



THE VISITATION

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Do We Need a New Catechesis?

By Fr. Robert J. Carr

If my parishioners know anything about me, they know I focus heavily on the combination of faith and science. I am in an area of Boston surrounded by educational institutions and am literally situated almost equally distant between the main studios of the public broadcasting powerhouse WGBH and the main campus of Harvard University. Not too much further are places like Radcliffe, Boston University and Lesley College. I am also one who strongly embraces faith and science which fits the area where I minister.

My parishioners and listeners to our parish radio program/podcast (catholicaudiomedia.com) know that I embrace evolution as much as I embrace the Trinity. I always remind others who believe Catholics are creationists that Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI taught that never has the Church understood Genesis as a mechanistic account of creation, rather it is a prophecy of destiny.

I wonder if we are not on the cusp of an earthquake of understanding what it is we believe. This is an important consideration because many priests today are demoralized through the great troubles the Church suffered, especially over the past twenty years. Being a Boston priest, I am aware of everything

from the recent study revealing priests in terror of false accusations and lawyers who celebrate when an accused priest commits suicide because they declare it to be an admission of guilt, to priests who feel worn down from the hatred many have for the Church. People may look at all this and ask: “Why be Catholic at all?”

I wonder however if God is at work in all this laying the groundwork for a new era in our faith. Maybe even the Devil is trying to prevent it from happening, an exercise in futility. We must understand only one thing: God calls us to persevere and He will do the rest.

St. Augustine taught and later St. Thomas Aquinas reiterated a central aspect of our Catholic faith today. We believe in scripture and tradition. What does that mean? It means we believe the Holy Spirit speaks to us through scripture but also through the history of those living our faith. This is something we celebrate especially in November.

They both taught that the last line in the Gospel of John where the evangelist claims there is not enough room in all of the world to hold all the actions and teachings of Jesus is not referring to physical space. The apostle instead means the room in our own understanding of Jesus’ words and acts. The

saintly doctors also taught this “room” expands. So, what the Church believed in the Eleventh Century, it also believes in the Twenty-First Century but at a profound level. We grow in our ability to comprehend. This is why our embrace of Sacred Tradition is so important. It is a key tool in our evolution of understanding of what it means to be a creature of the Divinity whom we know in Jesus Christ.

Those sincere Christians who embrace scripture alone as the source of divine revelation have a base of stone that cannot change over the centuries. Both St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas who lived prior to Luther’s Sola Scriptura teaching would be aghast at this foundational precept of non-Catholic Christianity. They both taught that Jesus did not want his words to be set in stone because they would remain superficial.

Let me give you an example: Recently, I saw on Twitter a tweet from a priest saying he was embracing the teachings of the Council of Trent because unlike Vatican II he said, these are infallible. I do not believe that was an accurate statement. I hope the priest understands the Sixteenth Century council’s teaching on creation describes our solar system before the Copernican Revolution. So, it is inaccurate when it says God

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One of the objectives for the Fraternity of Priests is to inform our donors about the ongoing financial health and details of the organization. We thank those many faithful benefactors who help make our service possible. Thank you!

Fraternity Financial Report

Monthly Budget:
\$4,750.00

Actual Donations:
\$3,716.00

Budget Deficit:
\$1,034.00

*Current as of
September 30, 2022.*

There are some months that are easier to write this article than others. Sometimes, inspiration hits, and I write effortlessly. Other times – like this month – I ponder in the midst of my other activities, I write and delete, write and delete, and wonder if I have anything worth saying. In the midst of this, the liar gets in there and makes me question my worth.

In these moments, I turn back to the Lord and He usually says one word to me: Humility.

All of the struggles of writing are usually found in the *expectations* I have for myself and what I think other people will think of what I write. *Pride*. The Lord reminds me to look to Him, not the world. He reminds me that I have to bear my heart. I have to bear my heart to Him... and to *you*. It's hard to bear my heart, to show my weakness, to be vulnerable. I'm not just talking about in an article, but with the Lord and with my people in the parish. I *think* they expect to have a priest who has it all together, one who can lead them and not put on to them any of my own inadequacies, insecurities or fears. I was listening to a talk Deacon Ralph Poyo gave at the 2021 Priest, Deacon, Seminarian Conference at Franciscan University ("Rise and Proclaim the Kingdom"), and he says, "You show people your heart, they'll follow you. You give people your heart, they'll die for you." Deacon Ralph reminded me that it's okay that I don't have it "all together." While I have to be appropriate about how I share my heart, I do need to do so for them to follow me... as I follow Christ. After all, Christ showed us His Heart, and He gave us His Heart.

