



Boston Catholic Journal

www.boston-catholic-journal.com
editor@boston-catholic-journal.com

The Myth of the Church *non-Militant*



Stat Crux dum Volvitur Orbis

Why the Catholic Church will Always Prevail

“The Church is crumbling because the Vatican, the Papacy, the Curia, and conservative bishops and priests have lost touch with changes in the 21st Century world.”

How often have we heard this criticism leveled at the Church — that has (unlike numberless political systems and countless social “revolutions” that have been tossed into Trotsky’s famous “dustbin of history” — before Communism ended up there in less than a century) endured for over 2000 years.

The truth of the matter is quite to the contrary: *it is precisely because the Church has resisted the prevailing and passing social trends and political doctrines of history* — and remained faithful to the *Depositum Fidei* — the Sacred Deposit of the Faith — that She has prevailed. The doctrines and dogma by which the Church has been articulated through the prompting of the Holy Ghost remain immutable. They are unchanging because they cannot be changed. And they cannot be changed because Sacred Scripture itself cannot be changed, together with the Sacred

Tradition around which it is understood and exercises its mandate to, “Go, therefore and teach all nations; baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.” — Christ’s very last words in the Gospel of Matthew (28.19 ... *last chapter, last verse*).

Stat Crux dum Volvitur Orbis — The Cross Remains Standing while the World Turns (the motto of the Carthusians) — is very much to the point. The Cross, together with the Church, and inseparable from it, remains, has remained, and will always remain despite the turning fortunes and misfortunes of the world. It is Christ's Kingdom and, as He told us, it is not of this world.³ She is the Mother of sinners whom She forms into saints. They, too, were, and are, and will be — in spite of the world ... and, sadly, in spite of many of those within Her.

The Church *appears* to be presently unraveling precisely because — since it began questioning its very *raison d'être* at Vatican II — it has made enormous and perfidious efforts to accommodate a world that hates it and hates its teachings and the Christ Who made His New Covenant with it.

Do you really imagine that the Church would suddenly flourish if it is contemptuous of and unfaithful to its spiritual (not worldly) mandate and decides to have (presuming it can; and *it cannot*) transsexual “female” priestesses, adulterous “marriages”, same-sex marriages, abortions-on-demand, human cloning, human transspecies cloning, *while* abrogating every moral proscription concerning every aspect of human behavior, claiming that all is acceptable to a non-judgmental God (all dogs and clones go to Heaven) proclaimed by secularists — who largely claim that they do not believe in a God (not of their own making and whose attributes are their own)? Do you really think that it would win the adulation of the world? Such a Godless “church” well may. But it would no longer be the Holy Catholic Church. It would not even be a good counterfeit. It would be *the world*; a world appropriately cross-dressed as a 'church". It would not have the mark of Baptism, but the mark of the beast. It would be the abrogation of the Church, or better yet, the transmutation of the Church *into* the world. *In a word, it would be a pointless state of affairs.*

Ecclesia Militans — the Church Militant

Since the Second Vatican Council we have, to an astonishing extent, forgotten who we are, and what our mandate is, as a **Church**: not a social service agency, not an NGO, not a steward of the earth's climate, not an arbiter of wealth and its distribution¹, and certainly not as masters of ourselves. We have lost our focus, if not our entire vision.

One no longer hears of the **complete Church: the Church Militant** (*Ecclesia Militans*, here on earth), **the Church Suffering** (*Ecclesia Penitens*, in Purgatory) and **the Church Triumphant** (*Ecclesia Triumphans*, in Heaven). They are one inseparable Church. Each exists with the other

and prays for the other, and hence we have a clear understanding of the **Communion of Saints** (*Communio Sanctorum*) and an even clearer understanding of the efficacy of intercessory prayer. Catholics had always understood this prior to Vatican II. Since then, however, our understanding of the Church has been truncated, diminished, incomplete. Our focus has become on the *present* with little or no real thought of realities in parallel worlds that are, paradoxically, the *same* world to the Catholic. This is, or for two thousand years was, the sole province of the **Church Militant** whose primary obligation was to *tirelessly seek the salvation of one's immortal soul*; to know, to love, and to serve God in this life that one may be happy with Him forever in Heaven, and to strive, as "a good soldier of Christ",⁴ against all sin and every temptation we encounter through the blandishments of "the world, the flesh, and the devil".

