

**October 23, 2016**

**23<sup>rd</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**

## From the Desk of the Pastor

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ!

We are greatly honored today to welcome our spiritual father in Christ, His Grace Bohdan Danylo, as he visits us, his flock, here at Holy Trinity, Carnegie. The purpose of Bishop Bohdan's visit is two-fold: to lead us in prayer to Our Father in heaven for the many graces bestowed upon us, and specifically to commend to the good Lord those nearly dozen couples in our parish who are celebrating wedding anniversaries.

I like using analogies, so indulge me for a moment, please. Imagine Pittsburghers not celebrating when the Steelers win the Super Bowl? Absurd! Nobody could possibly celebrate that victory more than Pittsburghers, right? Absolutely! We wouldn't expect a victory parade in Baltimore! Now, imagine Christians not celebrating marriage. Absurd! We were the ones (actually, it was first our older brothers in the covenant, the Jews) who elevated marriage to the level of heaven itself by saying that the covenant between a man and a woman was like God's relationship with us. This was one of the main reasons why early Christianity spread faster than your neighbor's kid can chase an ice-cream truck. Those Christian men treated their wives with respect and honor, they were overwhelmingly open to life and faithful to their vows. They were different. Even the pagans respected this, and this is what started the revolution in the ancient world: conversions.

Now, it is no secret that today in our society you cannot tell the difference between most Christian marriages and most secular marriages. This isn't said to make those of us from broken marriages/families feel bad. It is said, however, to remind us that if the Church believes marriage is the great thing it is, then we had better make a point of celebrating it. So, that's what we are doing! We say congratulations to those people whose names are written in this bulletin for giving faithful witness to all of us of the importance of love, family, sacrifice and honoring vows to God and spouse.

Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt 6:3). A great purposelessness has descended upon modern civilizations. People at large have lost any sense of the meaning and purpose of life; and without an understanding of our own purpose, there can be no true commitment. Whether that commitment is to marriage, family, God, or the simple resolutions of our lives, it will be almost impossible to fulfill without a clear understanding of our purpose. Commitment and purpose go hand in hand. So, to our married couples gathered here today we wish to commend you for rebuilding civilization. By seeking first the kingdom of God by living out your ordinary marital lives in patience and in love, you have given those who follow after you an example of commitment. With that in hand, our purpose is clear indeed.

In Christ,

Jason, priest and sinner

## New Things Happening at Holy Trinity:

- **Christmas Cards** are on sale to raise money for Holy Trinity's general fund. A pack of 15 beautiful gold and red colored cards costs \$16. Holy Trinity will profit \$8 per pack. Inside message: *Behold a mighty wonder! In Bethlehem, in a manger of dumb beasts, a young Child is born who is the eternal God! Glorify Him!* You can purchase your cards by calling the rectory at 412-279-4652 or send an email: to [holytrinitycarnegie@gmail.com](mailto:holytrinitycarnegie@gmail.com). We have **22** packs available.



- **Renovation:** The accordion wall separating the living quarters on the main floor from the office space is being replaced with a door and wall. When it's finished, please come by for a visit and check it out!
- **Wine and Cheese Bible Study Coming!** Wednesday evenings in November from 7-8pm in Church Hall. Topic: *The Book of James* Class limit: 10 people. Register by email: [holytrinitycarnegie@gmail.com](mailto:holytrinitycarnegie@gmail.com) or call the office.

**Prayer List:** Make a point of praying for everyone on the prayer list. If you don't have a prayer list, contact the office and we'll send you one. **Keep in your prayers:** Anastasia Chruszcz, Stephanya Borszcz, Pauline Danesky, Alice Haritan, Luba and Peter Hlutkowsky, Daniel Holowaty, John Maslany, Helen Novak, Joe Popivchak, Mary Simek, Tillie Volanski, Donald Schultz, Dr. Justine Perhosky, James Holdcroft, Rich Hurey, Eugene Szestak, Theodore Hritzko, John Yenchik and Barbara Spak.



**BAKED GOODS** are needed for the HTUCC's **Art, Crafts & Food Bazaar**, which will be on **Sat., Nov 5<sup>th</sup>** in the church hall from 9am – 1pm. If you plan to donate any baked items, contact Veronica Alstad at 724-443-7132 or [veronica\\_alstad@yahoo.com](mailto:veronica_alstad@yahoo.com). **ALSO, HTUCC'S Vendor Table** needs items. If you plan to donate any items for the HTUCC vendor table, bring them to the rectory by Mon., Oct. 31<sup>st</sup>. *Vendor Table Cost:* \$25. For more information, contact Mayda Medwig at 412-722-2050, or go to our website: [www.htucc.com](http://www.htucc.com).



