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DIOCESAN CIRCULAR – June 2011

LAST ISSUE? LAST ISSUE? LAST ISSUE?

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*Is this your last issue?
The decision is yours.
We shall be happy to continue to send the
Circular to you; but, only if you let us know.
Please send us a note, call us, send us an
email.
Many thanks to those who have already let us
know; your request has been recorded.*

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LAST ISSUE? LAST ISSUE? LAST ISSUE?

Apropos the above: this note does not apply to those who are receiving the Circular via email. You will continue to receive it thus.



John Paul II: The pope of life
by Fr. Frank Pavone

May 2, 2011 (LifeSiteNews.com) - On Sunday, May 1 the Catholic Church declared Pope John Paul II to be "Blessed," a step on the way to being declared a saint. This was done not as a judgment on the effectiveness or influence of his pontificate, nor on the depth of his knowledge of theology, but rather on his fidelity in living the Christian virtues.

The Church said, in other words, "If you want to follow Christ, look to John Paul II as an example."

Each person whom the Church beatifies or canonizes, moreover, has his or her special theme, some aspect of discipleship that marks his or her life. For Pope John Paul II, it is the theme of pro-life.

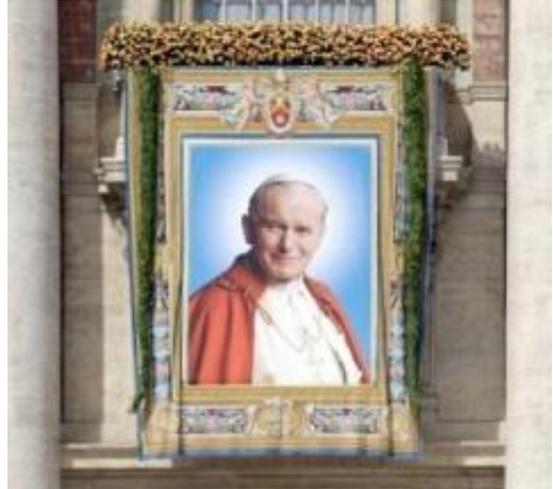
Not only was this a theme he spoke and acted upon continuously, but he gave the Church and the world a new way of understanding and practicing it.

At a recent conference, Dr. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, who served as Vatican spokesman under Pope John Paul, said that the key to his effectiveness was his conviction that each person was created in God's image and likeness. "He was a man profoundly convinced of the truth of those words in Genesis, 'God made man and woman in his image and likeness.' This gave him optimism even when he could no longer walk, and then even when he could no longer speak," Navarro-Valls said. "I think this was what attracted people even more than the way he spoke." (April 1, 2011, Pontifical University of the Holy Cross, Rome).

I was privileged to see this dynamic up close, as I served under Pope John Paul II at the Pontifical Council for the Family, an agency of the Vatican that he created in 1981 specifically to sustain and coordinate initiatives for the protection of human life from its conception.

This pope did not simply repeat the longstanding teaching of the Church that abortion is wrong. He did not simply hand down dogmas about what we can and cannot do, and how we are supposed to live up to the principles and the commandments, such as "Thou shalt not kill."

Traditionally, these and other teachings of the Church have been communicated in a philosophical context that is objective, deductive, and principled. There is a truth to which we have to adhere, and from which we deduce moral imperatives that are the same for everyone.



A photo of Pope John Paul II hangs from St. Peter's Basilica during Sunday's beatification ceremony.

Now John Paul II never denied that. But he also realized that people today don't think that way anymore. Modern thought is more subjective, experiential, and inductive. It relies more on personal insights and viewpoints. "What's true for me may not be true for you" is one of its favorite positions.

