



THE ARCHANGEL

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Church in Miniature

The present times are now commonly referred to as "unprecedented", "strange" and "surreal". We hear talk throughout the media on a "new normal" that henceforth defines how we are to organise our lives and relationships with others. A sense of profound unease and apprehension is felt by all.

Society has experienced rapid and deep change in the last decade. The single, most important target for social reform has centered around the family which is no longer defined as the stable union of man and woman, united in the bonds of marriage and blessed with the power to co-create with God.

As ideological wars ignite and political battles rage, the leaders of the Catholic Church remain mostly silent, except when they express support and encouragement for ideas and initiatives contrary to the divine order of things. A few lonely voices cry out, but in a clerical wilderness. Cardinals Burke, Sarah, Muller, Archbishop Vigano, Mgr Schneider and a handful of other prelates are courageous but their declarations fall on deaf ears. A spiritual and civil revolution has been underway for sometime and continues apace.

When David confronted Goliath, he was armed with his shepherd's staff and a few choice stones. These were enough to vanquish the great blasphemer of the God of Israel.

The shepherd's staff represents the efforts of Catholic bishops. Very few believe in the divine powers invested in them by their ordination. The great mass of bishops remains hidden and, when some raise their voices, they speak only in soft, safe tones that are lost amidst the din of protest and revolt.

The choice stones stand for the common family, and it is a single stone, balanced and smooth, that brought down the great oppressor.

We can never be aware enough of the spiritual and moral power of the family. As the basic building block of society, the family is a force that is able to transform society for good or for evil. The present disintegration of the family is the cause of the collapse of society as we used to know it.

Christendom was once built on individual families united in common creed under a common authority, ec-

clesiastical and civil. As the Roman Empire dissolved and disappeared, the remnants of civilization were preserved and cultivated in small pockets throughout Europe, usually under the example, guidance and influence of holy men and women assembled in monasteries. Monasteries served as a point of reference upon which local populations began to depend. They dispensed to the people the truths that helped them organise their lives in an orderly, godly manner and little by little, society reorganized itself into what would become the age of the great cathedrals and scholastic universities.

History books will attribute the success of Christendom to monasticism, but it is good to remember that without the concourse of fathers and mothers educating their children in accordance with religious truth, there would have been no great societal transformation. Saints may be made in monasteries, but monks and nuns were first raised and trained in stable families.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Catholic Church has never more depended on families as today, to continue Her work of praise and adoration of the Triune God, and of the redemption of man through the distribution of the seven sacraments. I sometimes wonder if the traditional forms of Church organization that we have been used to for the past 1500 years (stable churches, parishes and dioceses) is destined to eventually disappear, as priests become few and far between and governments increase restrictions on liturgy and creed. There is no reason to disbelieve that the Catholic Church will be outlawed as it has been many times before.

Christ's Mystical Body will then change in appearance and operation. Access to the sacraments will become difficult, for want of priests. As bureaucracy intensifies and tightens, common enterprises such as charities, schools, clubs and parishes will give way to government-controlled organisations that alone can meet state demands.

Christ's Mystical Body will adapt. Our Lord will leave the public realm and retreat into the privacy of the family home, which the early Church Fathers call the "Church in miniature". The family will become the privileged means of transmitting sanctifying grace to souls, through the active cultivation of all that pertains to the sacrament of marriage. But more on this overleaf.

Rev. John Brucciani, prior

Christ's Auxiliary Force

In his recent book *Christus Vincit*, Bishop Athanasius Schneider offers a compelling description of his Catholic upbringing. He was born in 1961 in Kyrgystan, a country in the USSR. His German parents were devout Catholics who organized their lives and their family to compensate for the scarcity of the sacraments. Priestly visits were extremely rare, and Catholic schools non-existent. His parents had no priest to marry them, so they married in front of lay witnesses. When Athanasius was born, his mother baptized him.

The bishop's parents took their faith very seriously. Despite the regime's militant atheism, they raised their children not just to know their faith, but to love it and live by it. They instructed their children not just with words but principally by their example. They were souls devoted most especially to the Holy Eucharist.

