



S S P X



# The Angelus

“Instaurare omnia in Christo”

## The Middle East

Archbishop Lefebvre and  
the Muslims in Senegal

The Situation of the Chaldean Christians  
in Iraq

Catholics in the Middle East



The Dome of the Rock is an Islamic shrine located on the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. It was initially completed in 691 at the order of Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik during the Second Fitna. It was built on the site of the Roman temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which had in turn been built on the site of Herod's Temple, destroyed during the Roman Siege of Jerusalem in 70 AD. The original dome collapsed in 1015 and was rebuilt in 1022–23. The Dome of the Rock is in its core one of the oldest extant works of Islamic architecture.

The site's significance stems in part from religious traditions regarding the rock, known as the Foundation Stone, which bears great significance for Jews and Muslims as the site of Abraham's attempted sacrifice of his son (Isaac according to Genesis 22:2; Ishmael according to Islamic belief).

For centuries Christian pilgrims still were able to come and experience the Temple Mount, but escalating violence against pilgrims instigated the Crusades. The Crusaders captured



Jerusalem in 1099 and the Dome of the Rock was given to the Augustinians, who turned it into a church while the Al-Aqsa Mosque became a royal palace.

Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin on October 2, 1187, and the Dome of the Rock was “reconsecrated” as a Muslim shrine. The cross on top of the dome was replaced by a crescent, and a wooden screen was placed around the rock below.

A few hours after the Israeli flag was hoisted over the Dome of the Rock during the Six-Day War in 1967, Israelis lowered it on the orders of Moshe Dayan and invested the Muslim waqf (religious trust) with the authority to manage the Temple Mount / Haram al-Sharif, in order to “keep the peace.”

In 1993, the golden dome covering was refurbished following a donation of \$8.2 million by King Hussein of Jordan.

# Letter from the Publisher

Dear readers,

The Middle East is the cradle of the Christian Faith. This vast region, including not only Jerusalem but also Damascus and Babylon, is the theater of familiar biblical history. But, for the last 1400 years, it has been overrun by the Quran, which imposes its despotic rule over vast expanses of the Fertile Crescent. If Islam tries to present a soft face to the gullible West, it always reverts to Muhammad's logic of holy war against and servitude of the "infidels".

At least in living memory, the Middle East has never enjoyed a lasting and real peace. Lately, however, because of the internal wars among diverse Muslim factions, the conflict has shifted and broadened. Not a day passes without news from the war front, which ranges from Damascus to Baghdad, and passes through Aleppo and Mosul. The Middle East epitomizes violence, explosions, and displaced families. Horror and devastation are the order of the day, and this has ensued relentlessly for years. And, as the waves of refugees are crossing its borders, the West is reluctantly forced to take a greater interest in the question, and hopefully will deal a final blow to the new beast coming from the land, ISIS.

There is little doubt in the minds of us all that this religious conflict is spreading throughout all European countries and is even spilling out into the Americas. Nature abhors a vacuum, and for a materialistic and spineless West, Islam will advance and soon impose itself. To counter the twin Islamist religious and demographic peril, can there be any other remedy than strong Catholic nations as well as young adults proud of their true faith and eager to raise a large family to carry Christ's name to all nations?

What are the reasons for the conflict, its hidden springs, its repercussions in the Western world? Europe first, and then, perhaps America? How much will immigration destabilize the old continent and lead to civil war before the end of this generation? These and other related topics frame this issue of our journal.

Fr. Jürgen Wegner  
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# The Angelus

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# Archbishop Lefebvre

and the Muslims in Senegal

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by Bishop Bernard Tissier de Mallerais, SSPX

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Archbishop Lefebvre arrived in Dakar as Apostolic Vicar in 1947. Even with his experience in Gabon, where he had tripled Christianity's numbers, he found himself faced with an entirely new situation: 50,000 Christians (Roman and Maronite), but also 1.5 million hundred Muslims! How to convert them?

## The Situation in Dakar

Yes, the situation of the Church in Dakar was much better than it is in the Middle East, where the Christians are "dhimmis," second-class citizens, held to special taxes and the object of general disdain, and even periodically persecuted and massacred by Muslims.

In the 1950s, Senegal was ruled by Catholics (alas, sometimes by Freemasons), and the future held the promise of a Catholic government in a Muslim country that was soon to acquire its independence.

The relations of the future archbishop of Dakar with the Muslims followed three bywords: cordial relations, warnings against the Marxism conveyed by Islam, and protection of Catholic life against Muslim influence.



## Muslim Friendships

<sup>1</sup> *Fideliter*, September-October 1987, #59, "Archbishop Lefebvre Mes quarante ans d'épiscopat" ("My Forty Years as Bishop"), p. 29.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Fadiouth is an island situated where a river joins the ocean; it was entirely Catholic.

<sup>4</sup> *Fideliter*, *ibid.* p. 30.

First of all, Archbishop Lefebvre's wisdom led him to cultivate the most cordial relations with the Muslim religious leaders. He even spoke of what unites Catholics and Muslims: "Belief in one God." He realized, thanks to the universities and the study circles organized by the Catholics, that "the Muslim elite looks towards the Church." Ababacar Sadikhe Thiam was a dear friend to him, and considered him as "more than a friend, a brother, a true spiritual guide, a man of God and of faith." God alone knows if such a Muslim was able in this way to receive the grace of an "implicit baptism of desire." Archbishop Lefebvre acted gently, careful never to be rough with souls. For Archbishop Lefebvre, evangelization had to go hand in hand with a Catholic political influence. Catholicism had to maintain its power, at a time when Islam was starting to make worrisome progress.