John Paul II was able to join traditional, objective thought with the patterns of modern thought in what came to be known as his "personalism." He focused on the dignity, the uniqueness, of each individual human person and affirmed their subjective insights and experiences. He taught that in each person we have a unique and unrepeatable being. And that uniqueness is precisely a reflection, or image, of God himself. Here is where the two worlds merge. Individual experience is not crushed, lost, or absorbed by the recognition that there is a God who has revealed universal moral norms. On the contrary, when God reveals himself to us in Jesus Christ, he reveals us to ourselves.

This is a key teaching of John Paul II. Precisely by accepting, not rejecting, our individual uniqueness, we connect with a truth that surpasses it and leads us, as individuals and a community, to fulfillment.

That's what he meant by the exhortation with which he began his pontificate and which he repeated so often: "Be not afraid!"

In other words, don't fear what you will lose if you welcome Christ into your life. You will in fact find your best self!

One of the most powerful expressions of this teaching is in "The Gospel of Life" (Evangelium Vitae) the 1995 encyclical that John Paul II considered central to his entire pontificate.

Newsweek devoted a cover story to the Encyclical when it came out. Religion editor Kenneth Woodward praised it as John Paul II's "signature statement" in history.

The encyclical calls us to "proclaim, celebrate, and serve" the gift of life, which is the foundation of society and of all the rights and goods we enjoy as individuals. He speaks in that document of how both the Church and state need to serve the human person in every circumstance, and identifies abortion and euthanasia as the fundamental and most serious moral problems of our day.

But they are not presented just as "issues." They are presented as contradictions to a deeper call to serve the person.

The pope wrote often about women, and one of many points he made is that we need to provide them alternatives to abortion, and forgiveness and healing after abortion.

In “Crossing the Threshold of Hope” (1994) he said, “In firmly rejecting “pro choice” it is necessary to become courageously “pro woman,” promoting a choice that is truly in favor of women.”

He challenged public officials to realize that when a state permits abortion, “the disintegration of the State itself has already begun” (Evangelium Vitae, 20).

And he called upon the young, and all of us, to build a “Culture of Life” with tremendous hope.

If he could repeat one thing to us this day, I believe it would be his words at World Youth Day in Denver on August 15, 1993: “Have no fear. The outcome of the battle for life is already decided ... You too must feel the full urgency of the task ... Woe to you if you do not succeed in defending life. ... This is no time to be ashamed of the Gospel. It is the time to preach it from the rooftops.”

By beatifying John Paul II, the Church is saying “Amen!”



PHILOSOPHY AND THE CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN – 39

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 – 1716)

‘God made the integers, all the rest is the work of man.’

Leopold Kronecker (1823 – 91) German Mathematician and Logician.

This outstanding mathematician and philosopher was born on July 1, 1649, in the city of Leipzig, which was then a part of Saxony. His father, Friedrich, was a professor of moral philosophy at the university there. His mother, Catharina (nee Schmuck), was the daughter of a lawyer, and was the third wife of the elder Leibniz. Little Gottfried’s father died when the child was only six years old and he was raised by his mother. It was she who instilled in him his life-long moral and religious values.

At the age of seven he began attending the Nicolai School in Leipzig, and it was here that he began to read the metaphysicians - especially the scholastics. Even before he formally entered the university, at the age of fifteen, he had become sufficiently advanced in his comprehension of Latin and Greek that he was considered by many to be legitimately able to rule adversely upon Aristotle’s logic (and more particularly upon his epistemology). It was also at that time that he commenced his serious study of Catholic and Protestant theology.

In 1661 he entered the University of Leipzig, where he studied philosophy (which was well taught) and mathematics (which was not)! He graduated with a general bachelor’s degree two years later. His thesis for this degree was entitled *De Principio Individui* (On the Principle of the Individual) in which he stressed that the essential value of any individual is not dependent upon matter or form but upon the whole being. Herein we may be seeing the rudiment of his notion - the ‘monad’.

