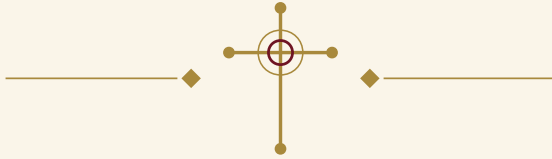


THE APE OF THE CHURCH





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*Heaven's Warnings, the Crisis of the Church,
and the Way Back into the Light*

*An investigation based on approved Marian apparitions, the testimonies
of holy men, and the reports of practicing exorcists*

ANNO DOMINI MMXXVI

*“The greatest trick the Devil ever pulled was convincing
the world he didn’t exist.”*

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE · 1864

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FOREWORD

There are sentences that work like a key. You read them, and suddenly a door opens onto a room you never knew existed. Baudelaire's famous word about the devil is such a sentence. For if it is true — if the greatest strategy of evil really consists in becoming invisible — then one would have to look for its greatest triumph not where evil rages openly, but where no one speaks of it anymore.

And that is precisely the finding of our age: no one speaks of him anymore. Not in the schools, not in the media, not in politics — and, this is the truly shattering part, hardly even in the Church herself. The words sin, hell, judgment, and devil have vanished from the vocabulary of the Western world like the words of a dead language. Whoever still uses them is considered medieval, fanatical, no longer quite of this time.

This book takes a different view: the disappearance of these words is not a sign of progress but the symptom of a disease — and at the same time the most cunning victory the enemy of mankind has ever won. It is an attempt to assemble the scattered pieces of the puzzle: the astonishingly coherent messages of the approved Marian apparitions across centuries, the observations of the exorcists, the historical events surrounding the fateful year 1963, and the testimonies of men like Padre Pio and Father Gabriele Amorth.

What emerges is not a comfortable picture. But neither is it a hopeless one. For the same sources that foretold the decline also promise the restoration — and they name, with great clarity, the way there. This book seeks to do both: to open the eyes to the seriousness of the hour, and at the same time to show the clearly defined way out that Heaven itself has pointed.

A word about method: this book distinguishes carefully between ecclesiastically approved apparitions and messages, disputed texts (such as the long version of the secret of La Salette), and unofficial reports and rumors. Wherever a source is disputed, this is stated explicitly. The reader should be able to judge for himself — but he should judge on the basis of the facts, not on the basis of silence.



INTRODUCTION: THE RIDDLE OF THE EXORCISTS



Let us begin not with a vision, not with a prophecy, but with a sober observation from practice — a statistic, if you will, from the most hidden field of work in the Catholic Church.

Exorcists keep records. They document their cases, they exchange notes with one another, they know how cases unfold. And for centuries an astonishingly stable rule of experience held: the liberation of a demonically possessed person took on average one to two days. The priest came, prayed the solemn exorcism of the *Rituale Romanum*, and the enemy yielded.

Then something strange happened. Around the year 1963 — and exorcists like Father Chad Ripperger point emphatically to this date — that duration jumped abruptly: from one or two days to ten to twenty-four months. And it did not stop there. From decade to decade the cases grew more protracted. Some suddenly dragged on for as long as eight years. Today, practicing exorcists report, things have reached the point where in recent years not a single person has been fully liberated from their demons.

One must let this finding sink in for a moment. The same prayers. The same Church. The same Christ in whose name the command is given. And yet: the enemy no longer yields.

How is that possible?

The answer Father Ripperger gives is theologically precise and shattering in its consequences. The sacraments — baptism, the Eucharist, confession — work *ex opere operato*: from the work performed itself. Their power does not depend on the holiness of the priest, nor on the state of the Church; Christ himself is the one acting. The sacramentals, however — and the exorcism belongs among them — work *ex opere operantis Ecclesiae*: from the working of the acting Church. Their power depends on the spiritual state of the Church as a whole, on the faith of the minister, on the disposition of the recipient.

The exorcism is thus something like a fever thermometer of the Church. When the Church is strong, holy, in the state of grace — the demons tremble before a single prayer. When the Church is weak, lukewarm, hollowed out from within — they laugh.

And the thermometer shows: since 1963 the spiritual vitality of the Church has been sinking without pause. The weaker the Church, the more power and influence the demons gain — not only over the possessed, but over families, societies, entire nations.