"We must reread the letters that Pope St. Pius V addressed to the king of Spain. The pontiff judges Islam, and he, the victor of Lepanto, knows what he is talking about! He denounces the dangers it presents for Catholicism. The pope asks Philip II to act strongly and courageously against Islam, to keep the immorality it spreads from contaminating Catholic society. Everyone knows that at the time, many Catholics in the south of Spain were seduced by Islam >

# Chaldean Christians in Iraq

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## Interview with a priest of the Chaldean Catholic Church

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The following is an interview with a priest of the Chaldean Catholic Church concerning the situation of his church in Iraq. The conversational style has been retained throughout.

**Angelus Press:** Father, you are a Chaldean priest who left Iraq in the early 1990s and arrived in the United States as a refugee. You have now ministered to Chaldean communities throughout the country. The readers of *The Angelus* are eager to know more about the origin of the conflict in the Middle East. Why do they fight in Arab countries?

**Father:** For me, only one thing accounts for this warfare that has been going on for over 1,400 years. Today we are focused on ISIS. But this and all other groups are practicing the religion as they have in the book, the Koran. They are legally

following what is in the Constitution of Iraq; Sharia Law.

**Angelus Press:** Do you mean the Jihad?

**Father:** They are practicing the Jihad, but the Sharia includes other elements of the law like the *dhimmi*. If you are Christian, then you are a second or third rate citizen. Some in the Church hierarchy refuse to call us Chaldeans and prefer to call us Christians, so that we are virtually forced to agree to what the Koran says, and, as a counterpart, we are protected by the Muslim country, constitution, and leader.

**Angelus Press:** Given the present situation in Iraq, would not this be a half-way decent way of life?

**Father:** This servile situation goes against my





civil status. I am a Chaldean and I am a citizen by right. I was there before Islam came, that land is mine. The Chaldeans are the original ethnic people, the Babylonians, whereas the Arabs were the invaders. We own Iraq, but we have no power. We have the original culture, race, and language.

**Angelus Press:** Father, you seem to be talking of Chaldea as a race. Does that encompass also the Chaldean Rite?

**Father:** Among those who share the Chaldean ethnicity, most are Christians, but some are unbelievers or Muslims. Among the Christians, the large majority is Catholic (with various rites: Chaldeans, Armenian, or Roman), whereas the other Christians (Nestorians, Syrians, Armenians, Protestants) represent only 20% of

the Chaldeans. The Chaldean Rite as well as the Syro-Malabar Rite are Syro-Oriental rites, and in this, they differ from other oriental rites, like the Maronite Rite (Syro-Occidental Rite) or the Armenian Rite. All the Catholic rites share in the threefold unity of the Catholic Church: the same Faith, the same valid seven sacraments, and the same higher authority of the pope.

**Angelus Press:** Could you give us some numbers as to how much the Catholic population has decreased in your country?

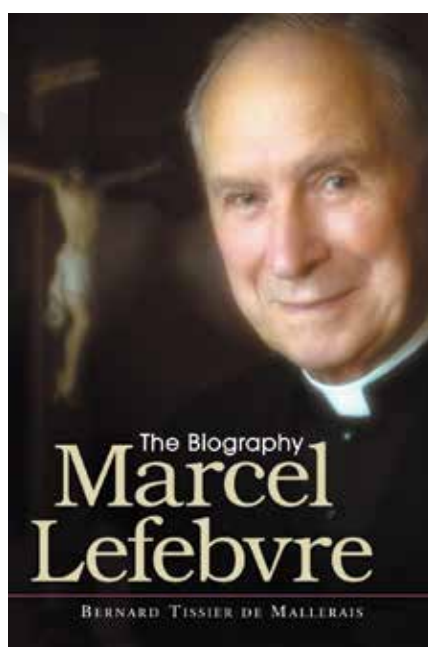
**Father:** At the time of Saddam Hussein, there were 1.5 million Christians, including Protestants and, among these, the Catholic Chaldeans counted 800,000. In today's Iraq the total number of Christians is only 300,000. Most of them >

Chaldean Church in Syria



# Marcel Lefebvre: The Biography

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This comprehensive work by Bishop Tissier de Mallerais is an insightful look at the life of one of the most influential bishops in the 20th Century and in the history of the Church. Here is a life that cannot be overlooked. The biography takes us through his early childhood in a deeply Catholic family in France, through his days in the French Seminary in Rome. From there it carries us to his missionary days in Africa, and his meteoric rise through the Church's ranks, including his role as Superior General of the Holy Ghost Fathers. Finally, much attention is given to the most profound and important chapter in his life: the founding and direction of the Society of St. Pius X. A true gem for anyone interested in this Athanasius of our time, and indispensable for anyone studying the history of the Catholic Church.

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# A Closer Look at Immigration

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Interview with Fr. Gregory Celier, SSPX

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**Angelus Press:** Has there been much magisterial writing on the issue of immigration?

**Fr. Celier:** Since the Council, this theme has frequently been broached with the “Annual Migrants’ Day.” Yet, prior to Pope Pius XII, there is almost nothing written, although the 19th and 20th centuries saw massive emigration. Aid societies were founded, but few speeches are to be found. As for theologians, the majority of them have ignored the migrations of modern times.

**Angelus Press:** Where should we start this issue?

**Fr. Celier:** We need to start by defining the word *immigrant*. According to the dictionary, to immigrate means to enter a foreign country for the purpose of settling there. It involves both the notion of changing countries and the

notion of settlement. Among other scenarios, a tourist visiting a foreign country does not fit this definition. That being established, it is appropriate to make a few distinctions.

