

PROLOGUE

Since releasing his Apostolic Exhortation, it has been clear that Bishop Olmsted's work has galvanized many Catholic men across the United States and beyond, in a way that is poignant for our time. The lives of men in this 21st century are at a pivotal point. Each man must decide for himself if the reality of revealed truth is something he desires, or not. Was there a man named Jesus Christ who walked this earth 2,000 years ago, who was the incarnate Word of God, or not? Did He call forth twelve ordinary men to receive and carry forward his message of mercy and forgiveness, and did He therein establish an apostolic succession of leadership that exists to this day, or not? Does this one holy catholic and apostolic church, founded by Jesus Himself - preserve the divinely inspired revealed truth of the Father through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and include within it the promise of God that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, or not?

Is mankind, created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore so endowed to the highest perfection that he alone is privileged to procreate in communion with God, to produce new singularly dignified souls that shall live forever with a God who desires nothing more than this, or not?

And, among the created heavens of Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominations, Virtues, Powers, Principalities, Archangels, and Angels, is there a creature so magnificently intelligent to be called the "Morning Star, Son of Dawn" (Isaiah 14:12), who despite all his brilliance, chose not to serve the God man Jesus and mankind alike, or not? Did he instead declare to the heavenly host, "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God, I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13-14), or not? Is this creature, whose name is Satan, the devil, who in losing the battle for primacy in heaven was cast down to the earth and swept with him a third of all the angels in heaven (cf. Revelation 12:4), or not? Recall the words of Jesus, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven" (Luke 10:18). And does this devil out of his pride and hatred of the Almighty, constantly war against all mankind until the end of time to deny God the family He desires to be with Him for all eternity, or not?

Either we believe, or we don't. I pray you do! Because as St. Paul tells us, "the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God" - (1 Corinthians 1:18, NIV). Men, this power St. Paul speaks of enables us to become who we are, sons of the Father.

We have an opportunity here. Never forget the lesson of the prodigal son (cf. Luke 15:11-32): God rejoices when we come to him, repent of our sins, and ask him for help. Yes, He rejoices! Jesus tells us, "[T]here will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

In the 1930's a young Polish nun, Sister Faustina Kowalska, received extraordinary revelation from Jesus. In her Diary, now Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska, writes, "... [A]pproach [Jesus] with sincerity, [and] our miseries, sins and evil deeds vanish; he will settle our debts when we surrender ourselves to him" (para. 1748). Earlier, in paragraph 1485 Jesus told her, "My mercy is greater than your sins and those of the entire world" and "I am your strength, I will help you in the struggle."

This is important because the Lord tells us to expect persecution:

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. Beware of men; for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be dragged before governors and kings for my sake, to bear testimony before them ... [D]o not be anxious how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you in that hour; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ... [A]nd you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." (Matthew 10:16-22)

As Bishop Olmsted says, this battle is primarily spiritual. But the spiritual battle has been manifested in the world with harsh words and actions, and now in America even potential personal loss and incarceration from laws that deny the truth. Yet we are confident of the victory found in the truth itself, Christ! The Bishop's letter explains this reality to us, and what we need to do. *Men, read it, do it, and live it!*

Each of us needs to start where we are right now. We may believe, but not fully, or we may fear our sins are too great to forgive. But we just need to look at those who came before us. If you don't know where to start, start here with the prayers of men from the New Testament whose hearts were powerfully struck by the truth:

Immediately [he] exclaimed [to Jesus], "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!"
(Mark 9:24, NIV)

[B]ut he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Mark 10:48, NIV)

Jesus wants us to know, "Be not afraid of your Savior, O sinful soul. I make the first move to come to you... [D]o not run away from your Father" (*Diary of Saint Maria Faustina Kowalska*, para. 1485). And as St. Paul says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8). From the beginning, God has powerfully acted in the lives of men, and today He desires to work in **your** life.

Perhaps Jesus has made the first move to come to you! It is my hope and prayer that many men will find this compendium workbook a faithful guide to receive Jesus in the totality in which He seeks them and then join together and go *Forward!* - Into the Breach.

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