During the summer of 1663 Leibniz attended the central German University of Jena, where he first encountered the mathematician, astronomer, and philosopher Erhard Weigel. It was this eminent Professor who drew his attention to a new concept - that mathematics could supply all the proof necessary of such subjects as logic and philosophy. It was the teaching of this patriarch of the early German enlightenment period, that number was the most basic element of the universe which was to have a major influence on Leibniz.

Following his experience at the University of Jena he returned once again to the University of Leipzig - this time to read law. His dissertation for the Master of Philosophy degree combined aspects of philosophy and law - through the use of mathematics. Within a few days of his examination success his mother died.

He submitted his doctoral thesis in 1666, at the age of twenty, and he published his dissertation ‘*Dissertatio de arte combinatorial*’. In this work he reduced all reasoning and discovery to the basic elements of number, letters, sounds, and colours. Although he was widely acclaimed by the intellectual community for his learning and scholarship he was nevertheless denied his doctorate in law at Leipzig. It was rumoured that it was the wife of the Dean of the faculty who had influenced his Examination Committee to make such an academic faux pas.

Without any further delay Leibniz relocated to the University of Altdorf, where he duly received his well deserved doctorate in law in February of 1667. On this occasion his dissertation was; ‘*De Casibus Perplexis*’ (On Perplexing Cases). He was quickly offered, but refused, a professorship at Altdorf. In the year 1667, the

long term Lutheran Leibniz entered the service of the Roman Catholic Baron Johann Christian von Boineburg and he promptly moved to Frankfurt.

His interests had by then extended to include science, literature, and politics. He did, however, continue in his legal career, and had even taken up residence in the courts of Mainz by 1670 - where he worked to improve the code of Roman Civil Law for that city. Any potential religious differences that may have existed between Leibniz and the Baron failed to result in any real friction - probably because Gottfried's life long dream had been one of a reunification of all the Christian Churches. Indeed, it was with Boineburg's encouragement that he produced a number of monographs dealing with the points at issue between the Churches.

In 1672 he travelled to Paris where he tried (unsuccessfully) to persuade King Louis XVI to expel the Turks from Egypt. It was his hope, by so doing, to turn the French monarch's aggressive attentions away from those sensitive areas that were of political interest to Germany. While in Paris he also proceeded to extend his knowledge of mathematics and physics under the personal tutelage of the Dutch astronomer Christiaan Huygens.

He visited England twice; first in 1673 and then again in 1676. On his first visit he had arranged to make an initial demonstration of his, as yet incomplete, calculating machine - at the February meeting of The Royal Society in London. He was elected a fellow of this society just two months later. By the fall of 1675 he had become internationally well recognised as a truly creative mathematical genius. His early studies of the geometry of infinitesimals had progressed, in the space of one year, to the discovery of the notation $d(x^n) = nx^{(n-1)}dx$ - for both integral and fractional values of n .

Unfortunately Isaac Newton had also been working independently (and unbeknown to each other) on the same area of mathematics. It appears that Newton had written two letters to Leibniz in 1676, both of which were to be delivered by way of the first secretary of The Royal Society, Heinrich Oldenberg, who was responsible for all of the foreign correspondence of the society. Neither of these communications was actually received until several months after their composition. This postal catastrophe led Newton (who was always inclined to a mild paranoia about his work) incorrectly to conclude that Leibniz had stolen his methodology. These disastrous accidents, not surprisingly, gave rise to protracted ill feelings between all of the parties concerned.

In 1676 Leibniz had also travelled to Amsterdam and, having met with Spinoza, he had become librarian to the Duke of Brunswick at Hanover (a post that he held until his death). Leibniz's other great achievements included his development of the binary system of arithmetic - perfected in 1679 but not published until 1701, as '*Essay d'une nouvelle science des nombres*', by the Paris Academy to mark his election to that body. He also continued to perfect his metaphysical system during the 1680's by which he sought to reduce reasoning to an algebra of thought: '*Meditationes de Cognitione, Veritate et Ideis*'; and '*Discours de metaphysique*'. He also worked on dynamics (kinetic and potential energy, and momentum) and his two part treatise '*Dynamica*' was published while he was in Rome - and was elected to the Accademia at that time.