In this month of All Saints Day, I see this as a call from the Lord to become more of a saint. He gives each of us the grace we need to be saints, if we accept the grace. Part of that acceptance is

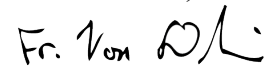
not having stony hearts. I *want* to be perfect – as perfect as I portray myself to be. But I'm not. I'm pretty sure you're not, too. Are we willing to humble ourselves in our brokenness, in our weakness, in

our insecurities, in our fears to share our hearts? Are we willing to allow the people around us to see us as we really are in all the mess?

Christopher West, in his teaching on the Theology of the Body, speaks about how we so want to be seen. He asks women which they would prefer: *to be looked at* or *to be seen*? They always say they want *to be seen*. We all want to be seen and *accepted*. Without this, we miss out on true communion. But if we are only showing our facades, and not our hearts, there will always be that niggles inside saying, "Yeah, but if they truly knew you, they wouldn't like/love you."

I continue to pray to be able to humble myself enough to reveal my heart, to share my heart. I pray, brothers, that you are able honestly to share your heart – with God, with those around you (friends, parishioners, etc.), and even with yourself.

Grace and Peace,

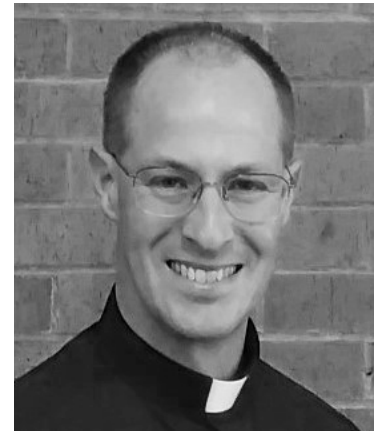


Fr. Von DeRosia

Coming Soon!

The Fraternity of Priests newsletter is turning digital. Visit fraternityofpriests.org to opt into receiving this monthly newsletter via email, or you may keep receiving this newsletter via mail if preferred.

Editor's Note: Please send articles, comments, and photos to the our editor, Fr. Bob Carr, via e-mail to editor@fraternityofpriests.org. Newsletter material from all Fraternity members is gratefully accepted.



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created orbs (the Sun being one of them) that revolve around the Earth.

We know the teaching from Trent is not undermined by our growing understanding of the world around us but it is deepened by it and then we build upon it with the teachings of Vatican II. The description of the Solar System is incorrect in Trent but the principles of creation are not. The Catechism of Vatican II is just as important as Trent and not to be cast away as fallible and vice versa.

Presently, there are many Catholics who seek a stronger embrace of tradition and want us to go back to the catechisms of their grandparents or even parents. These texts based on the Catechism of the Council of Trent are good for elementary school but today we need a newer version because they cannot form students well for today's world.

People used those old texts at a time many believed Mars was inhabited, this is why so many believed Martians were invading the Earth when they heard The Mercury Theater on the Air broadcast of that classic novel War of the Worlds on October 30, 1938.

Today, we know there are no Martians living on that desert planet. Why? Because we have regular pictures coming from there. Our understanding of our universe changed since those older catechisms were written, this does not mean they are no longer true but they are too superficial for our times.

Today, I see people who lament that no one is living the morality of their time. The reason is because they see no reason to because they do not have the faith to back up the morality. One hundred years

ago, people had the faith and they understood their morality within the context of faith. That is no longer the case today. When I hear of Catholic leaders teaching morality without introducing students to Christ first, I realize that is an exercise in futility. People need to know the why of their morality to live it. The why of our morality is based on understanding that we are creatures of the one divinity in the universe who calls us to love God and neighbor. We cannot live it well if we do not help people develop the relationship with the divine in Jesus Christ first.

So, as St. Irenaeus taught: "The Glory of God is a man fully alive." Our faith begins with a humility that brings us to understand that when we listen to God we also grow in our self-understanding, in a deeper appreciation for our world and in our ability to live peaceably. When our first step is to say there is no God then we cannot walk the path Christ calls us to walk.