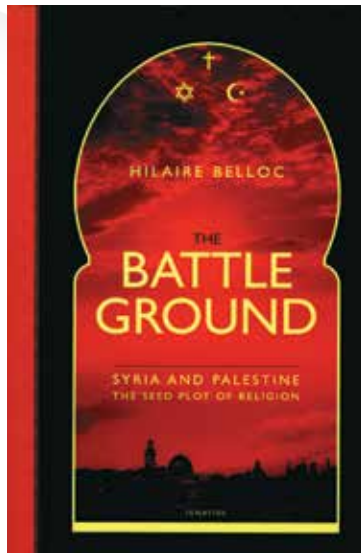
**Angelus Press:** What distinctions?

**Fr. Celier:** Some enter a country called by their employer in his professional capacity. These are what we call “expatriates,” and few of them stay long in the host country. Hence, they are closer to tourists than to immigrants. Then, some may arrive in a country as a result of being violently expelled from their home country. This is the case of “displaced persons,” a rather massive reality since World War II. Finally, there are those who, of their own choice, enter a country to find a better life and work. Of this group, some are legal, and some illegal, >

# The Battleground

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Syria and Palestine, the Seed Plot of Religion



In this religious-biblical oriented history, Belloc provides a full and fair treatment of the ancient Jews and other Middle Eastern cultures and their impact in history and in today's world. He affirms a special divine design in the story of Syria and particularly of Israel, reaching a climax in the event of the Crucifixion of Christ. His famous motto, "Europe is the Faith, the Faith is Europe" has been interpreted as a form of religious ethnocentrism. But he was making the point that what we regard as the greatest cultural, political, and artistic achievements of Western civilization stem from the old creed. Without the one, the other would not exist.



# Christians in the Middle East

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by Gabriel S. Sanchez

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The Middle East, the historic birthplace of Christianity, remains home to a diverse but dwindling Catholic population, along with several non-Catholic confessions. For 1,400 years, the children of the false prophet of Mohammed have subjected Mid-Eastern Christians to innumerable persecutions, often forcing those left living to survive as little more than second-class citizens. Even ostensibly secular states such as Turkey continue to actively discriminate against its native Christian populations. With the rise of the so-called Islamic State (ISIS), along with numerous uprisings falsely known as the “Arab Spring,” Christians have once again found the Muslim sword at their throats. Moreover, the destabilization of Iraq and Syria has emboldened numerous Islamic groups to wage war against each other while trampling over Christians

and other religious minorities. The situation for Christianity in the region is dire, with some opining that this already modest population may be reduced to a mere remnant in the coming decades.

This article surveys briefly the situation of Mid-East Catholics with discussions of the region’s other Apostolic Christian communions. It is important to note that these churches can be broken into four distinct groups, none of which are in official communion with one another: (1) Catholics belonging to several *sui iuris* (autonomous) churches made up of distinct rites, along with several small Latin Catholic populations; (2) Eastern Orthodox churches following the Byzantine Rite in communion with one another, but which broke communion with Rome during the early centuries of the second

# Orientalium Dignitas

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Excerpts from Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas*

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*Editor's Note:* The following are excerpts from Pope Leo XIII's papal encyclical *Orientalium Dignitas*, which was promulgated on November 30, 1894. Nearly half-a-century earlier, Blessed Pius IX dispatched his *Epistle to the Easterners* which, among other things, invited the patriarchs of the Eastern Orthodox Church to reestablish communion with Rome. These efforts would be continued during the reigns of St. Pius X, Benedict XV, Pius XI, and Pius XII, all of whom took positive action to both uphold the rights and dignity of the *sui iuris* Eastern Catholic churches in communion with Rome and extend a hand of friendship toward the non-Catholic populations of the East in the service of unity.

The Churches of the East are worthy of the glory and reverence that they hold throughout the whole of Christendom in virtue of those extremely ancient, singular memorials that they have bequeathed to us. For it was in that part of the world that the first actions for the redemption of the human race began, in accord with the all-kind plan of God. They swiftly gave forth their yield: there flowered in first blush the glories

of preaching the True Faith to the nations, of martyrdom, and of holiness. They gave us the first joys of the fruits of salvation. From them has come a wondrously grand and powerful flood of benefits upon the other peoples of the world, no matter how far-flung. When blessed Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, intended to cast down the manifold wickedness of error and vice, in accord with the will of Heaven, he brought the light of