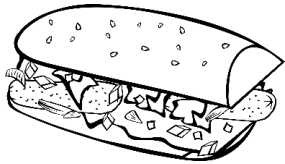
**The Ukrainian Technological Society** will hold its Dinner Dance at The Club at Nevillewood on **Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>** beginning at 6:00pm celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ukrainian Independence. Congressman Timothy F. Murphy will be presented the Friendship Award. For reservations at \$75 per

person, please call 412-771-0336 or e-mail [motriah@gmail.com](mailto:motriah@gmail.com), or call George Honchar 412-215-3303 or visit their website at [www.utsphg.org](http://www.utsphg.org).

**HTUCC “Nite at the Races”** will be Saturday, **Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>** in the church hall. Doors/Buffer opens at 5:30pm \* 1<sup>st</sup> race runs at 7pm \* **\$12 Admission** includes Buffet – Soft Drinks – Beer – Coffee – Tea - Desserts \* 50/50 raffle \* Ukrainian Auction \* For more information:

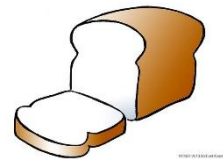


Call the rectory: 412-279-4652, go to our website: [www.htucc.com](http://www.htucc.com), or call Rebecca at 412-956-3771 **Please submit your horse’s name (\$10 per horse) by Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> to [Rebecca.Zaletski@hotmail.com](mailto:Rebecca.Zaletski@hotmail.com).**



**A HOAGIE SALE** will be sponsored by our CCD Program to benefit our Building Fund. Order forms for the hoagies are coming soon! The hoagies will be delivered after the Divine Liturgies on November 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The Price is \$7 each.

**HTUCC Homemade Bread** for Thanksgiving – **Orders must be placed by November 11<sup>th</sup>** by calling the Church Rectory (412-279-4652) or the Pyrohi Kitchen (412-276-9897). **Plain loaf:** \$8.00, **Raisin loaf:** \$8.50 **PICK UP** during Pyrohi Sales, Thursday, Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> (9am until Noon) and Friday, Nov. 18<sup>th</sup> (9am until 2pm).



**Homemade Nut Rolls** –Our HTUCC Ladies are baking Nut Rolls for Thanksgiving. For anyone who has already placed their order, the price is \$13 a roll and you can pick up your order on Nov. 10<sup>th</sup> & 11<sup>th</sup> and Nov. 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>. For information, call Holy Trinity Rectory: 412-279-4652, or Holy Trinity Pyrohi Kitchen: 412-276-9897.



**The Magic Boots** will be presented by the Kyiv Ukrainian Dance Ensemble on **Sat, October 29<sup>th</sup>** at 3pm at the Andrew Carnegie Music Hall (300 Beechwood Ave, Carnegie). At 12pm - a Ukrainian Market Place with traditional foods & merchandice, and later at 6pm - a reception with Kyiv (refreshments and music). ShowTickets: \$15 Adult, \$12 Seniors & Students; Reception Tickets: \$10 Adult, \$5 Students, Children under 12 Free. Ticket information: 412-527-5359 or [www.kyivdance.net](http://www.kyivdance.net).

**“Pierogie Fest”** will take place at St. George Ukr. Cath.Church (3455 California Ave, North Side, Pgh) on **Saturday, Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>** from 11am to 6pm. Seven(7) varieties: potato & cheese, sauerkraut, half & half, loaded potato, jalapeno, farmer’s cheese and lekvar (prune plum), plus Three (3) kinds of soup: borscht, chicken noodle & mushroom barley. PLUS baked goods \* For more information call 412-766-8800.

**Mediterranean Food Festival** takes place at St. George Orthodox Church, (610 Dewey Ave., Bridgeville) on **Fri., Oct 28<sup>th</sup>, Sat., Oct 29<sup>th</sup> and Sun., Oct 30<sup>th</sup>** from Noon – 8pm (Fri & Sat) and Noon – 6pm (Sun). *Family recipes prepared by hand!* Dine in or Carry Out. Shish Kabob Lamb, Baked Kibbee, Mediterranean Chicken, Spinach pies, just to name a few!! Order by phone or online. 412-221-2277; [www.stgeorgebridgeville.org](http://www.stgeorgebridgeville.org).