This places before us two questions, which this book seeks to answer in two parts:

First: Was this decline foreseen? Were there warnings? And if so — what do those same sources say about what is still to come?

Second: What exactly happened around the year 1963? What weakened the Church so much that her centuries-old weapons went blunt?

The answer to the first question leads us to four places: to a convent in Quito, to a mountain in the French Alps, to a shepherd village in Portugal,

and to a convent in Japan. The answer to the second question leads us to Rome — into the years of the Second Vatican Council and into the darkest rumors of recent Church history.

Let us begin with the warnings. They reach further back than most suspect — more than four hundred years.



PART I — THE WARNINGS OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

A PROPHETIC PEDAGOGY ACROSS FOUR CENTURIES

Worldwide, close to a thousand Marian apparitions have been reported to date. The Church is extraordinarily reserved in granting recognition — only a vanishingly small fraction have been approved after years, often decades, of examination. It is precisely this strictness that makes the following so remarkable:

Whoever lays the approved apparitions of the last four hundred years side by side — Quito 1610, La Salette 1846, Fatima 1917, Akita 1973 — discovers no disconnected individual messages. He discovers an internally coherent prophetic pedagogy: the same themes, the same warnings, the same dramatic arc, across continents and centuries, conveyed to people who could have known nothing of one another — to a Spanish nun in colonial Ecuador, to two illiterate shepherd children in the French Alps, to three Portuguese children, to a Japanese sister.

The arc is always the same: **diagnosis of sin → announcement of chastisement → naming of the remedies → promise of triumph.**

It is as if a mother had repeated the same warning over four hundred years with growing urgency — like a mother whose children are running toward a precipice and will not listen.



CHAPTER 1

QUITO 1610: THE WOMAN WHO SAW OUR CENTURY



A CONVENT AT THE END OF THE WORLD

Quito, at the beginning of the 17th century: a Spanish colonial city high in the Andes, at what felt like the edge of the known world. In the Royal Convent of the Immaculate Conception lives a Spanish Conceptionist: Mother Mariana Francisca de Jesús Torres y Berriochoa (1563–1635). Between 1594 and 1634 she receives a series of apparitions of the Mother of God under the title "Our Lady of Good Success."

What lifts these apparitions above all others is their direction in time. The Mother of God speaks to Mother Mariana hardly at all about her own epoch. She speaks about *ours*. On January 21, 1610 — Galileo had just turned his telescope to the heavens; the Thirty Years' War still lay in the future — she says:

"I make it known to you that from the end of the 19th century and shortly after the middle of the 20th century ... in what is then the colony and will later be the Republic of Ecuador, the passions will erupt and there will be a total corruption of customs ... for Satan will reign almost completely by means of the Masonic sects."

Pause over that. "Shortly after the middle of the 20th century" — that is exactly the threshold of the 1960s at which the exorcists registered the collapse of their effectiveness. And more still: the apparition names the "Masonic sects" as the instrument — more than a hundred years before Freemasonry even existed. The first Grand Lodge was founded only in 1717 in London. A nun in the Ecuador of 1610 could have known this name from no earthly source.

By "customs" is meant that which structures a society at its core: what counts as acceptable, what as normal, what as good. The prophecy thus foretells not merely individual scandals — it foretells that the moral blueprint of society itself will dissolve.

THE ATTACK ON THE CHILDREN

"They will focus particularly on the children in order to sustain this general corruption."

Whoever has the children has the future. The prophecy names the strategy with the coolness of a general-staff plan. And a glance at the history of the modern school system gives it a chilling depth of focus: the modern school system arose in the 19th century on the Prussian model and was deliberately separated from religious content — with the declared aim of producing punctual, obedient, adaptable workers for the emerging industry. Not saints were to be formed, but functioning units. The secularization of education was no side effect — it was the program. Generation after generation grew up with no one explaining to them what grace is, what sin is, what man is for.

THE DESECRATION OF THE MOST HOLY

Then the message turns to the heart of the Catholic faith — the Eucharist:

"Oh, how it grieves me to tell you that there will be enormous sacrileges, public as well as secret, through the profanation of the Holy Eucharist."

"The enemies of Jesus Christ, instigated by the devil, will steal consecrated Hosts from the churches in order to profane the Eucharistic species. My Most Holy Son will see Himself cast to the ground and trampled by filthy feet."