Bishop Schneider describes a typical Sunday at home. "On Sundays, we closed all the doors, drew the curtains, and knelt down—my parents with the four children—and we sanctified the day of the Lord because there was no priest, no Mass. We had to sanctify the day of the Lord, so in the morning we prayed the Rosary, a litany, prayers, and then we made our Spiritual Communion, to unite ourselves spiritually with the Mass which was being celebrated in some place at that time, at which we could not assist except in spirit. And we would invite the Lord to visit us and we made the Act of Contrition. It was our Sunday worship as a family, in the house, in the domestic church. Then, sometimes (once or twice a year), a priest secretly came, and it was always a very deep and silent joy."

Bishop Schneider's childhood offers a perfect illustration of the concept of family as a Church in miniature. He grew up outside of any network of priest and parish. His family life was organized accordingly. His parents understood that in the absence of the ordinary means of sanctity (the sacraments), their holiness would have to supply. They understood that *they* were the only chance their children had of persevering in the Faith.

Parents are the children's first educators. While we are ready to fight and sacrifice for this basic right, not all parents understand its true significance. As a child's first educator, parents inherit a very great responsibility. They should view their educational duties not merely as an obligation but as a ministry, much like a priest in regard to his flock.

So great and splendid is the educational ministry of Christian parents that Saint Thomas Aquinas compares it with the ministry of priests: "Some only propagate and guard spiritual life by a spiritual ministry: this is the role of the sacrament of Orders; others do this for both corporal and spiritual life, and this is brought about by the sacrament of marriage, by which a man and a woman join in order to beget offspring and bring them up to worship God." (Summa contra Gentiles, IV, 58).

Saint Thomas here highlights a lesser-known aspect of the sacrament of marriage. The sacramental grace is often perceived as a supernatural aid for the preservation of the marriage itself, to help the spouses fulfil their duties to each other and their children with increased generosity and self-sacrifice. Such a view is, however, incomplete.

All seven sacraments cause grace in the recipient's souls, but two sacraments give power to the recipient to cause grace in souls other than their own: the sacraments of ordination and matrimony.

Parents are not always aware of the sacramental power they wield. The marital bond imparts with it a capability to "propagate and guard" their spiritual lives not just by instruction and example, but also through their own personal and shared devotion. In many ways parental holiness conditions the child's spiritual growth. They are a source of life not only to the body but also to the soul.

Of course, a child may be influenced and sanctified by the sacrifices and prayers of other holy souls, as befits the communion of saints. Parents, however, wield a unique power. In God's plan, the child's sanctification flows from their fidelity to His divine will.

This is why family prayers presided over by the father are of critical importance. Family prayer is the father's, mother's and children's ordinary means of sanctification. Access to the sacraments can easily become futile if the *ex operato* graces are not reinforced by family prayer. Parents who are serious about sustained family prayer and devotion, of the sort that comes from the heart and is the expression of love, bring great credit to themselves and blessings to their families. God will naturally look to them for vocations. The first breeding ground and the first seedbed for priestly vocations is the family that prays together.

It is worth noting that family prayer is different from a parent's personal prayer. The sacramental bond unites husband and wife in a common quest of holiness and sacrifice. Together they should seek to come ever closer to God by their own life of prayer and good works. Too often parents feed only on the prayers with their children for their spiritual sustenance. This is not enough. Parents should pray with AND without their children! It is an axiom in the spiritual life that one can only give to others of one's *superabundance*. If we want good and holy children, we must be very good and very pious. It is outstanding parents that produce good children.

As the human element of the Catholic Church collapses into greater confusion and scandal, our Lord looks to fathers and mothers to prime their souls so that He can make them channels of His grace by means of the sacrament of marriage they have received. In the absence of priests and of Catholic institutions, like in the former USSR, the Church's survival depends on the courage and piety of its families. As a former anti-Christian militant explained to Fr Mateo Crawley: "*We have only one goal in mind: to dechristianise the family. We leave to the Catholics gladly the churches, the chapels, the cathedrals. For us, it is enough to have the family in order to corrupt society. If we have control over the family, our victory over the Church is guaranteed.*" *

Holy Souls in Purgatory

In 998 St. Odilo, Cluny's most distinguished abbot, introduced All Souls' Day to be celebrated on the second day of November. From Cluny the feast spread to other Cluniac monasteries, and then to the entire Catholic Church.