**St. Andrew Lutheran Church** (218 Alter St. East Carnegie) will hold its annual **Christmas Bazaar on Friday & Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup>**. The Bazaar will feature *quality homemade savory soups*, crafts, decorations, assorted baked goods and pierogies. Shop for bargains and don't forget to bring your Christmas list! The Bazaar opens from 11am until 3pm each day. Everyone is Welcome!

**Eleventh Annual Gathering of Catholic Men** will take place **Sat., Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>** at the Pittsburgh Convention Center. **Topic: “Difficult Times, Looking for Answers?”**  
**Program Speakers:** Matthew Leonard, Ennie Hickman, Bob Rice, Bishop David Zubik, Greg Willits; Doors open at 8:00AM. Program starts at 9:00AM. All day admission. Come and go as you please. First come first serve open seating \* Disability seating available \* Sacrament of Penance available between 10:30AM and 2:30PM. **Ticket Pricing:** Early Bird Adult Tickets (until 10/29) - \$35; Regular Advanced Tickets \$40; At the Door Tickets - \$50; Youth /Student Tickets [13 to 22) - \$10; Power of 3– 3 Tickets \$99; Father & Teenage Son Ticket - \$45 (\$40 early bird). No Man will be turned away. Priests, deacons & religious are free. For those men in the parish that would like to attend this event as a group, please contact Deacon Myron @412-303-9086 or [mjspak@verizon.net](mailto:mjspak@verizon.net).

**Bishop Canevin High School** (2700 Morange Rd. Pgh. 15205) will hold their 15<sup>th</sup> annual **Holiday Craft Show on Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>** from 10am until 3pm. Over 150 crafters – Lunch – Baked Goods – Gift Auction – 50/50 raffle – “Crafts with Katie” and a free shuttle. Contact Vera 412-922-7400 x 224 for more information.

**The Patriotic Rosary** will be sponsored by the Father Denys Assembly 0939 Knights of Columbus and the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Contemporary Choir on **November 7<sup>th</sup>** at 6:30pm at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church (330 Third Ave, Carnegie). We will be presenting and praying this most unique and inspiring rosary for our beloved country's return to the principles and values of our founding fathers.

**Ukrainian Selfreliance Credit Union- Promotional Loan Offer:** Between Oct. 1<sup>st</sup> and Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, the credit union is offering “*Triple Play*” {*\$1,000 \* 1% \* 1 Year*}. The monthly payment is \$83.79. Use this for gifts, car repairs, tires, kitchen appliances, home furnishing, payoff bills, etc. Rate is APR-annual percentage rate. Loan is for

qualified member with proof of income, credit report & completed loan application. Call for additional information: 412-481-1865

**Fr. Alex Wroblicky** will be one of the presenters at the first Eastern Catholic Bible Conference to be held at St. John the Baptist Cathedral in Munhall on **Nov. 4 & 5**, 8:30am – 4:30pm. This conference is a joint effort by several Eastern Catholic Jurisdictions to help our faithful become more acquainted with the Scriptures. Register and pay online at [www.eparchyofpassaic.com](http://www.eparchyofpassaic.com). \$30 per participant, includes lunch.

**The Church** was a Mother to you in Life, providing for your Spiritual Needs: Please Remember the Eparchy of St. Josaphat in Parma in your Last Will and Testament. The wording to do this is as follows:

“I give and bequeath to the Ukrainian Catholic Diocese of St. Josaphat in Parma, located in Parma, Ohio, \_\_\_% of the residue of my estate [or: the sum of \$\_\_\_\_\_].”

**Vital Stats for Sunday Oct 9<sup>th</sup>:** \$1,675 was offered in the collection with another \$86 for candles, \$10 for Canonization of Ukrainian Saints, \$17 for the Natalia Protynyak in Ukraine Fund, \$75 for Christ Out Pascha book sales, and \$61 in holubtsi sales, for a grand total of \$1,924. The Pyrohi Project brought in a “*net amount*” of \$1,603. Many blessings to all of our contributors whose sacrificial giving is known by God.

