.

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

■  **schmenz** → Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M. • 4 years ago

I don't know the internal motivations of the Popes who have issued these apologies. But I believe they are aware that "perception is everything." We can argue that the Popes didn't mean this or didn't mean that but that carries little weight with the average soul. As the salesmen say, "It's not what you say. It's what people think you say."

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



This comment was deleted.

■  **Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.** Mod → Guest • a year ago

No, we do not believe that a person who dies in God's grace will be damned and neither did Father Feeney. We believe that those whose names are written in the book of life will die with the sacrament.

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This comment was deleted.

■  **Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.** Mod → Guest • a year ago

This is certainly an open question that is a matter of theological opinion. The Church has not settled it.

From the point of view of God, there are no accidents. (I mean "accidents" in the sense of mishaps, not in the sense of the nine Aristotelian categories other than substance. God has none of those accidents, either.)

If we have to revise or alter our teachings based on mishaps, then it seems that God is not God.

In the history of dogmatic theology, I'd venture to say that most theologians have held one or two opinions that most other theologians consider Quixotic or eccentric. I remember studying the Pohle-Preuss theology series with Brother Francis years ago. Quite frequently, one finds that the Scotists are the ones that hold a view not shared by other schools. They tended to be, well, "different," but they were Catholic. They were disciples of the great Blessed John Duns Scotus. Let us not forget that HIS minority view on the Immaculate Conception won the day in Pius IX's definition — even though he was not mentioned by name in *Ineffabilis*

[see more](#)

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 **bethannbee** • 3 years ago

I am reading a book by Peter B. Kelly which discusses "Extra ecclesiam nulla salus" and discovered this website while searching more deeply into that Church dogma. I highly recommend his book, "Cleansing Fire", for Catholics struggling with the terms of The Modern American church. It is available at www.cleansingfire-thenovel.com

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 **Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.** Mod → [bethannbee](#) • 3 years ago

Thanks, bethannbee, for your comment. I've read the book and recommend it highly. Peter Kelly was interviewed by Michael Voris, and that interview can be seen here:



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