He developed a strange, unique, and complex system of philosophy between the years of 1680 and 1697. Nevertheless, the entire structure of this philosophy rested upon only a small number of very general principles. He was convinced that, for each individual, there corresponded a 'complete notion' which is knowable in its entirety only to God. All of the properties possessed by an individual, at any moment in its history are, however, deducible. In 1710 Leibniz published '*Theodicee*' which tackled that ever popular problem of how evil can exist in a world created by a good God.

Leibniz is said to have been of medium height, broad shouldered, bandy-legged, and to have had a pronounced stoop. He was said to have been capable of remaining motionless, for several days on end while thinking - a feat that, to me at least, is somewhat reminiscent of the great Socrates. He was a man of moderate habits and had a quiet temper. While charitable in his judgements, and tolerant of those holding opinions different to his own, he was, nevertheless, reputed to be fond of money and very desirous of honours. His last years were sadly dogged with chronic ill health and social controversy - and he was deeply embittered by the neglect shown him by his peers. He died on the 14 November, 1716, and was buried in Die Neustadter Kirche in Hanover mourned only by his good friend and secretary, Johann Georg von Eckhart.

Having completed this brief account of Leibniz's life I will now attempt to discuss, as clearly and concisely as I can, Leibniz's philosophical views of God and of His creation. Early in his career he had become convinced that the essential attribute of all bodies in the universe is 'force'. By force he meant the tendency of bodies to move -

or to continue in their motion. The entire universe was, for him, built out of units of force; each extant body consisting of a number of these units of force. Hence, the whole of nature consists of an infinite number of such units. Leibniz called these units 'monads', or force atoms. Each monad he considered to be eternal, indestructible, and immutable.

Monads, he insisted, possess different degrees of clarity. The more opaque (and therefore the vaguest) monads form plant structures; the less obscure form the animals; and the almost totally clear form men and women. God is comprised of perfectly clear monads. There is no break in the series which extends from inorganic matter, at one extreme, to God at the other. Each monad contains within itself the entire universe - which logically, therefore, must have been there from the beginning.

Organic living bodies contain a 'queen monad', or a soul, which is the guiding principle of all the other monads which make up that particular body. Although no monad can directly influence another one, God had created them from the beginning to operate together in a complete harmony. Thus, when any one monad does something the others do 'appear' to act as if it had influenced them. All then act together - just as do the various parts of a complete organism.

We must try to understand, therefore, that the universe, as perceived by Leibniz, is dynamic and alive - and although this may well remind us of the ancient atomistic theory of Democritus the monads are not 'all alike' or 'purely mechanical'. Leibniz's opinion was that his own theory impeccably reconciled the science of his day with contemporary Christian doctrine and values. In his view of the scientific universe God was the supreme monad or being.

God, having set the universe in motion, then withdrew and let the other monads unite and separate according to their own intrinsic nature. Man, who was also a construct of these monads had a central controlling monad, or soul. Thus, man along with all nature, is subject to law, order, and uniformity. The entire universe must be conceived of as being driven onward, to creation or dissolution, by inexorable laws which are its inherent nature - and Man is simply an integral part of this process. Although man was in some way the goal of the divine creative will from the very beginning, he has remained part of the natural whole and is therefore wholly subject to its pre-established laws.

Leibniz, you will have by now observed, had successfully reduced matter to force - but he still had to deal with the problem of good and evil. How, in a universe of monads, can evil be possible? His answer was similar to that of some of his predecessors: this world is the best possible world - but it is not perfect! God had divinely limited Himself - when He chose to express Himself in finite beings. These limits have resulted in suffering and sin. Furthermore, he observed, evil serves to make what is good - really good. Just as my big mischievous cat 'Barney', through his naturally naughty behaviour, serves to bring the true niceness and gentleness of my little dog 'Goonie' into bolder relief.