As I write this, there is a question of whether or not Mr. Putin will be using nuclear weapons in the war with the Ukraine. As a baby-boomer, I grew up with the concern about nuclear war. What kind of intelligent human beings lead us to a place like this? Certainly not those who have any connection to a loving God even if they claim they do. This demonstrates the message of the Gospel. If you choose to reject Christ, you end up in a place of stupidity and when people are deciding whether or not to use weapons of mass destruction, we are in a place of stupidity.

I teach science is nothing more than theories and facts that either prove or disprove those theories.

Faith is a message of love based on who we truly are as creations of the divine being we called God redeemed by his Son Jesus Christ and led the Spirit. Science teaches us about the material world and faith teaches us the realities of our world seen and unseen. Science without faith creates the holocaust, faith without science creates the inquisition. We need an understanding of both and we need to teach an understanding of both so that people can live as Christ called us to live.

We may be at the cusp of that movement where people understand faith and science together and together we humbly listen to the Prince of Peace.

Unlike many other forms of Christianity, Catholicism embraces scripture but also tradition. This is why it is essential that we build a catechesis that does more than teach scripture or Catholic tradition and morality. We need a catechesis that brings both faith and science together in a way we give a comprehensive view of what it means to be human, Catholic and redeemed by Christ. What it means to know Christ and what we must do to serve Him as our Lord and Savior here in the twenty-first century.

We will not be invaded by Martians even though we have already invaded their planet. We will expand our understanding of who we are in God's universe and where we are going if we start to realize the need to teach the faith more comprehensively. We need a catechesis based on the expanded understanding of who we are as both St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine among others taught was Jesus' plan for our faith all along.

Please send us your prayer intentions: _____

THANK YOU FOR PRAYING FOR A PRIEST EACH DAY!

December 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 For the souls of our deceased FOP members	2 For prayer requests received	3 For our Holy Father, Pope Francis
Rev. 4 Romanus Tampah <i>Wa, West Africa</i>	Rev. 5 Cyracus Tang <i>Wa, West Africa</i>	Rev. 6 Frederick Tantie <i>Wa, West Africa</i>	Rev. 7 Matthew Tuurosong <i>Wa, West Africa</i>	Rev. 8 Giles Dimock OP <i>Washington, DC</i>	Msgr. 9 Stan Jaworski <i>Winnipeg, MB</i>	Rev. 10 Michael Nault <i>Winnipeg, MB</i>
Rev. 11 Francois Paradis OMI <i>Winnipeg, MB</i>	Rev. 12 George Dunkley <i>Worcester</i>	Rev. 13 Jean-Paul Gagnon <i>Worcester</i>	Rev. 14 Greg Downs <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Dcn. 15 Norman Gremillion <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 16 Harold Imamshah <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 17 Silverino Kwebuza <i>Alexandria, LA</i>
Rev. 18 Martin Laird <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 19 Ron Matthews <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 20 John O'Brien <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 21 John Pardue <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Rev. 22 Thomas Paul <i>Alexandria, LA</i>	Msgr. 23 John Mraz <i>Allentown, PA</i>	Rev. 24 George Winne <i>Allentown, PA</i>
Rev. 25 John Brennan <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 26 Robert Carr <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 27 William Carroll <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 28 Donald Clinton <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 29 Volney DeRosia <i>Boston, MA</i>	Dcn. 30 Paul Dow <i>Boston, MA</i>	Rev. 31 Gerry Fraser <i>Boston, MA</i>

A PRAYER FOR PRIESTS

O Jesus, Eternal High Priest, live in (name of priest), act in him, speak in and through him. Think your thoughts in his mind, love through his heart. Give him your own disposition and feelings. Teach, lead and guide him always. Correct, enlighten and expand his thoughts and behavior. Possess his soul, take over his entire personality and life. Replace him with yourself. Incline him to constant adoration and thanksgiving; pray in and through him. Let him live in you and keep him in this intimate union always.

O Mary, Immaculate Conception, Mother of Jesus and Mother of priests, pray and intercede for (.....). Amen.

Fraternity of Priests, Inc.
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Email: contact@fraternityofpriests.org
<http://www.fraternityofpriests.org>

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