# Mount Carmel

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by Fr. Christopher Danel

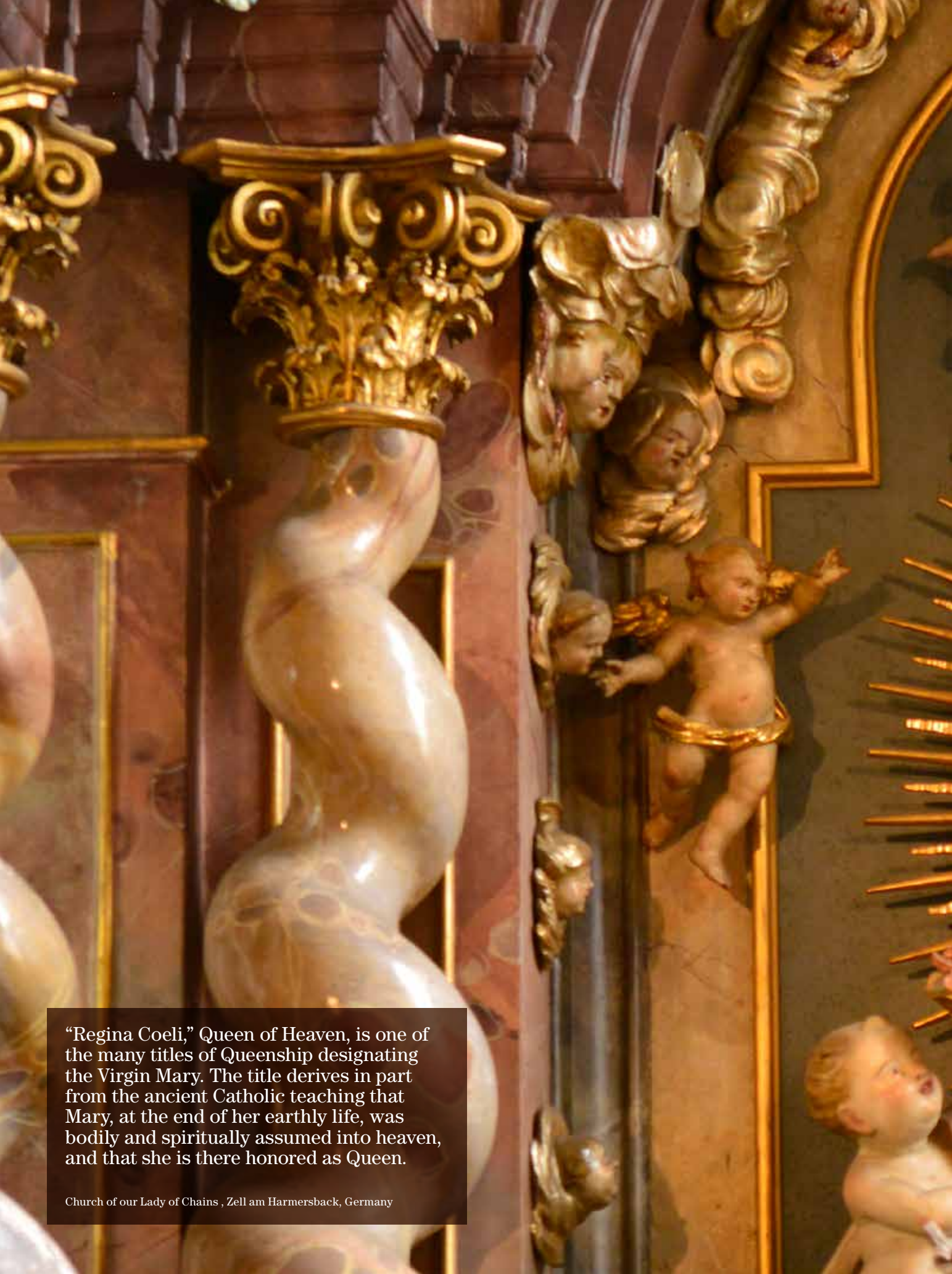
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Where the Middle East meets the Mediterranean, Mount Carmel, the refuge of prophets and haven of monks, towers over the Levantine coast just as its influence has continued to tower over the spiritual life of the Church mystically. “Our Lady of Mount Carmel has had an immense influence in spirituality and in the life of the Church along the centuries. It is good for us to recall a little of the history of the Carmelite Order, especially as today, with the grace of God, we are witnessing alongside our Society—we could almost say in our Society—the resurrection of authentic Carmels, in which we rejoice greatly” (Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre, July 14, 1985).

Mount Carmel has been described as a “privileged place of silence and beauty—*lieu privilégié de silence et de beauté*” (Archbishop Lefebvre). It is not a tall, isolated peak like Sinai, Tabor, or Hermon. Rather, it is a fifteen-mile long range only ten miles west of Nazareth which ends at a high promontory at the coast near the Crusader city of Acre. It is covered with a verdant forest of pines and oaks, much of which is a

national park, with a spring gushing clear water from the south side, known as the spring of the Prophet. The range has many caves, and it was to these that the prophets sought refuge to be alone with God. It is a place that was certainly well-known and visited by Our Lord, Our Lady, and the Apostles.

Much of the life of the Prophet Elias was spent on Carmel. On its summit he prepared the famous



“Regina Coeli,” Queen of Heaven, is one of the many titles of Queenship designating the Virgin Mary. The title derives in part from the ancient Catholic teaching that Mary, at the end of her earthly life, was bodily and spiritually assumed into heaven, and that she is there honored as Queen.

Church of our Lady of Chains , Zell am Harmersback, Germany





# Bastion of the Faith

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by Fr. Dominique Bourmaud, SSPX

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Alfredo Ottaviani (1890-1979) was born in Rome in a humble family, as his father was a baker. He studied with the Brothers of the Christian Schools across the Tiber, at the Pontifical Roman Seminary and the Athenaeum *S. Apollinare*, from which he received his doctorates in philosophy, theology, and canon law. He was ordained to the priesthood in March 1916.

## A Life Sketch

He was soon nominated Professor of Scholastic Philosophy and of Ecclesiastical Public Law (his preferred discipline) at the Urbanian University and, later, at the Juridical Atheneum of *San Apollinare*. He became

successively a substitute at the Secretary of State and advisor to the Supreme Congregation of the Holy Office. After 17 years of labor, in 1959, he became its Pro-Prefect—the Pope holding the title of Prefect. That is when he was consecrated a bishop by Pope John XXIII, taking the Episcopal motto *Semper Idem*—Always the same—which reflected his conservative theology.

Already as a seminarian, Alfredo was formed by the struggle against the Church's fierce enemies, "Freemasonry and Hebraism reign by means of the Minister Sidnei Sonnino." In 1937, Pius XI used his services in the writing of *Divini Redemptoris* against communism, which he called "intrinsically perverse." His political studies, which led to the publication of the *Institutiones Juris Publici Ecclesiastici*, made him the herald of Christ the King against the



trends of John Courtney Murray and the liberals. Here are some of his most salient teachings on this matter:

“I have said, first of all, that *the State has the duty of professing its religion socially*. Men united socially are no less subject to God than when they are taken as individuals, and the civil society, no less than individual men, is in God’s debt, under Whom, as Author, it is gathered together, by whose power it is preserved, by



Cardinal Ottaviani

whose goodness it has received the great treasure of good things which it enjoys. Thus, as it is not licit for any individual to fail in his duty to God and to the religion by which God wills to be honored, in the same way, states cannot, without serious moral offense, conduct themselves as

if God were non-existent or cast off the care of religion as something foreign to themselves or of little moment.”