### Lector Schedule:

- Saturday, Oct. 29 at 4pm: Mary Reabe
- Sunday, Oct. 30 at 8:30am: Ben Ciarallo, and later at 11am: Cantor

### What’s happening in our parish this week....

Sat. *The holy, equal to the apostles, Bishop Abercius*

10/22

4:00pm Divine Liturgy for the repose of George & Catherine Mishtal requested by Stephen P. Zaletski

JC

....also Divine Liturgy to mark the 27<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the late Pelagia Czuczman requested by Eugene Czuczman

IS

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Sun. *The holy apostle James, brother of our Lord in the flesh*

10/23

10:15am Bi-Lingual Divine Liturgy for the people of the parish and couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries



JC

....*followed by a reception in the church hall*

5:00pm *Bishop's Dinner Dance –Pittsburgh Airport Marriott*

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Mon. 10/24	<i>The holy martyr Aretas and those martyred with him</i> The pastor's day off	
Tues. 10/25	<i>The holy martyrs Marcian &amp; the Subdeacon Martyrius, notaries</i>	
8:00am	Divine Liturgy for the health of Eugene Szeszak requested by the St. Josaphat Society	JC
Wed. 10/26	<i>The holy and glorious great martyr Demetrius</i>	
8:00am	Divine Liturgy for the health of Mary Ann Steranka requested by the St. Josaphat Society	JC
Thurs. 10/27	<i>The holy martyr Nestor, companion of St. Demetrius</i>	
Fri. 10/28	<i>The holy martyr Paraskevia of Iconomium, called "Friday"</i>	
Sat. 10/29	<i>The holy venerable-martyr Anastasia the Roman</i>	
4:00pm	Divine Liturgy for the health of Dr. Justine Perhosky requested by Frances Yuschak	JC
	....also Divine Liturgy to mark the 2 <sup>nd</sup> anniversary of the late Evelyn Popivchak requested by Greg & Linda Popivchak and family	IS
Sun. 10/30	<i>The holy martyr Zenobius, bishop of Aegea &amp; his sister, Zenobia</i>	
8:30am	Divine Liturgy to mark the birthday of the late Theophil "Ted" Konecky requested by the Konecky Family	IS
11:00am	Divine Liturgy for the people of the parish	JC
	....also 40 <sup>th</sup> Day Divine Liturgy for Theresa Zozula requested by George Honchar	IS

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Quotes: I want to become the kind of person my dog thinks I am! (Thank you Mike Makar for sharing this quote!)



# October BIRTHDAYS

Tom Kerchansky	Carola Medwig	Michalina Pituch
Olga Gonskyi	Borys Bednarchuk	Stephen H. Zinski
Stephanie Fedora	Zoryana Petrovych	Ming Medwig
Volodymyr Petrovych	Dennis Kurzawski	Christine Kalymon
Mary Pietrantonio	Maria Bagmet	Maribel Medwig
Maranda Kuzemka		

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## The inspiring story of the great Catholic woman who was a twice-divorced nun

### *Remembering the "Prison Angel," Mother Antonia Brenner*

Can a Catholic woman get married and divorced twice, give birth to eight children with two different men, become a nun and eventually found a new religious order? The answer is Yes! In fact, this same woman would, on Mother's Day, 1990, walk the steps alone to present the gifts to Pope John Paul II for the Mass he was offering during his visit to Mexico and, in return, receive his blessing. After all, with God, all things are possible.

This woman was Mother Antonia Brenner, who came to be known as the "Prison Angel" of La Mesa Prison. Mother Antonia died three years ago on October 17, 2013. I believe history will show that this woman was one of the greatest among Catholic women of the late 20th and early 21st centuries.

Mary Clarke was born in Beverly Hills on December 1, 1926. Her dad, Joe Clarke, was a successful businessman and Mary and her two siblings grew up surrounded with affluence and the glitz of the movie world. Their neighbors included Hollywood luminaries such as William Powell, Hedy Lamarr and John Barrymore.

Joe Clarke had a deep love for all people. No matter how good life was for his family he made sure his kids were always taught to help the less fortunate. That desire to help others would blossom in Mary and was destined to explode. However, before the "explosion," Mary embarked on a circuitous life journey.

Mary married at 18 and had three children, the first dying shortly after birth. That marriage ended in divorce. As a divorcee, Mary now felt distanced from her Catholic upbringing. She married again, this time in a civil service in Las Vegas, to a man named Carl Brenner. She and Carl had five children together but ultimately, that marriage also ended in divorce. No matter, God “writes straight with crooked lines” and apparently the Holy Spirit had his eye on Mary Clarke Brenner her entire life. He was about to shower his grace all over his daughter.