Leibniz suggested that in the human soul there existed certain innate principles, which if followed logically, will lead to the establishment of criteria for 'goodness' and 'badness'. One of these principles is the all too familiar notion that we should seek pleasure and avoid pain. Reasoning from this fundamental principle we can prove that certain acts are 'good' while others are 'bad'. As I have said before, men do not always obey these innate principles because of their passions and impulses, but this does not prove that they do not exist - only that such men are ignorant of the underlying principles.

Man is unable to form an unambiguous perception of God, since God is the highest and most perfect monad and man must always remain lower and less perfect. Nevertheless man can have an idea of God's nature by taking those finer qualities that he finds within himself (such as goodness, power, honesty, and knowledge) and raising them to infinity. This results in the idea that God is infinite in each of these qualities. Since God is perfect and complete He cannot undergo change or development as do all other monads. He comprehends all things, and all time, totally at a glance. This is why the world which He created is the best of all possible worlds.

Just as the character of a monad is determined from within, by the law of its own inner nature, so a man's character is also determined by his inner nature (his impulses and desires). Will, for Leibniz, is simply the conscious striving of an individual guided by a clear idea. Men know what they want, and they strive to attain it. This striving is known as the 'will' - and choice is nothing more than selecting that desire which is the strongest. Men are never 'free' in any absolute sense of this term; for they can never decide for one action or for another regardless of their desires. We 'will' what our inner nature decides is best for us. Leibniz believed that he had,

by way of this theory, made it possible for men to realize the values established by the Christian faith.

The soul monad, just like all other monads, develops and moves towards self realization because of its own internal nature. Furthermore, Leibniz held that all knowledge comes to the soul monad, not from without, but from within itself. It is implicit within the soul and is a matter of the development of what is latent in the very nature of the soul itself. Experience merely stirs the soul to realise what is within itself. Since no monad can be destroyed - and as this is also true of the soul monad - it is therefore eternal and will live on (though the other monads which make up a particular body are separated at death). The human soul can therefore be considered to be immortal.

Every monad, as a center of force, has the power of perception - and can represent or express in itself the entire universe. The higher that the monad is on the scale, the clearer are these perceptions. In the human organism the queen (or soul) monad has before it the picture of the complete body and acts according to the laws of final causes - that is, by means of desires, ends, and means. Bodies, therefore, act according to the laws of efficient causes and motions, and these twin realms are in perfect harmony with each other. What Leibniz is trying to do is to erase (or at least diminish) the absolute difference between mind and matter (that has for so long plagued us in the past). He does this by holding that both are centres of force, but that the queen monad is a clearer and more perfect monad than those composing the body or matter. The soul monad holds its special place because it is a better monad, not because it is something different from other monads.

Finally, Leibniz felt that John Locke had not gone far enough when he suggested that 'there is nothing in the intellect that did not exist before in sensation' - for he should have added 'except the intellect itself'. Now German philosophy appears to have reached a pinnacle, and we have come to the point when we should consider Immanuel Kant, one of the greatest philosophical system builders of all times. Let us, therefore, turn now to him and ask: 'What is knowledge? How is it possible? What can we really know - and how?'

I look forward very much to talking about this with you again in two months. Until then may God continue to bless and keep you.

Fr. David Skelton. C.S.W.G. Life Associate.

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Canada's March for Life makes a splash in national media

by Patrick B. Craine

OTTAWA, Ontario, May 13, 2011 (LifeSiteNews.com) - Canada's record-breaking National March for Life made a splash in the national media this year, reversing a long-standing trend in the mainstream media of diligently ignoring the largest annual rally on Parliament Hill.

Over 15,000 pro-lifers gathered on the Hill Thursday for Canada's 14th annual National March for Life, which marked the 42nd anniversary of Trudeau's infamous Omnibus Bill that paved the way for abortion-on-demand.



