

Saint Augustine once asked: "Why does Truth engender hatred?" He answered:

"It can only be that man's love of truth is such that when he loves something which is not the truth, he pretends to himself that what he loves is the truth, and because he hates to be proved wrong, he will not allow himself to be convinced that he is deceiving himself. So he hates the real truth for the sake of what he takes to his heart in its place. Men love the truth when it bathes them in its light: they hate it when it proves them wrong."

If God is the ultimate truth, if the Catholic Church is the Bride of Jesus Christ who is God in human flesh, if everyone is made in the image and likeness of God and thereby

The Narrow Gate

BY FATHER BRIAN P. GANNON

DON'T WAIT FOR DOORBELLS

desires truth – why do many reject Christ's truth?

The most fundamental answer is, as Augustine says, pride; rooted in Original Sin. The lack of deep union with God blinds man to his own distorted world view.

Without God, one cannot know divine truth.

Lack of Virtue

Recently, Pope Benedict XVI made remarks regarding AIDS and how condoms worsen the

epidemic. The fundamental problem is not "unprotected" promiscuity but promiscuity itself: the lack of virtue. His full quote discussed the remarkable work the Church was doing for AIDS victims, and the spiritual strength God gives. Mainstream media headlined only that the pope spoke against condoms, knowing it would incite anger.

European leaders and Americans leaped to condemn the pope's words. Ignored by the media were the African leaders who wholly supported the pope's remarks. Ignored was the papal Mass with more than one million Africans attending, more than any other world leader ever gets. Ignored was the highly-respected Harvard scientist, Edward Green, who cited studies proving the pope right; how condoms *have* exacerbated the AIDS epidemic in Africa.

These attacks on the pope demonstrate a secular rage against the truth of Jesus Christ. They seek to intimidate the Church into silence, to bully it away from its God-mandated role: forming culture towards self-sacrificing love of God. This becomes more scandalous as certain groups calling themselves "Catholic" claim to speak for Catholics when, in fact, they defy the pope and 2,000 years of tradition.

Mandate of Christ

The mandate of Christ to go out and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (see Matthew 28: 18-20) cannot be substituted for the idea that one must remain quiet in the public square.

This is silly. Did the Apostles at Pentecost stay inside, waiting for potential converts to ring the doorbell? No – they plunged into the public square, converted thousands, paid for it with torturous deaths, but then gained paradise.

Thus, when Catholics cover up Christ's name at Catholic colleges, or honor politicians who support the billion-dollar industry of murdering innocent children, or when secularists try to bully the pope into silence precisely because he proves them wrong, it is exactly as Saint Augustine said above, 1,600 years ago.

Seeking Truth

Truth can only come from God; being in deep union with God through prayer, regular Confession, and reception of the Eucharist. Seeking truth means doing penance for one's sins and those of others. These invite more of God's grace to more clearly see truth.

If Christ is God and man, then He is the ultimate example of a human being and of love. It is diametrically opposed to the



There must be constant activity to turn culture away from sin because sin is always self-destructive. Sin only wounds and kills.

It is actually un-American to intimidate someone into silence in the public square, especially when they preach virtue, as did the Founding Fathers. Even more fundamentally, it is against the nature of Christianity to go silent when Christ demands of us the exact opposite. As the state or federal gov-

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to cure their tumors, broken legs, or infections.

If we Catholics take serious the idea that Christ is God Himself crucified and resurrected, this joy cannot be silenced. There must be a strong and aggressive engagement of the culture.

Relentless

This does not mean forcing society to become Catholic. But it does mean being relentless in sticking to the teachings of the Church and trying to convert others through prayer, example, and self-confidence in the truth.

ernment seek to pass laws that attack Christ's teaching on life and marriage, one can only do what the early martyrs did; speak up to convert society, with love, prayer, and penance. To give the world the treasure we hold: Christ resurrected.

Waiting for the doorbell is not the way to spiritual happiness. The only way to happiness is union with Him in Truth and Love, through the sacraments bought at the price of Divine Blood. It is spreading the love of Christ fearlessly that swings wide the narrow gate. ♦

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Catholic Words

BY DR. JOAN M. KELLY

Regina Coeli

Regina Coeli. From the Latin meaning "Queen of Heaven."

Regina Coeli, Queen of Heaven, are the first words of the antiphon of the Blessed Virgin Mary which is chanted in the Divine Office (Liturgy of the Hours) following Compline (the last liturgical hour of the day), from Holy Saturday until the Saturday after Pentecost (June 6 this year). The Regina Coeli is recited during the Easter Season in place of the Angelus per order of Pope Benedict XIV in 1742.

Lent is over! The joy of the Resurrection resounds! It is time to sing with Mary, our Queen!

Tradition attributes the Regina Coeli to Pope Saint Gregory the Great (590-604), but the first traces of its actual existence are rooted in the 12th century. The Franciscans were the first to sing it in their Office after Compline.

The Regina Coeli is prayed standing. Standing is the most ancient of the liturgical postures and was the ordinary position at worship for the first 1,000 years of Christianity. Standing symbolizes the Resurrection of Christ which is commemorated particularly on Sundays and throughout the Easter Season.

The entire prayer includes the following verses:

*Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.
For He Whom you merited to bear, alleluia.
Has risen as He said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.
Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
Because the Lord is truly risen, alleluia.*

Let us pray:

*O God, Who by the Resurrection of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, granted joy to the whole world, grant, we beg You, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His mother, we may lay hold of the joys of eternal life, through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

(Dr. Kelly, who lives in Westport, is a member of the faculty of Holy Apostles College & Seminary, Cromwell, and teaches in the Caritas Christi adult education program at Sacred Heart Academy, Hamden.) ♦