Mary became more and more involved in charity work. In 1965 she met Father Henry Vetter. He took her along on a delivery of food, medicine and clothing to the prisoners at La Mesa Penitentiary in Tijuana. The plight of the prisoners at La Mesa (considered among the worst prisons in Mexico) impacted her greatly and as time went by her growing compassion and love of neighbor would become focused on these people. They would become her specialty, her ministry, her purpose in life.

Mary Brenner spent the next 10 years traveling back and forth to La Mesa Prison bringing needed supplies but mostly her love and mercy. Her presence became well known and the prisoners, both men and women, began looking forward to her visits. They began calling her “La Mama.” The warden even gave her accommodations so she could sleep over.

Mary took the name of Antonia (after her mentor, Monsignor Anthony Bowers) and became Mother Antonia Brenner. She sewed together a nun’s habit, put it on, and went to see Bishop Leo Maher of San Diego. She got down on her knees and told him her story. He knew all about her and gave her his blessing, validating her ministry. She would even start a new order, Eudist Servants of the Eleventh Hour, an order for women 45 and older who wanted to serve the less fortunate. In addition to the blessing from Bishop Maher she also received the blessing of Bishop Juan Jesus Posadas of Tijuana. She had Church authorization for her ministry from bishops in two separate countries.

After her kids were grown, Mary gave away her belongings, moved out of her home in Ventura and headed to La Mesa Prison. She had received permission to live there. Her new home was to be a 10 ft. by 10 ft. cell in the women’s section of the prison. She would live as any other inmate, sleeping in her concrete cell and having only cold water and prison food. The amenities in her room included a crucifix on the wall, a Bible, a Spanish dictionary and a hard prison bed. In the morning, she lined up with the other prisoners for roll call. This was to be her home for the next 32 years.





And in doing that, she reminds us of the great line from C.S. Lewis that Christianity is a “fighting religion”—not in the sense of hatred or violence directed at other persons, but rather in the spiritual struggle against the evil in ourselves and in the world around us, where our weapons are love, justice, courage and self-giving.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem described our spiritual struggle this way: “There is a serpent [the devil] by the wayside watching those who pass by: beware lest he bite thee with unbelief. He sees so many receiving salvation and is seeking whom he may devour.” The great American writer Flannery O’Connor added that whatever form the serpent may take, “it is of this mysterious passage past him, or into his jaws, that stories of any depth will always be concerned to tell, and this being the case, it requires considerable courage at any time, in any country,” not to turn away from God’s story or the storyteller.

If our theme as a meeting this week is reclaiming the Church for the Catholic imagination, we can’t overlook the fact that the flesh and blood model for our Church—Mary as *mater et magistra*—is quite accomplished at punching the devil in the nose. And as Mary’s adopted sons, we need to be bishops who lead and teach like the great Cyril of Jerusalem.

### **The People We Have Become**

Having said all that, my thoughts today come in three parts. I want to speak first about the people we’ve become as American Catholics. Then I’ll turn to how and why we got where we are. Finally I’ll suggest what we need to do about it, not merely as individuals, but more importantly as a Church. We need to recover our identity as a believing community. And I think a good way to begin doing that is with the “catechetical content” of our current political moment.

My focus today isn’t politics. And I won’t waste our time weighing one presidential candidate against the other. I’ve already said elsewhere that each is a national embarrassment, though for different reasons. But politics involves the application of power, and power always has a moral dimension. So we can’t avoid dealing with this election at least briefly. Here’s what I find curious. Given Mr. Trump’s ugly style and the hostility he sparks in the media, Mrs. Clinton’s lead should be even wider than it is. But it’s not. And there’s a lesson in that. It’s this. Even many people who despise what Mr. Trump stands for seem to enjoy his gift for twisting the knife in America’s leadership elite and their spirit of entitlement, embodied in the person of Hillary Clinton.

Americans aren’t fools. They have a good sense of smell when things aren’t right. And one of the things wrong with our country right now is the hollowing out and retooling of all the key words in our country’s public lexicon; words like democracy, representative government, freedom, justice, due process, religious liberty and constitutional protections. The language of our politics is the same. The content of the words is different. Voting still matters. Public protest and letters to members of Congress can still have an effect. But more and more of our nation’s life is governed by executive order, judicial overreach and administrative agencies with little accountability to Congress.