Pius XII quickly became preoccupied by the advances which some Western Church leaders were making toward the Communists, and also by the inroads Neo-Modernists were making within the Church. The Pope secretly convoked Ottaviani for the formation of a preparatory commission for a future ecumenical council for the “redefinition of various points of the Catholic doctrine threatened by errors, not only theological, but also moral and philosophical, and even sociological.” But, seeing that division reigned within the commission itself, Pius XII blocked everything. The only outcome was to be the forceful encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950, with Ottaviani’s contribution, which condemns the *Nouvelle Théologie* launched by Fr. Henri de Lubac in the spirit of Teilhard de Chardin.

Cardinal Ottaviani participated in the 1963 papal conclave, which selected Giovanni Battista Montini as Pope Paul VI. He was also the Dean of Cardinals during the conclave, and as such, he had the honor of crowning with the tiara, on 30 June, the very pope who would give it away. That was to be the only conclave he attended since, in 1976, the age restriction of 80 was already in effect.

## Pre-Vatican II Battles

No sooner was Pius XII buried than changes were in the wind. At the beginning of 1962, Cardinal Ottaviani had notified the Jesuit superiors that the theologian Karl Rahner had been placed under Roman pre-censorship and could not lecture or write without permission. Only months later, Pope John XXIII appointed Rahner to be *peritus* to the Second Vatican Council. Virtually the same strategy was adopted with Henri de Lubac and Yves Congar who, though suspected of Neo-Modernism, were subsequently granted the title of Council *periti* nominated by the Pope.

The pre-Conciliar battles which were taking place were inaugurating a new type of Council, a triangular power (Pope—Curia—Council), >

The Novel Commandment:

# “Thou Shalt not Discriminate”

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by R. Pa (*SiSiNoNo*, Sept. 15 2016)

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The recurring temptation to falsify the Gospel, reducing it to an insipid moralism, is inspired by the suggestion that leads not a few “Catholics” to regard dogmatic tolerance, which considers all doctrines as equally good, as the supreme criterion guiding personal and social behavior.

Its obstinate insinuation breaches the consciences preemptively subjected to the multiple corrupting influences of the school and the media. These spread subtly the paralyzing sophisms aimed at violating the social Kingship of the Incarnate Word for the benefit of the Babelic syncretism promoted by the champions of ideological confusion and moral degradation.

Tolerance, in virtue of its own implicit indifferentism, can be identified with the worthlessness typifying a world culpably dedicated to the sacrifice of the inalienable rights

of divine Religion to the idols of the eroding democratic societies. But it would be naïve to think that tolerance would resolve in the generic disposition to keep with our neighbors relationships characterized by a respectful and cordial benevolence. In the pretense of the neutral pluralistic “game,” truth in its categorical essence gets dissolved by the somersaults of a “dialectic” marked by its tacit and prejudicial negation.

This aforementioned deception, constructed on the coexistence on an equal basis of the most discordant philosophical and theological views, takes advantage of the psychological prohibitions implicit in the praxis of “dialogue,” which, constraining the interlocutors not to impose the inexorable difference between truth and error, precludes any reference, however minimal, to the true religion and the true morality.



Test your Mastering Ability over

# Modern Media

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by Fr. Philippe Bourrat

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The dangers and the insidious but real harm of the invasive digital world, which fascinates and modifies the behavior of all age strata of the population, are often under-estimated by those who are in charge of education. Yet, the stakes are high.

## The Invasion of the Device

We cannot deny that a regular use—not even an intensive use—of the internet and digital screens deeply modifies the habits of life and the amount and nature of leisure, and are the object of habitual worries of the mind. Rare are those who, today, escape the power of this tentacular beast.

Who can doubt that the spiritual life itself is

not affected? The spirit of prayer and the life of contemplation are inevitably diminished, mortified. Although prayer is not a technique, it demands some natural conditions and a proper environment in order to grow. The houses of prayer, churches, and monasteries, have always been places where silence was duly cultivated. The Christian soul and, a fortiori, the soul dedicated to God, must be a house of prayer and, for this purpose, avoid what turns it into a slave of technological tools which perturb and excite the imagination.

The constant glare of the internet and its infinite variety of words and images cause the user to become dependent on change and entertainment, accustoming the brain to ask always for more novelty, stimuli, excitement. Curiosity becomes the main motive of action



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# The Pilgrimage of Life

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by a Benedictine Monk

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The ancestors of the majority of U.S. citizens were, more or less recently, pilgrims from a foreign country. Amongst the others, waves of Catholic immigrants came to this country seeking work, a better standard of living, or, in some cases, simply survival. They came with the hope of one day becoming a citizen. They struggled to adapt themselves to our country and its laws while at the same time holding onto their ethnic traditions which in no way were a threat to the common good of our country. We thrive on the variety of cultures of which we are composed insofar as all contribute to strengthen the common good of the nation.

In a Catholic household, the head of the family, in the name of charity, should receive a poor man offering a meal and if possible lodging for a brief time. Our Lord says that what has been done to

the least of these would be considered as if done to Himself. God will reward all Christian charity and hospitality.

