

from the
MATTHEW 10-27
HouseTops

A Publication of the Crusade of Saint Benedict Center



Saint Benedict Center

The Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary

To Our Readers:

“This is the victory which overcometh the world: Our faith” (1 John 5:4). These words come to mind as we glance at the contents of the present issue. Brother David Mary has written for us a wonderful chronicle of the Church’s victory over the Iconoclast heretics of the eighth century. This victory, which defended the dogma of the Incarnation from yet another infernal attack, was largely due to the wisdom and sanctity of St. John Damascene, the “Golden Stream” from Syria.

Gary Potter has given us the first installment of a two-part article on the heroic Cristeros in Mexico. By contrast with the Damascene, the Cristeros lost their struggle. Mexico, alas, remained in the hands of the same forces that held it prior to the courageous uprising of these modern crusaders.

In the light of eternity, however, the only real loss is the loss of an immortal soul. At the General Judgment, everyone will see that the Cristeros — who produced Blessed Miguel Pro and other martyrs — are the true victors. They had “the victory which overcometh the world.” While beholding the salvation of their despised enemies, the persecutors of Mexico’s soul will say, “These are they, whom we had sometime in derision, and for a parable of reproach. We fools esteemed their life madness, and their end without honour. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints” (Wisdom 5:3-5).

Here at St. Benedict Center, we too are engaged in a battle. We are fighting a doctrinal battle — not unlike that fought by St. John Damascene — against liberalism, indifferentism, and modernism. We are also fighting another war, somewhat like the Cristeros’: the battle for the soul of America. We wish to make our nation *Catholic*. We see, in Adam Miller’s piece on the First Thanksgiving, a parable of this crusade. It is the battle for America’s soul in miniature: the Spanish Catholic victories in what is now U.S. soil were overturned by English Protestants.

We pray God that the Faith here will be restored, that our labors — and the labors of all who care to unite theirs to ours — will be blessed by God and will bear fruit. However, the victory of the conversion of America looks bleak for us, unless the victory over liberalism, modernism, and indifferentism be achieved first. Liberal Catholicism is powerless to convert a nation.

We ask all the saints and angels to come to our help in this battle for the soul of the Church and for the soul of America. We especially enlist the help of three very dear saints, to whom we dedicate this issue of our publication: St. James the First Bishop of Jerusalem, whose Epistle we study herein; St. John Damascene, the burning light from the East; and St. Juan Diego, whose recent triumphal canonization — a victory in itself — broke historical records for such events. We know that they are interested in our work and in the salvation of souls. And how could we mention Mexican Catholicism without begging for the help of Our Lady of Guadalupe? O Empress of the Americas, we thank you for the heavenly favor of 1531, and for the stupendous miracle, your supernaturally-imprinted image, which continues to be a challenge to an unbelieving world. Help us, O thrice-holy Virgin, to overcome the world!



In the Immaculate Heart of Mary,

Bro. Francis, MICM

from the MATTHEW 10-27 HouseTops

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Cover: The three-handed icon of the Mother of God before which St. John Damascene received a tremendous miracle (see page 59). This is the original image, and is attributed to St. Luke the Evangelist. **Center:** Our Lord Jesus Christ the King, reigning from the wood of the Cross. Artistic design by the Sisters of the Slaves of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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VALOR AND BETRAYAL

The Historical Background and Story of the Cristeros

Part I

By Gary Potter

A part from its having actually come to power nearly everywhere in the world two centuries after first exploding in France in 1789, the ever-unfolding Revolution* has succeeded in other ways. Perhaps its greatest success is the extent to which it has persuaded the great mass of mankind that it is *their* movement, a struggle of the majority for freedom and opportunity against elites who formerly oppressed them and will do so again unless they remain vigilant. Doubtless the success of the Revolution in this respect helps account for the fact that it now holds sway nearly everywhere, though seldom under its own name anymore. Nowadays it usually calls itself “democracy.”

Though its power does extend nearly everywhere, what matters most to the Revolution itself is that its power is first of all coextensive with those lands that once constituted Christendom. It came into existence, after all, to overthrow the beliefs, laws, customs and practices which distinguished Christendom from the rest of the world. As for that “rest,” most of it was colonized or otherwise taking its lead from the lands of Christendom by the time the Revolution supplanted the teachings of the Faith with its own false philosophy. Thus, Christendom’s transformation into the liberal West inevitably resulted in the Revolution’s hegemony over the other lands, ones in Asia, Africa and elsewhere, and their peoples.

That the Revolution always aimed to supplant the teachings of the Faith with its own principles has led many Christian commentators to identify this or that non-Christian group or organization as the “real” force or power “behind” the movement. No reasonable man can doubt that the “forces of organized naturalism,” as the redoubtable Fr. Denis Fahey called them, have had their role in the history of the past two centuries. However, it is the point

*It is important to note here that, by “the Revolution,” we mean the political embodiment of the false philosophy of liberalism.

of view here — as we believe it was Fr. Fahey’s, if we read him correctly —

that the nearly universal sway of the Revolution today is owed more to our own fallen nature than to anything else. That is, men have been inclined ever since the Fall to live according to their own will instead of God’s. Starting two centuries ago, they finally began to overthrow the political and social institutions that curbed their inclination. For a time the Church was able to prevent this development from becoming nearly complete, as earlier she was able to prevent it altogether. At Vatican II, however, it was disavowed that her teachings had a special role or influence in the conduct of political affairs. (We are speaking of politics in the sense of their being the means by which the life of society is regulated.) Since then, there has been little standing in the way.

To say there has been little standing in the way is not to say there is nothing. Here and there individuals and groups strive to keep alive the idea of Christian social order. Their very existence keeps the nearly universal sway of the Revolution from becoming total. That is on the one hand. On the other, by keeping the idea alive now, they also make it possible for Christian social order to be revived when God decides the



time for that is come.

The work of these individuals and groups is taxing, for it is not easy to seem always to be on history’s losing side. Things can be even more discouraging for those not directly engaged in the work, but who support it. Will a brighter day ever come? they wonder.

An Encouraging Example

The story that follows may be of some encouragement. It is the story — told far too briefly — of Mexico’s Cristeros, Catholic peasants who did not accept that the Revolution was *their* movement. They rose in arms against it in their country, and by their very fighting and dying in the number they did, gave the lie — like the