All Souls' Day is celebrated at the end of the liturgical year when the Church examines the fruits of the redemption. The first fruits are the saints in heaven, honored on All Saints'. Next are the holy souls who have gone through the battle of life, are confirmed in the state of grace, and are certain of eventual beatitude.

NATURE OF PURGATORY

These holy souls are detained in purgatory (a term in use since the eleventh century). This place is defined as a "holy hell" or a "sad heaven." Some like to locate it close to hell and fill it with red-hot fire. But it is enough to have radiant heat. Others, with better reasons, place it close to heaven; for them it is the vestibule of heaven, or, to change the figure, it is the side-door through which many enter heaven, who are not qualified to come in through the spotless Pearly Gates. Purgatory is much more like heaven than hell, for the souls detained there are not in Satan's clutches, but ready for God's loving embrace. They have their pains, but they also have their joys. They have their pains, because they cannot see God, though they are so close to Him. Their knowledge that their sentence is terminating builds up the desire for heaven to such a pitch that the pain of privation is most intense. But there is a mixed feeling. They also have their joy. Pertinently St. Catherine of Genoa wrote: "Apart from the happiness of the saints in heaven, I think there is no joy comparable to that of the souls in purgatory." Their state is such that it is more correct to call them holy souls than poor souls.

The holy souls know in advance how long they must stay in purgatory, and they can do nothing to shorten that stay. They are at the mercy of others. They are like the poor man at the football stadium—without a ticket. He sees the crowd and hears them cheer, but he cannot join until someone gives him a ticket. So the holy souls are dependent on others to get them to heaven.

HOW TO HELP THE HOLY SOULS

The faithful left behind can do just that, and they want to do it. The holy souls are their friends who have gone ahead into eternity. The faithful still love them and want to do something for them. They

can—through their prayers. This is certain from the clear statement (Macc. 12:46): "*It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead that they may be loosed from sins.*" The prayer used may be the one suggested by Cardinal Newman in his hymn for the dead: *Help, Lord, the souls which Thou hast made, The souls to Thee so dear, In prison for the debt unpaid Of sins committed here.*

The faithful can also help these holy souls through the Sacrifice of the Mass. They make an offering on All Souls' Day that Masses be said. These Masses help the holy souls, both because the Mass is so powerful in itself and because the faithful have coupled their sacrifice (this offering) with the Sublime Sacrifice. That these sacrifices are helpful is no guess, but a fact known from the same book of Macchabees (12:43) where Judas Macchabeus had his soldiers send drachmas to Jerusalem to offer up a sacrifice for the soldiers who had fallen in battle.

The practice of remembering the departed at the altar was widespread already in the early Church. St. Monica, to give one example, was familiar with it. When she lay on her deathbed at Ostia, she made a lyrical request of her son, Augustine (Confessions, IX, 11): "Bury my body wherever you please. Let that not be your concern. Only one thing I beg of you: at the Lord's altar, wherever you may be, remember me."

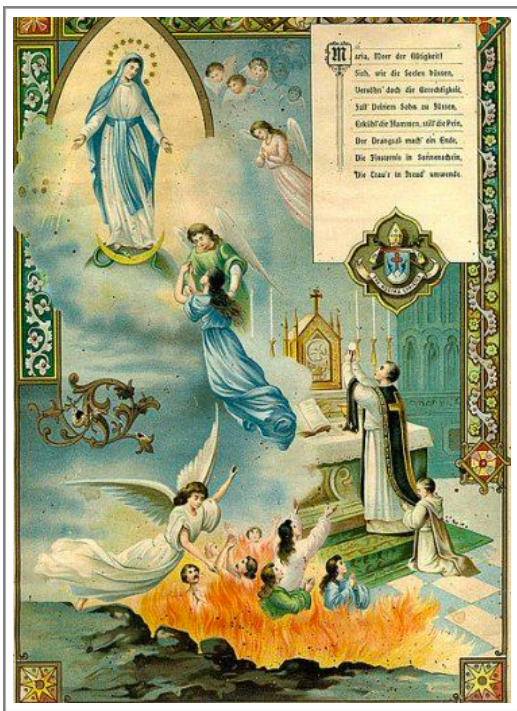
The faithful can help the holy souls through sacred indulgences that we can obtain for them - see last page. Of course, our prayers for the Holy Souls must be said thoughtfully. A prayer such as Shakespeare described in Hamlet is useless: "My words fly up, my thoughts remain below: words, without thoughts, never to heaven go."