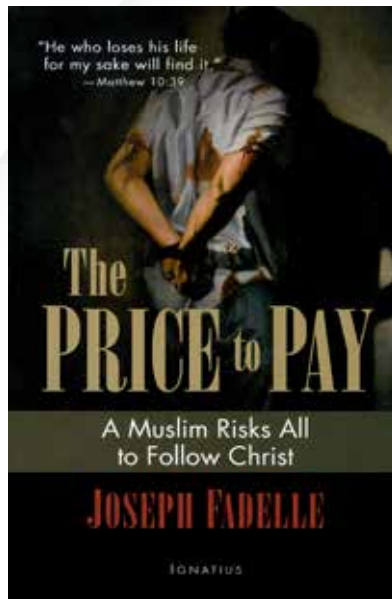
Imagine the scenario of a poor refugee becoming obstinate and violently forcing the generous family to let all of his relatives come and stay in this same house, thus obliging the host family to seek shelter elsewhere. The head of the family must defend the common good of his household. The immigrant is no longer seeking refuge, but a military conquest. He has no intention of adapting himself to the rules of the household, but of imposing his rule and abolishing the rules and rights of the legitimate owner. Immigration is quite different from invasion.

In a monastery the monks are like foreign pilgrims. As one author puts it “The Rule of

>

# The Price to Pay

A Muslim Risks All to Follow Christ



*The Price to Pay* is the powerful story of Joseph Fabelle's conversion to Catholicism. He risks everything—family, friends, his inheritance and home, and even his life—in order to follow Christ. In a dramatic and personal narrative style, Fabelle reveals the horrible persecution endured by Christians living in a violent and hostile Muslim world.

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# Saint John the Baptist

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by Dr. Marie-France Hilgar

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“Verily I say unto you: Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist” (Mt. 11:11); and from Honorius of Autun: “He is proclaimed greater than all saints, he is equal to angels only, that is why he is also, and rightfully so, called angel” (*Speculum Ecclesiae*).

St. John the Baptist, the *Prodrome* (the one who runs ahead to make an announcement) has given many painters and sculptors the occasion of representing him in art form. We will in this article divide the life of Our Lord’s cousin into six sections: the announcement of his birth to Zaccharias, his birth and youth, his predication, the baptism of Our Lord, his decapitation, and his incineration.

## The Announcement

“There was in the days of Herod a certain priest named Zaccharias of the house of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth....And they had no child, because that Elizabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years....According to the custom of the priest’s office, his lot was to

burn incense when they went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without...And then appeared unto him an angel of the Lord...the angel said unto him ‘Fear not Zaccharias for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John” (Lk. 1:5-13).

Among the many representations, we have chosen a sculpture by Andrea Pisano on >





Florence Baptistery - South Portal by Andrea Pisano- 1336. Histories of St John the Baptist

# Islam & American Civil Religion

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by Dr. John Rao

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Chesterton describes the feeling of a Catholic entering a mosque as that of “the presence of absence.” Having been in a number of mosques myself, I know exactly what he means. There is much about their very structure that seems familiarly Eastern Christian, and the sight of many sincere people fervently praying within them can easily remind a believer of the scene at a Christian pilgrimage site. Nevertheless, the central substantive element of Catholic worship—the tabernacle of the living God—is missing. What speaks to us from the place which should be occupied by the Word Incarnate comes only from the mouth of the Moslem preacher and prayer leader.

At first hearing, the words that he speaks might appear to express simplicity itself, making their acceptance and conversion to Islam a very

easy matter for almost anyone. After all, the religion really has only a single doctrine: the reality of the one, omnipotent Creator God, and the need to obey His commands. But this surface simplicity is deceptive. For one actually gets a lot more “bang for the buck” from the simple surface teaching of Islam, and there are three crucial reasons for this.

## The Emergence of Islam

The first of these is due to the fact that Islam, like Christianity, emerged at a certain “fullness of time.” It came out of an Arabia which had become a dumping ground for wandering Jews, Christian missionaries (orthodox and heretical), Gnostics, Zoroastrians, grumpy pagans, avaricious



# Education in Cleanliness

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by SSPX Sisters

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“Once upon a time there was a great king who reigned from his throne in a magnificent palace...everything was beautiful, and clean, and wonderfully decorated, and everyone in the palace had only one desire: to please the king with their dress, their words, their attitude, and their actions....Children, the greatest king, the King of kings, lives in our heart, and we get to please Him, to honor Him.”

## Mother Begins her Story

The little ones ask their mother questions, they do not understand very well, and with eyes full of wonder they learn that their soul is more beautiful

than the most beautiful palace on earth, since Jesus Himself has been living in it since their baptism! If our soul is a temple, our body must reflect the beauty of this interior treasure and our whole exterior must always radiate Jesus.

## Virtue of Cleanliness

Dear mothers, even little ones can understand this, and it is both the starting point and the deepest reason for an education in cleanliness and modesty. For a Christian, it is not so much a question of social conventions, it is a question of true virtue: my personal cleanliness must be to honor the Divine Guest in my soul. From their



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by Fr. Juan-Carlos Iscara, SSPX

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## What age is required for being a godparent at baptism?

As the spiritual life—the life of grace—begins at baptism, the Church considers the minister of baptism and the godparents as spiritual parents of the person baptized.

From the very early centuries of the Church, it was understood that this spiritual relationship imposes grave obligations on the godparents: together with the parents, they become guides and guardians of their godchild's religious formation,

assuming a life-long engagement to help him to persevere in the faith after baptism.

Thus, the 1917 Code of Canon Law clearly states that the godparents must consider their spiritual child as perpetually entrusted to their care and guide him by their example and teaching so that his whole Christian life fulfills what the godparents promised on his behalf in the solemn ceremony of Baptism (c. 769). Canon law insists forcefully on the rigorous duty of watching over the religious instruction of the child, incumbent primarily on the parents, but complemented by the

## *Amoris Laetitia*: The Confusion Continues

Although we are fast approaching the one year anniversary of Pope Francis issuing his now infamous Apostolic Exhortation on the family, *Amoris Laetitia*, the confusion caused by it does not abate.