People feel angry because they feel powerless. And they feel powerless because in many ways they are. When Tocqueville wrote *Democracy in America*, he assumed that only two basic social structures were possible in the modern era, democracy and aristocracy. Because of its mass appeal,

democracy would be the winner. Once we assume that power flows from the people, the ordinary citizen, not some self-styled nobility, obviously has the right to rule.

Or at least that's the theory. Reality is more complex. Tocqueville noted that even in America, both "aristocratic [and] democratic passions are found at the bottom of all parties." These passions might be hidden from view. But they're very much alive and well. It's worth noting that *aristoi* is just the Greek word for "the best," and in practice, social elites come in all shapes and sizes.

The 2016 election is one of those rare moments when the repellent nature of both presidential candidates allows the rest of us to see our nation's pastoral terrain as it really is. And the view is unpleasant. America's cultural and political elites *talk* a lot about equality, opportunity and justice. But they *behave* like a privileged class with an authority based on their connections and skills. And supported by sympathetic media, they're remaking the country into something very different from anything most of us remember or the Founders imagined.

The WikiLeaks email release last week from the Clinton entourage says a lot about how the merit-class elite views orthodox Christians. It's not friendly.

But what does any of this have to do with our theme? Actually quite a lot. G.K. Chesterton once quipped that America is a nation that thinks it's a Church. And he was right. In fact, he was more accurate than he could have guessed. Catholics came to this country to build a new life. They did exceptionally well here. They've done so well that by now many of us Catholics are largely assimilated to, and digested by, a culture that bleaches out strong religious convictions in the name of liberal tolerance and dulls our longings for the supernatural with a river of practical atheism in the form of consumer goods.

To put it another way, quite a few of us American Catholics have worked our way into a leadership class that the rest of the country both envies and resents. And the price of our entry has been the transfer of our real loyalties and convictions from the old Church of our baptism to the new "Church" of our ambitions and appetites. People like Nancy Pelosi, Anthony Kennedy, Joe Biden and Tim Kaine are not anomalies. They're part of a very large crowd that cuts across all professions and *both* major political parties.

During his years as bishop of Rome, Benedict XVI had the talent of being very frank about naming sin and calling people back to fidelity. Yet at the same time he modeled that fidelity with a kind of personal warmth that revealed its beauty and disarmed the people who heard him. He spoke several times about the "silent apostasy" of so many Catholic laypeople today and even many priests; and his words have stayed with me over the years because he said them in a spirit of compassion and love, not rebuke.

Apostasy is an interesting word. It comes from the Greek verb *apostanai*—which means to revolt or desert; literally "to stand away from." For Benedict, laypeople and priests don't need to publicly renounce their baptism to be apostates. They simply need to be silent when their Catholic faith demands that they speak out; to be cowards when Jesus asks them to have courage; to "stand away" from the truth when they need to work for it and fight for it.

It's a word to keep in mind in examining our own hearts and hearts of our people. And while we do that, we might reflect on what assimilating has actually gained for us when Vice President Biden conducts a gay marriage, and Senator Kaine lectures us all on how the Church needs to change and what kind of new creature she needs to become.

So how did we get to this moment, and when did the process begin?

### **How Did We Get Here?**

I suppose 1960 is a good place to date the start of our current troubles. That's when candidate John Kennedy promised Houston Baptist ministers that—if elected—he'd keep his Catholic faith separate from his presidential leadership. Or we could use 1984 as a start date. That's when Mario Cuomo gave his widely praised but finally incoherent defense of Kennedy's approach to public life—the “I'm personally opposed to evils like abortion, but” tactic—in a speech here at Notre Dame.

Or we could use 1962 as another reasonable start date. That's when President Kennedy told a group of policy advisers that “The fact of the matter is that most of the problems, or at least many of them that we now face, are technical problems ... administrative problems. They are very sophisticated judgments which do not lend themselves to the great sort of ‘passionate movements’ which have stirred this country so often in the past. Now they deal with questions which are beyond the comprehension of most men.”

That last Kennedy line—describing our problems as “beyond the comprehension of most men”—sums up the spirit of today's leadership classes. Briefly put, their message is this: “Smart people should run things, and most people aren't smart enough to qualify. But the country shouldn't worry as long as the really smart people like us—in other words, the technologically and managerially gifted—stay in charge. So don't rock the boat with a lot of useless noise from the deplorables.”