BLEND OF GOD'S JUSTICE AND MERCY

Purgatory is a place where the justice and the mercy of God blend. Justice demands that sin be punished. Mercy limits the severity of the punishment. Our Lord says through His beloved evangelist: "The night comes when no man can work," but in His mercy He lets others work for that holy soul.

Fortunate souls, thanks to Extreme Unction coupled with Viaticum and the Apostolic Blessing, go directly to heaven. Others, many others, not so supported must enter purgatory and go into heaven by the side door. In His mercy God allows us to pray for the holy souls, and we do this best on All Souls' Day.





By the practice of Indulgences, the Church places at the charitable disposal of the faithful the inexhaustible treasure accumulated, from age to age, by the superabundant satisfactions of the saints, added to those of the martyrs, and united to those of our Blessed Lady and the infinite residue of our Lord's sufferings. These remissions of punishment she grants to the living by her own direct power; but she nearly always approves of and permits their application to the dead by way of suffrage, that is to say, in the manner in which, as we have seen, each of the faithful may offer to God who accepts it, for another, the suffrage or succour of his own satisfactions.

— The Liturgical Year, Abbot Gueranger O.S.B.

A partial indulgence can be obtained by devoutly visiting a cemetery and praying for the departed, even if the prayer is only mental. One can gain a plenary indulgence visiting a cemetery each day between November 1 and November 8. These indulgences are applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory.

A plenary indulgence, again applicable only to the Souls in Purgatory, is also granted when the faithful piously visit a church or a public oratory on November 2. In visiting the church or oratory, it is required, that one Our Father and the Creed be recited.

A partial indulgence, applicable only to the souls in purgatory, can be obtained when the Eternal Rest (Requiem aeternam) is prayed. This is a good prayer to recite especially during the month of November:

Eternal rest grant to them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

Liturgical Calendar November 2020		Mass
All masses live-streamed @ SSPX Great Britain		
1	All Saints	
	<i>2nd Collection for District seminarians</i>	9:00
		18:00 Benediction
2	All Souls	7:15, 8:30, 19:00
3	Feria	
4	St. Charles Borromeo, Bishop & Confessor	
5	Feria	
6	Feria - 1st Fri - Holy Hour 18:00	
7	Saturday of Our Lady - 1st Sat.	7:30
8	Twenty-Third Sunday after Pentecost	
		9:00
		18:00 Benediction
9	Dedication of Archbasilica St. John Lateran	7:15
10	St. Andrew Avellino, Confessor	7:15
11	St. Martin of Tours, Bishop & Confessor	7:15
12	St. Martin I, Pope & Martyr	
13	St. Didacus, Confessor	
14	St. Josaphat, Bishop & Martyr	
15	Resumed Sixth Sunday after Epiphany	
		9:00
		18:00 Benediction
16	St. Gertrude the Great, Virgin	7:15
17	St. Gregory the Wonderworker, Bp & Conf	7:15
18	Dedication of the Basilica of Ss Peter & Paul	7:15
19	St. Elizabeth of Hungary, Widow	7:15
20	St. Felix of Valois, Confessor	7:15
21	Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary	7:30
22	Last Sunday after Pentecost	
		9:00
		18:00 Benediction
23	St. Clement I, Pope & Martyr	7:15
24	St. John of the Cross, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
25	St. Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
26	St. Sylvester, Abbot	7:15
27	Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal	7:15
28	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30
29	First Sunday of Advent	
		9:00
		18:00 Benediction
30	St. Andrew, Apostle	7:15

National Lockdown
Again

Church Services
Not allowed

Please note - we are not always able to offer as many masses as we would like on Sundays since we also have to cover other venues. Also, there is sometimes Sunday mass at 11am. **Please use the noticeboard booking system to ensure that everyone is spread out across all the masses.** Please also observe as best possible the hygiene requirements of these strange times, out of respect for others.

<https://noticeboard.sanctusmichael.com/stmichaels/>