In the past few months, the bishops of Malta and the German Episcopal Conference have issued statements saying that the divorced and remarried may receive the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion while continuing to live in a state of adultery, basing their statements on the pope's words in *Amoris Laetitia*. At the same time, Bishop Steven Lopes of the Personal Prelature of the Chair of St. Peter (former Anglicans who are now Catholic) issued a pastoral letter to his priests and faithful stating that those living in a state of adultery are necessarily prevented from receiving the sacraments. Additionally, various bishops in the United States have issued conflicting "pastoral guidelines" for their priests on the proper way to implement the Apostolic Exhortation — some take the stance of the Maltese and German bishops while others reiterate the perennial teaching of the Church that those persisting in an adulterous relationship are excluded from the sacraments. Sadly, these conflicting statements make it appear that adultery becomes a mortal sin based upon your location!

Aside from the serious danger this poses to

the salvation of souls, many priests have been put in very difficult positions as to leading their parishes. A priest in the Diocese of Pereira, Colombia, was suspended for the serious crime of preaching that the divorced and remarried may not approach the sacraments if they continue to live as husband and wife. The bishop of the diocese, Rigoberto Corredor Bermudez, stated in his decree suspending the priest that he had separated himself from the Church by not following the teaching of Pope Francis in this matter. For Bishop Corredor, it does not matter what our Lord or the Church has always taught, what matters is what the current pope says is the Catholic faith — a frightening statement from a successor of the apostles. Happily, soon after the decree was made public and the absurdity of Bishop Corredor's statements was pointed out in the blogosphere, the priest in question was reinstated and the suspension removed.

While we certainly must pray for Pope Francis and the bishops who have joined him in promoting the reception of the sacraments for those persisting in the mortal sin of adultery, we must also keep in our prayers those priests who are now being persecuted for teaching and preaching the Catholic faith.





# Converting Muslims in Lebanon

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by Fr. Patrice Laroche, SSPX

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Editor's Note: The following are the prepared remarks of Fr. Patrice Laroche which were given at the 2016 Angelus Press Conference, The Missions. In order to remain faithful to Fr. Laroche's intentions, the original style of the remarks has been retained throughout. Fr. Laroche's final, oral version of the talk can be purchased through Angelus Press.

Before proceeding with my talk, let me give you some background on Lebanon and the challenges facing the Society's apostolate there.

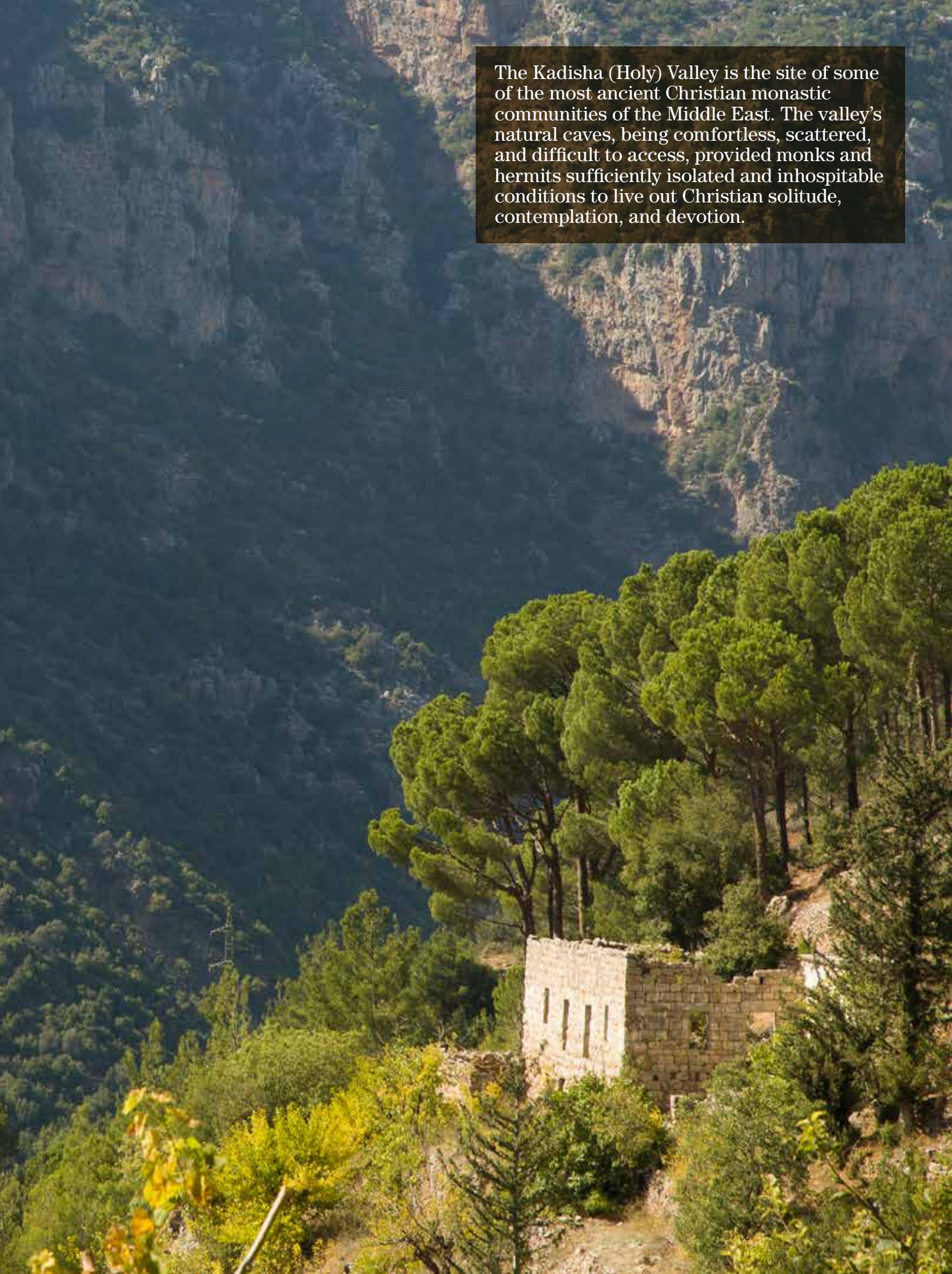
Lebanon is a small country of 10,400 square kilometers. It is 50 times smaller than France, but is populated with almost five million inhabitants, to which we now have to add about one and a half million refugees from Iraq and Syria who are fleeing the war.