For the second straight year, the march won coverage in all the major media outlets, including the CBC, CTV, Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, National Post, Metro, and Global.

In particular, the overwhelmingly positive coverage from the Sun News Network revealed how the new station will likely be a game-changer for national media coverage of pro-life issues.

The reporting was admittedly not all positive, however, with many media outlets giving equal attention to the small pro-abortion counter-protest, and the CBC reporting an estimate of 5,000 despite the official count of over

15,000. As well, while the Globe and Mail published a Canadian Press article about the march on its website, it was nowhere to be found in the paper's print edition.

On the other hand, Postmedia, which runs the National Post and a chain of local papers across the country, ran a relatively-positive piece headlined 'Party atmosphere on Parliament Hill for anti-abortion rally'. "Had it not been for the signs expressing sentiments such as 'Abortion: A Crime Against Humanity,' Thursday's anti-abortion rally would have looked like Canada Day on Parliament Hill, as thousands gathered under sunny skies for the 14th annual March for Life," it read.

Toronto's 680 News, one of the city's top radio stations, included a relatively lengthy and very positive report on the march in its news reports for that day. Reporter Cormac McSweeney is said to have been enthusiastic, putting emphasis on the word "thousands" and consistently using the word "pro-life" in the report. Two pro-lifers were interviewed.

Sun News offered by far the most complete and positive coverage from the mainstream media, however. Their top story Thursday morning was a poll they had commissioned in advance of the March showing that 59% of Canadians want legal restrictions on abortion and more than quarter want protections for the unborn from conception. They also ran an [internet poll](#) on abortion throughout the day.

Brian Lilley, the host of Sun News' Byline, dedicated his show Thursday evening to abortion, with an opening call for Canadians to build a culture of life. "We need to speak openly about what an abortion is. It's the killing of an unborn child," said Lilley. "[The unborn child] is a human life flourishing inside a woman."

"Not only do these abortions end a human life, they hurt the women involved. We need to help these women," he added.

Lilley also engaged in a dialogue with Abacus pollster David Caletto, debunking the myth that it would be political suicide for Canadian politicians to enshrine in law some legal protections for the unborn.

Lilley, and [Sun News coverage](#) in general were refreshingly clear, in a way perhaps unprecedented for a national media outlet, about the vastly misunderstood status quo of abortion law in Canada – namely that there has been no abortion law since 1988, and thus abortion is legal and state-funded up until birth.

Though there has been a spattering of media coverage over the march's history, it made its first major breakthrough into the media spotlight last year, fueled by the controversy over the Conservative government's exclusion of abortion funding from its G8 maternal health initiative.

This year's march won a huge amount of free publicity in the days before the event, after LifeSiteNews broke the story that Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson had proclaimed May 12th 'Respect for Life Day' in honor of the March for Life.

The perhaps unprecedented level of coverage was foreshadowed by the fact that the Globe and Mail, one of Canada's most pro-abortion papers, announced the pro-life event in advance, on Thursday morning. The Ottawa Citizen also announced the event beforehand, promising coverage and photos, as well linking to Parliament's webcam so readers could see the massive crowd.



DIOCESAN NOTES AND NEWS

- Fr Bryan Donegan has a new telephone number: 780-312-9479. His address coordinates remain the same.
- Joan de Catanzaro, wife of our first Canadian bishop, Carmino, died on May 9. Very graciously, we were permitted to use St Barnabas, Anglican Church of Canada, for the well attended Requiem. Joan was 89. May she rest in peace.
- **The Diocesan Office is moving!!** Our lease runs out at the end of July; and, as our "partners" in the lease (our long time auditors, Shepherd Moffatt Accountants) are not renewing, we must find new quarters. We have already "claimed" the new space, and although we will not be moving there until the middle of July, our mailbox is already active:
70 Bentley Avenue, Suite 102
Ottawa ON K2E 6T8
Telephone (613-233-3915) and email (anglican catholic@bellnet.ca) remain the same.