In effect, technology and its comforts are now our substitute horizon for the supernatural. Technology gets results. Prayer, not so much—or at least not so immediately and obviously. So our imaginations gradually bend toward the horizontal, and away from the vertical.

Religion can still have value in this new dispensation by helping credulous people do socially useful things. But religion isn't “real” in the same way that science and technology are real. And if, as John Kennedy said, our main social problems today are practical and technical, then talking about heaven and hell starts to sound a lot like irrelevant voodoo. The Church of our baptism is salvific. The Church where many Americans really worship, the Church we call our popular culture, is therapeutic.

Let me put our situation this way. The two unavoidable facts of life are mortality and inequality. We're going to die. And—here I'm committing a primal American heresy—we're *not* created “equal” in the secular meaning of that word. We're obviously *not* equal in dozens of ways: health, intellect, athletic ability, opportunity, education, income, social status, economic resources, wisdom, social skills, character, holiness, beauty or anything else. And we never will be. Wise social policy can ease our material inequalities and improve the lives of the poor. But as

Tocqueville warned, the more we try to enforce a radical, unnatural, egalitarian equality, the more “totalitarian” democracy becomes.

For all its talk of diversity, democracy is finally monist. It begins by protecting the autonomy of the individual but can easily end by eliminating competing centers of authority and absorbing civil society into the state. Even the family, seen through secular democratic eyes, can be cast as inefficient, parochial and a potential greenhouse of social problems. Parental authority can become suspect because it escapes the scrutiny and guidance of the state. And the state can easily present itself as better able to educate the young because of its superior resources and broader grasp of the needs of society.

Clearly our civil liberties and our equality before the law are hugely important premises for a decent society. They’re vital principles for our common public life. But they’re also purely human constructs, and in a sense, fictions.

What Christians mean by “freedom” and “equality” is very different from the secular content of those words. For the believer, freedom is more than a menu of choices or the absence of oppression. Christian freedom is the liberty, the knowledge and the character to do what’s morally right. And the Christian meaning of “equality” is much more robust than the moral equivalent of a math equation. It involves the kind of love a mother feels for each of her children, which really isn’t equality at all. A good mother loves her children *infinitely and uniquely*—not “equally,” because that would be impossible. Rather, she loves them *profoundly* in the sense that all of her children are flesh of her flesh, and have a permanent, unlimited claim on her heart.

So it is with our Catholic understanding of God. Every human life, no matter how seemingly worthless, has infinite dignity in his eyes. Every human life is loved without limits by the God who made us. Our weaknesses are not signs of unworthiness or failure. They’re invitations to depend on each other and become more than ourselves by giving away our strengths in the service of others, and receiving their support in return. This is the truth in the old legend about heaven and hell. Both have exactly the same tables. Both have exactly the same rich foods. But the spoons in both places are much too long. In hell people starve because they try to feed themselves. In heaven they thrive because they feed each other.

For all of its greatness, democratic culture proceeds from the idea that we’re born as autonomous, self-creating individuals who need to be protected from, and made equal with, each other. It’s simply not true. And it leads to the peculiar progressive impulse to master and realign reality to conform to human desire, whereas the Christian masters and realigns his desires to conform to and improve reality.

I want to turn now in my last few minutes to what we need to do.

### **What Must Be Done?**

Talks like mine today are always a mixed experience. In describing a hard time, the words can easily sound dark and distressing. That’s not my intention at all. Optimism and pessimism are twin forms of self-deception. We need instead to be a people of hope, which means we don’t have the luxury of whining.

There's too much beauty in people and in the world to let ourselves become bitter. And by reminding us of that in *The Joy of the Gospel*, his first apostolic exhortation, Pope Francis gives us a great gift. One of his strongest qualities—and I saw this at the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia—is his power to inspire confidence and joy in people while speaking candidly about the problems we face in a suffering world.

Serenity of heart comes from *consciously trying to live on a daily basis* the things we claim to believe. *Acting* on our faith *increases* our faith. And it serves as a magnet for other people. To reclaim the Church for the Catholic imagination, we should start by renewing in our people a sense that eternity is real, that together we have a mission the world depends on, and that our lives have consequences that transcend time. Francis radiated all these things during his time in Philadelphia.