Although we have had contacts in Lebanon for

nearly 30 years, our mission in this country is still a modest one.

The principal reason for that is that most of the Christians who are leaving there belong to an oriental rite: in general they are Maronite Catholic, Greek Catholic, or Greek Orthodox. Since the 6th century, Lebanon has been a refuge for all Christian communities that were persecuted in the Middle East. Those who belong to the Latin rite are only a small number, about 15,000. This means that it is not in search of the Tridentine Mass that many faithful in the region come to us, which is the usual way people seek our assistance.

The second reason our apostolate in Lebanon remains small is the war, which lasted 15 years (1975-1990) and the general insecurity that led many people to leave. Many of the first Christians we met in Lebanon have since fled to France, Canada,



The Kadisha (Holy) Valley is the site of some of the most ancient Christian monastic communities of the Middle East. The valley's natural caves, being comfortless, scattered, and difficult to access, provided monks and hermits sufficiently isolated and inhospitable conditions to live out Christian solitude, contemplation, and devotion.

## Letters to the Editor



Dear Angelus Press,

Thank you for your January-February publication of *The Angelus* on the theme of politics. While I have reservations about some of the structure and content, I completely agree that we need to be as sensitive as possible to the fact that liberalism in our country has infected its very life-blood. As Archbishop Lefebvre used to say about our times: liberalism is in the air we breathe; it's as easy to avoid the infection of liberalism as to avoid germs in the air...

That being said, I was surprised to see nothing about America's current, concrete political situation, except for a few passing and usually negative references. Against the backdrop of a startling and historical election cycle, whose results no one would call insignificant, wasn't there anything to say about the issues at stake, the policies being debated, the values being challenged, or the war being waged?

I know of many good people who spent this time on their knees, begging God by their prayers and by their tears, to save their country, communities and families from some unprecedented evils. I think they are right to see, in an outcome largely unexpected and unexplained, a positive answer to their prayers. Was it a complete, final answer? Absolutely not. Was it an act of God who continues to show His mercy? Absolutely. Can we speak to any of these things in future publications?

With every assurance of my support!

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Dear X,

Many thanks for your letter. We understand how you might be frustrated that we didn't address some of the more practical questions related to American politics today. Here are, hopefully, a few reasons to explain why we stayed at the level of principles:

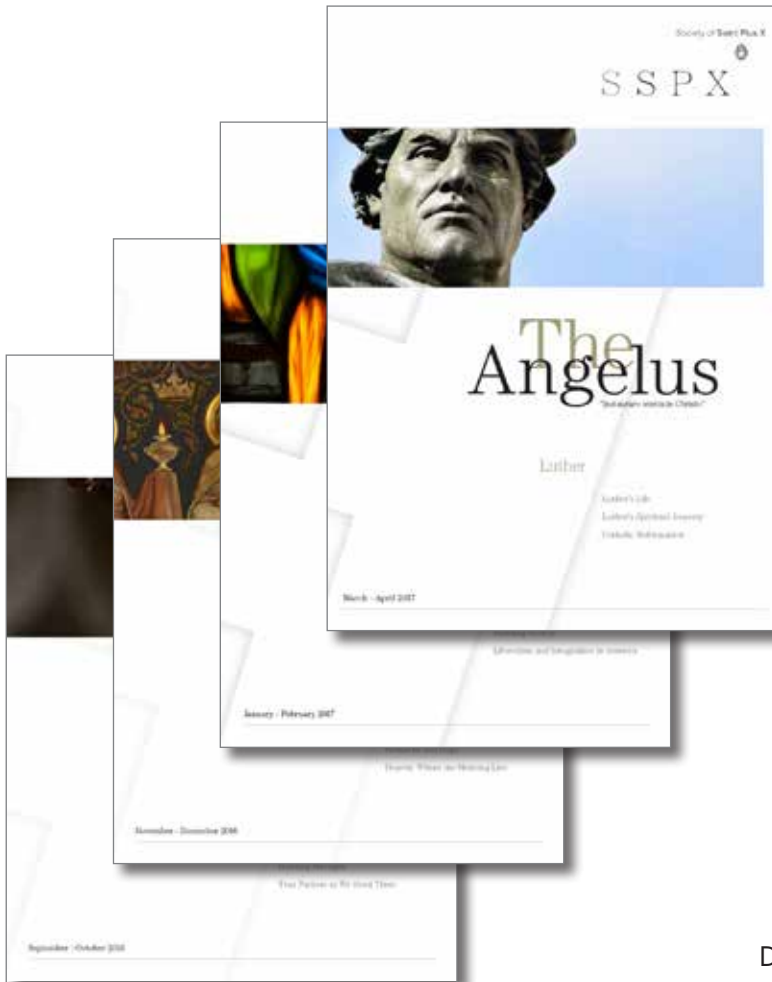
1. Under American law (the Johnson Amendment), non-profit organizations are not allowed to endorse or condemn candidates for federal offices. Since we're a non-profit organization, we are limited to what we can say. It's the same reason priests cannot mention candidates from the pulpit. Perhaps the law will change one day, but for now, we play it safe.
2. Behind the scenes at *The Angelus*, we are working months in advance to produce each issue: this means, although this particular issue arrived



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