**The Bag Lady Papers:
The Priceless Experience of Losing It All**

Penney, Alexandra; New York: Voice/Hyperion, 2010
220 p. \$23.99 (US)



When Americans discuss tragic historical events - the Kennedy assassinations(s), the Challenger disaster, the World Trade Centre terrorist bombings - they tend to ask *What were you doing when such-and-such occurred?*

As for the author, she remembers only too vividly how she was engaged on the evening of 11 December 2008. Enjoying a life-style that enabled her to entertain on a truly lavish scale (fresh-cut flowers, vintage wines served in European crystal goblets, gourmet foods presented on finest imported china, the services of a professional bartender...), Alexandra Penney was in the final stages of preparation for an elaborate dinner party. After all, as a senior fashion editor for Condé Nast Publications, she could readily afford to indulge herself and her friends in true holiday fashion..

And then the telephone rang...

Picking up the receiver, Alexandra was greeted by an hysterical friend asking if she, too, had invested heavily with Bernie Madoff. Answering in the affirmative, she was told to turn on her TV immediately. Having done so, she was horrified at footage of the disgraced financier being led away by police and federal agents, but panic really set in when she learned that she was among the 13, 576 investors who had summarily lost everything. [The term for this is *Madoff'd*.]

With the guests soon to arrive, the author found herself frantically phoning her lawyer, her broker and literally anyone she could think of who might initiate damage control. At first, she was assured that since her holdings were primarily in US Treasury Bills, she was secure. On the following day, however, an investigation of the numbers on her certificates revealed that they were as fraudulent as the documents themselves.

Obviously, Ms. Penney was not happy (nor was her dinner party a resounding success).

As a disciplined career woman, she took the next morning off from her desk at Condé Nast, and concentrated on determining her assets and outstanding liabilities. In doing so, she learned that the former were simply non-existent; as for the latter, the situation was far worse than she ever could have imagined. She had taken out several mortgages on investment properties with payments soon to fall due, her rent for an up-scale apartment was expensive even by NY standards, the tuition for her son's private school was looming on the horizon etc.

Within 72 hours, Alexandra Penney had gone from carefree financial existence to near penury: all due to the machinations of one Bernard Madoff. She confides anecdotally that she actually found herself arguing with a pizza worker over a two-for-one promotion, something heretofore unthinkable. Such were the straits in which she found herself.

Stated simply, Alexandra was suddenly in a predicament she had never envisioned: having to decide the difference between what was essential and what frivolous. Among the first "luxury" items to go was her uptown apartment. She was able to locate a "loft" which she renovated with the help of her friends. In order to supplement her income, she found it necessary to apply for temporary jobs (she had, meanwhile, lost her editorial position).

What makes this book interesting from a Christian perspective is its emphasis upon personal redemption. Whereas the author had previously conceived of her extravagant life-style in purely materialistic terms, she now came to appreciate that most intangible yet consummately important gift: friendship. Indeed, the author describes numerous instances in which she was on the verge of complete despair when her friends and former business associates unexpectedly came to her relief. Her gratitude for such acts of kindness resonates throughout her memoir.

There is, however, a singularly dark side to this narrative: the author's (and those of numerous Madoff victims) unsuccessful efforts to seek redress from the US government - in particular, the SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission). These presidentially appointed bureaucrats ranged in their response to repeated requests for assistance from indifference to virtual contempt. Such were Madoff's allies in high places.

Fortunately, Ms Penney has emerged from her two-year ordeal with a deeper understanding of the superficiality of material wealth and misplaced trust, with an acute awareness that what she once held dearest indeed rested on very shaky foundations.