The image of the "filthy feet" carries a double meaning — one obvious, and one our age refuses to see. The obvious one: the literal theft of Hosts for black masses, which is documented. The hidden one concerns something far more everyday.

The old teaching of the Church was crystal clear: whoever wishes to receive Holy Communion must be in the state of grace — free of grave sin, cleansed through confession. Whoever knowingly communicates in mortal sin commits a sacrilege; he "eats and drinks judgment upon himself," as Paul writes. This awareness has been almost completely extinguished in the last century. Through reforms the rules for receiving Communion were loosened; exceptions once unthinkable were admitted — for instance, Communion for the civilly remarried. Today, in many parishes, everyone sitting in the pews goes to Communion as a matter of course — while the confessionals stand abandoned.

Yet a large part of the baptized live permanently in objectively grave sin without even suspecting it: cohabitation before marriage, artificial contra-

ception, infidelity, pornography — all violations of the commandments of God which, according to the unchanged teaching of the Church, are mortal sins when committed knowingly and willingly, and which, without repentance and confession, turn the reception of Communion into a sacrilege. Millions of well-meant Communions, Sunday after Sunday — and a large portion of them, measured by the teaching of all the centuries, an offense against the Body of Christ. "Trampled by filthy feet": the prophecy of 1610 does not first describe the scandals of others. It describes the ordinary Catholic Sunday of the 21st century.

THE FORGOTTEN SACRAMENTS

The apparition goes through the sacraments the way a physician examines the organs of a patient:

Extreme Unction:

"The Sacrament of Extreme Unction will be little esteemed. Many will die without receiving it — either through the negligence of their families or through a misguided affection for their sick."

"Others, goaded by the accursed devil, will rebel against the spirit of the Catholic Church and will rob countless souls of innumerable graces, consolations, and the strength they need to make the great leap from time into eternity."

Who today still calls the priest to the deathbed? One calls the emergency doctor, the lawyer, the funeral home. The tacit assumption of our age runs: everyone goes to heaven anyway. So no one needs the sacrament any-

more that the Church kept ready for two millennia for the most important hour of life — the hour of passage. The prophecy calls it by name: a robbery committed against souls, often out of "misguided affection" — one does not wish to "alarm" the sick. And so he dies unprepared.

Marriage:

"As for the Sacrament of Matrimony, which symbolizes the union of Christ with His Church, it will be attacked and deeply profaned. Freemasonry, which will then be in power, will enact iniquitous laws with the aim of doing away with this Sacrament, making it easy for everyone to live in sin, and encouraging the procreation of illegitimate children born without the blessing of the Church."

Here too: the prophecy describes a *legislative* attack — "iniquitous laws." Father Ripperger points out that in the United States the introduction of divorce laws was driven substantially by Masonic circles, as later was the legitimization of same-sex marriages. The statistics of the present read like the report of fulfillment: according to figures of the American health authority CDC, around 1.6 million children are born out of wedlock in a single year — about 40.3 percent of all births. Around 79 percent of couples live together before marriage. What was announced in 1610 as an unimaginable aberration is today the statistical norm.

The Priesthood:

"The Sacrament of Holy Orders will be ridiculed, oppressed, and despised ... The devil will labor with cruel and subtle cunning to draw them away from the spirit of their vocation, and will cor-

rupt many of them. These corrupted priests will scandalize the Christian people and will draw the hatred of bad Catholics and of the enemies of the Church upon all priests."

Read this sentence in the light of the abuse crisis — and its precision is frightening. The abuse of minors by priests demonstrably began as early as the 1940s and 1950s. The Vatican saw the danger: in the worldwide instruction *Religiosorum Institutio* (1961) it was expressly ordered that homosexual candidates be kept from the priesthood — an instruction that was ignored in many places, in part deliberately. Especially devastating was the bishops' handling of uncovered cases: transfer instead of dismissal, cover-up instead of purification. When the wave broke publicly in the 1990s, the hatred struck — exactly as foretold in 1610 — not only the guilty, but "all priests." The reputation of the priesthood was destroyed for generations; today's shortage of priests is also a late consequence of this scandal.

The Captive Pope:

"This apparent triumph of Satan will bring immense suffering upon the good pastors of the Church — upon the many good priests, and upon the Supreme Pastor and Vicar of Christ who, a prisoner in the Vatican, will shed secret and bitter tears before his God and Lord."