If men and women are really made for heroism and glory, made to stand in the presence of the living God, they can never be satisfied with bourgeois, mediocre, feel-good religion. They'll *never* be fed by ugly worship and shallow moralizing. But that's what we too often give them. And the reason we do it is because too many of us have welcomed the good news of Vatican II without carving its demand for conversion onto the stone of our hearts. In opening ourselves to the world, we've forgotten our parts in the larger drama of our lives—salvation history, which always, in some way, involves walking past St. Cyril's serpent.

In Philadelphia I'm struck by how many women I now see on the street wearing the *hijab* or even the *burqa*. Some of my friends are annoyed by that kind of “in your face” Islam. But I understand it. The *hijab* and the *burqa* say two important things in a morally confused culture: “I'm not sexually available;” and “I belong to a community different and separate from you and your obsessions.”

I have a long list of concerns with the content of Islam. But I admire the integrity of those Muslim women. And we need to help Catholics recover their own sense of distinction from the surrounding secular meltdown. The Church and American democracy are very different kinds of societies with very different structures and goals. They can never be fully integrated without eviscerating the Christian faith. An appropriate “separateness” for Catholics is already there in the New Testament. We've too often ignored it because Western civilization has such deep Christian roots. But we need to reclaim it, starting *now*.

Catholics today—and I'm one of them—feel a lot of unease about declining numbers and sacramental statistics. Obviously we need to do everything we can to bring tepid Catholics back to active life in the Church. But we should never be afraid of a smaller, lighter Church if her members are also more faithful, more zealous, more missionary and more committed to holiness. Making sure that happens is the job of those of us who are bishops.

Losing people who are members of the Church in name only is an imaginary loss. It may in fact be more honest for those who leave and healthier for those who stay. We should be focused on commitment, not numbers or institutional throw-weight. We have nothing to be afraid of as long as we act with faith and courage.



We need to speak plainly and honestly. Modern bureaucratic life, even in the Church, is the enemy of candor and truth. We live in an age that thrives on the subversion of language. And here's one example. "Accompaniment," when Pope Francis uses the word, is a great and obvious good. Francis rightly teaches us the need to meet people where they are, to walk with them patiently, and to befriend them on the road of life. But the same word is widely misused by others. *Where the road of life leads* does make a difference—especially if it involves accompanying someone over a cliff.

Here's another example: A theologian in my own diocese recently listed "inclusivity" as one of the core messages of Vatican II. Yet to my knowledge, that word "inclusivity" didn't exist in the 1960s and appears nowhere in the council documents.

If by "inclusive" we mean patiently and sensitively inviting all people to a relationship with Jesus Christ, then yes, we do very much need to be inclusive. But if "inclusive" means including people who do not believe what the Catholic faith teaches and will not reform their lives according to what the Church holds to be true, then inclusion is a form of lying. And it's not just lying but an act of betrayal and violence against the rights of those who *do* believe and *do* seek to live according to God's Word. Inclusion requires conversion and a change of life; or at least the sincere desire to change.

Saying this isn't a form of legalism or a lack of charity. It's simple honesty. And there can be no real charity without honesty. We need to be very careful not to hypnotize ourselves with our words and dreams. The "new evangelization" is fundamentally not so different from the "old evangelization." It begins with personal witness and action, and with sincere friendships among committed Catholics—not with bureaucratic programs or elegant sounding plans. These latter things can be important. But they're never the heart of the matter.

When I was ordained a bishop, a wise old friend told me that every bishop must be part radical and part museum curator—a radical in preaching and living the Gospel, but a protector of the Christian memory, faith, heritage and story that weave us into one believing people over the centuries.

I try to remember that every day. Americans have never liked history. The reason is simple. The past comes with obligations on the present, and the most cherished illusion of American life is that we can remake ourselves at will. But we Christians are different. We're first and foremost a communion of persons on mission through time—and our meaning as individuals comes from the part we play in that larger communion and story.

If we want to reclaim who we are as a Church, if we want to renew the Catholic imagination, we need to begin, in ourselves and in our local parishes, by unplugging our hearts from the assumptions of a culture that still seems familiar but is no longer really "ours." It's a moment for courage and candor, but it's hardly the first moment of its kind.

This is why Mary—the young Jewish virgin, the loving mother, and the woman who punches the devil in the nose—was, is, and always will be the great defender of the Church. And so we can say with confidence: *Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us. And St. Cyril of Jerusalem, patron of bishops, be our model and brother in our service to Mary's son, Jesus Christ. So be it: Amen*