Today, such notions — *central* to our lives as Catholics — appear oddly quaint; indeed, as quaint as the notion of a tripartite Church: *Militant, Suffering, and Triumphant*. The Church has been presented to us, not in its multidimensional reality, but as the very local "Faith Community" of the here and now, immersed in time rather than eternity, as broadly inclusive of "sensitivities" (hence our aversion to the word "sin" and our intolerance of the place "Hell"), as democratic, egalitarian, and gender-neutral. It is a place to feel good about oneself and to be assured of one's place in Paradise. It is a place to be indemnified against one's sins (and *definitely* not to confess them and be absolved of them!). It is pure ritual devoid of all *religious* ritual. It is not the Church Militant of ages past ... or even a few decades past. *That Church Militant came at great cost to oneself and in many ways*. It was the "Narrow Path". And now, as we all recognize, "the path is broad"⁵, or has become so since Vatican II. In its unnecessary and dangerous struggle to "redefine itself" in terms compatible with "the Modern World" or the "21st century", the Church that emerged from Vatican II hemorrhaged more than two generations of Catholics who spurn the Church as irrelevant (as indeed it has made itself) — it largely forgot, or more frightening still, completely lost understanding of the very reason of its mission, its purpose, and its very being:

The Church exists for the salvation of souls

Everything else is ancillary, secondary, and of incalculably less worth.² As such it is ever at enmity with the world which capitalizes upon men for purely social, sexual, and political ends that find their short-lived fulfillment in the here and now. It is why the Church on Earth is called (or at least *was* called, for 2000 years) the **Church Militant** — Catholics on earth who, availing themselves of the Sacraments of the Church, perpetually struggle against, and fight the great spiritual battle with sin as the greatest affront to God through the instigation of the evil one and for the salvation of their immortal souls, against an implacable enemy: Saint Paul is clear on this when he wrote to the Ephesians (6.12) that, "our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but

against principalities and powers, *against the rulers of the world* of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places."

This, then, is our vocation: the call to nothing less than holiness ... not fairness; to God ... and *not the world*, as Saint John warns us:

"Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the world, the charity of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passes away, and the concupiscence thereof: but he that does the will of God, abides forever." (1 St. John 2.15-17)

Liberals — we will not say “progressives” as they prefer to think themselves, and, after all, “a rose by any other name ...” — both ecclesiastic and lay — nevertheless demand this transmutation of the Church as a point of “justice”. Considered carefully, however, a world of such “justice” is a world of insanity, a hellish world beyond the most grotesque vision of today’s darling academic sibyls. We know it! But it is not “correct” to state it ... is it? We can, after all, call a rose by any other name ... however ghastly its fumes that we insist on calling “fragrance”. As long as cadaverine *looks* like water, we will call it so, but live not a day if we imbibe it. But because it looks like water we will demand it be *treated* like water. Much like *justice*. No?

The Holy Catholic Church *will* remain all three — Holy, Catholic, and a Church — until the end of time. *Why? Because Christ promised it.* Can you adduce a better argument? The physical edifice may (indeed, already has) become mean and mediocre like the meager Faith of many of Her blighted children. She may become smaller in number, but for that reason She will be all the more fervent in holiness. That is okay. Parasitic thistles — that grow for a season and die and never re-emerge — are planted among the wheat that also dies but grows again, and manifold, season after season, — these thistles, yes, seem to overwhelm it, so vast is their number. But they have not reached the Threshing Floor where the chaff is separated from the wheat, although it is certain that they will. They *must* grow to feed the fire that cannot be quenched, while the wheat must grow to feed the Faithful.

The very gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church — do you really fear that Caesar with his debauched children will pull down her walls — from without ... *or within?*

Editor
Boston Catholic Journal

¹ "Render unto Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's" (St Matthew 22.21)

² "For what doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and suffer the loss of his own soul?" (St. Matthew 16.26)

³ "Jesus answered: My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would certainly strive that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now my kingdom is not from hence." (St. John 18.36)

⁴ "Labor as a good soldier of Christ Jesus." (2 Timothy 2.3)

⁵ "Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!" (St. Matthew 7.13)



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