THE SEA OF IMPURITY

The final words of the Quito message concern the climate in which all this will take place:

"In these unhappy times there will be unbridled luxury which, acting thus to snare the rest into sin, will conquer innumerable frivolous souls."

"Luxury" renders the Latin *luxuria* — lust, one of the seven capital sins. Here Quito builds the bridge to Fatima, where Sister Lúcia, three hundred years later, will explain that more souls are lost through the sins of the flesh than for any other reason.

"Innocence will almost no longer be found in children, nor modesty in women."

"The spirit of impurity will saturate the atmosphere like a filthy sea and will flood the streets, squares, and public places with astonishing liberty."

"There will be almost no virgin souls left in the world."

A "filthy sea" that "saturates the atmosphere" — is there a more fitting description of a world in which the internet is omnipresent? A world in which advertising, television, magazines, and social media systematically target the deepest, drive-controlled addiction centers of the brain? In which, according to surveys, around 90 percent of men and 50 percent of women regularly consume pornography? In which sexual content and ideologies have already entered the elementary schools?

The woman who saw this died in 1635. Her body was found incorrupt. Her message bears the title "Our Lady of Good Success" — a title that sounds like a promise. But before the good success comes, it was to grow darker. Of that speaks the next apparition — 236 years later, on a lonely mountain in France.



CHAPTER 2

LA SALETTE 1846: THE WEeping MOTHER

TWO CHILDREN WHO BARELY KNEW EACH OTHER

September 19, 1846. High above the village of La Salette in the French Alps, at about 1,800 meters, two children are tending cattle: Mélanie Calvat-Mathieu, fourteen and a half years old, and Maximin Giraud, eleven. Both come from Corps, both are illiterate, both without any religious upbringing. And — a detail that would later refute any suspicion of an arranged invention — the two have known each other for only two days at the time of the apparition.

In a hollow they see a globe of light, "as if the sun had fallen there." Within it: a seated woman, her face in her hands, weeping. She rises and speaks to the children — and what she says is no gentle devotion. It is an indictment.

THE INDICTMENT AGAINST THE PRIESTS

"The priests, the ministers of my Son, have become, by their wicked lives, by their irreverence and their impiety in celebrating the holy mysteries, by their love of money, of honors and pleasures, cesspools of impurity."

"Woe to the priests and to those consecrated to God who, by their unfaithfulness and their wicked lives, are crucifying my

Son anew. The sins of those consecrated to God cry to Heaven and call for vengeance ... for there is no longer anyone to implore mercy and forgiveness for the people."

Saint John Eudes had already formulated it: the heaviest chastisement God can inflict on a people is not war and not famine — it is to give them bad priests. For the priest is the lightning rod of the world: daily he offers the spotless sacrifice that appeases the wrath of God. If the priest falls, the protection falls. La Salette says exactly that: "There is no longer anyone to implore mercy for the people."

THE PLAN OF THE GOVERNMENTS

Then the gaze widens from the Church to the world:

"All the civil governments will have one and the same plan, which will be to abolish and do away with every religious principle, to make way for materialism, atheism, spiritism" (another name for the occult) "and vice of all kinds."

The year was 1846. Marx and Engels had not yet even published the Communist Manifesto. And yet the sentence describes in three words the program of the coming 180 years: **materialism** — the belief that only matter exists; **atheism** — the abolition of God as state doctrine and later as social consensus; **spiritism** — which is nothing other than the occult streaming into the vacuum thus created. For man never stops believing; he merely begins to believe in the wrong things. Yoga spirituality, esotericism, tarot, "manifesting," horoscopes, neo-pagan practices — the de-Christianized world has not become religionless, but open to every spirit that knocks.

"The Vicar of my Son will have much to suffer, because for a time the Church will be given over to great persecution, a time of darkness, and the Church will witness a frightful crisis."

THE GREAT SECRET — A DISPUTED TEXT

What follows must be honestly framed. The apparition of La Salette itself is ecclesiastically approved — episcopal recognition came as early as 1851. To be distinguished from it is the so-called *long version* of the "great secret," which the seer Mélanie Calvat later wrote down and published in 1879 in Lecce (Italy) with the imprimatur of the local bishop. This long version is disputed: the Holy Office took action against individual editions and urged restraint in its dissemination and interpretation. It is documented here for the sake of completeness — not as an article of faith, but as a historical text whose parallels to later events may speak for themselves.