The Bag Lady Papers serves as a truly cautionary tale for these troubled financial times.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Stauffenberg, OSG
Cathedral of the Annunciation, Ottawa



FROM MAGGIE'S KITCHEN



There was a meeting of sorts during Coffee Hour this past Sunday (Easter 3), which concerned the other Sunday school teacher more than it did me, so we shifted our responsibilities around and she stayed for the first part of Coffee Hour. Before we even began the opening prayer, the question was asked, “Is the world really going to end on Saturday? It scares me!” Children really do listen to sermons, even if they don’t track the whole argument! What they had heard earlier from the pulpit (well, lectern, since we are in borrowed quarters) was a commentary on the latest end-times “prophecy” as viewed through the eyes of the day’s Eucharistic lections.

At least I knew where the question came from, so I could repeat in simpler terms the part of the homily anxiety had blocked out, first filling in some gaps in their store of information. The questioner was genuinely surprised to learn that such predictions had been made many, many times ever since Jesus’ resurrection. The lights were coming on. Will the world end? Yes. When? Nobody but God knows, and that’s the way He wants it. Meanwhile, our business is to be ready and waiting with joy for Jesus’ return whenever it occurs. Thinking about it, the class figured that could just as well be today as next Saturday, or it could be long after all of us have died. Anyway, whether the “prophecy” proves true or not, it’s a good kick in the shins reminder to think about how we live our lives. But it shouldn’t scare us.

The second question was not quite as easy to answer: “Will I still have my Lego?” Had they read C. S. Lewis’ *The Last Battle*? One of them had, and remembered how all England was gathered up into heaven (surely a reflection on Romans 8:18-22). I admitted that I didn’t know exactly what that meant, but that it couldn’t help but be absolutely wonderful.

Opening prayers were attentively offered, and then we looked at an icon of the Ascension in preparation for the day’s lesson on the same by the other teacher -- who also noticed the class’ greater engagement with the subject.

I should add that my husband did some on-line research on the group responsible for this prophecy-*du-jour*. They squeaked by the “not even the Son knows” by saying that the Son in His manhood didn’t know, but in His Godhood would certainly know, and that anyway the word came to them from the Holy Spirit. Whatever. Saturday will either vindicate them, or condemn them, along with their long line of predecessors. Those of us who’ve been following the assigned readings in Deuteronomy know from chapters 13 and 18 that false prophets have been with us ever since when.

In the way of true prophets, this month we celebrate the birth of St John the Baptist, whose vocation it was to announce the coming of God in the flesh, with warnings and exhortations to repentance. A lot of divine planning went into this, as is evident from St Luke’s account. Even the person of John the Baptist was foretold, by the prophet Malachi in particular. Somehow I don’t think that the present prophecy-bearers are in the same league as John the Baptist, and I have my doubts that they would have been chosen to announce the Second Coming, “rapture”, or whatever.

But that doesn’t let us off from being prepared: “Watch therefore, for you do not know on what day your Lord is coming” (*Mt 24:42*).

In Rome on the feast of St John the Baptist (June 24), according to Ernst Schuegraf in *Cooking with the Saints*, you can enjoy this traditional dish of snails. What the association is, I have no idea. If your yard is infested with these mollusks (and you’ll know by now), read up in *The Joy of Cooking* on how to make them edible. Otherwise, buy the canned variety.

LUMACHE CON SALSA

Lumache also refers to the snail-shaped pasta shells, but in this simple recipe it’s the snails themselves. Sauté

1/4 cup chopped onions and 1 tsp minced garlic in 2 Tbsp good olive oil, until golden (be careful not to scorch the garlic). Add and brown 7oz./200 g canned snails, then add 1-1/4 cups roughly chopped canned plum tomatoes with their liquid, 1/2 tsp each of sugar and oregano, some fresh basil, chopped, and salt to taste. Cover the pan and simmer for 30 minutes. Add a pinch each of black pepper and cayenne, and check the seasoning. Serve with spaghetti. And no, snails don't signify the end of the world, though to some they are absolutely heavenly.



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