On the coming chastisement:

"God will strike in an unprecedented way. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth! God will exhaust His wrath upon them, and no one will be able to escape so many afflictions together."

"The chiefs, the leaders of the people of God, have neglected prayer and penance, and the devil has darkened their intelligence; they have become wandering stars which the old devil will drag along with his tail to make them perish. God will allow the old serpent to cause divisions among those who reign, in every society and in every family; physical and moral punishments will be suffered. God will abandon mankind to itself and

will send punishments which will follow one after the other for more than thirty-five years."

"God will abandon mankind to itself" — that is the most terrible of all chastisements, and it corresponds exactly to the thought of the Letter to the Romans: God "gave them up" to their own passions. The chastisement consists at first not in lightning from heaven, but in the withdrawal of grace. A world without grace dismantles itself. And the motif of discord — "among those who reign, in every society and in every family" — will be repeated almost word for word in Akita: "cardinals against cardinals, bishops against bishops."

On the crisis of society and Church:

"Society is on the eve of the most terrible scourges and of the greatest events. Mankind must expect to be ruled with an iron rod."

"Woe to the princes of the Church who will be occupied only with piling riches upon riches, with guarding their authority and ruling with pride!"

The central, disputed prophecy:

"Forgetting the holy faith in God, each individual will want to guide himself and to rise above his peers. Civil and ecclesiastical authority will be abolished; all order and all justice will be trampled underfoot; one will see only murder, hatred, jealousy, lies, and discord, without love of country or of family."

"Rome will lose the faith and become the seat of the Antichrist."

The first sentence is an almost literal anticipation of what was later diagnosed as the basic principle of modernism: the shifting of the standard of judgment from God to the self. "Each individual will want to guide himself" — that is the religion of our days: *my* body, *my* truth, *my* life plan. The second sentence — "Rome will lose the faith" — is the most famous and most fiercely disputed of the entire secret. It is found only in the long version of 1879, not in the ecclesiastically examined core; its authenticity, literal meaning, and interpretation are contested among theologians. It should not be read in isolation or sensationally. And yet the reader, in the second part of this book — with the statements of Father Malachi Martin and Padre Pio about Satan's penetration into the bosom of the Church — will inevitably be forced to think back to it.

On the cosmic signs:

"The seasons will be altered. The earth will produce only bad fruits; the stars will lose their regular motion. The moon will reflect only a feeble reddish light. Water and fire will give the earth's globe convulsions and terrible earthquakes which will swallow up mountains and cities."

This imagery stands in the tradition of the biblical discourse on the end times and returns in Akita: "Fire will fall from the sky." It points to a catastrophe of global dimensions.

THE APPEAL — AND THE FIRST PROMISE

Yet La Salette does not end in darkness. As in all the apparitions, the indictment is followed by the call — and the call by the promise:

"I address an urgent appeal to the earth ... Finally, I call upon the apostles of the last times, the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ, who have lived in contempt of the world and of themselves, in poverty and humility, in contempt and silence, in prayer and mortification, in chastity and union with God, in suffering and unknown to the world."

"Fight, children of light, you, the few who can see; for behold, the time of times, the end of ends, is at hand."

"Finally — after the great tribulation — the Gospel will be preached everywhere, and men will make great progress in the faith, because there will be unity among the workers of Jesus Christ, and men will live in the fear of God."

The "apostles of the last times" — poor, humble, praying, chaste, ready to suffer, unknown to the world. That is not a description of princes of the Church. It is a description of ordinary believers who remain faithful in hiddenness. Perhaps a description of the reader of this book.

And at the end: the restoration. Exactly the same promise that Fatima will compress, seventy years later, into a single sentence — perhaps the most important sentence of the twentieth century.



CHAPTER 3

FATIMA 1917: THE MIRACLE OF THE SUN AND THE THREE SECRETS



SEVENTY THOUSAND WITNESSES

Fatima is the best documented, most strictly examined, and most highly approved private revelation in the history of the Church. From May 13 to October 13, 1917, the Mother of God appeared to three shepherd children — Lúcia dos Santos (10), Francisco Marto (9), and Jacinta Marto (7) — on the 13th of each month (with the exception of August, when the children were detained by the authorities).

The conclusion was an event that stands alone in the history of apparitions: the Miracle of the Sun of October 13, 1917. The apparition had announced it months in advance, to the day and the hour — a public miracle "so that all may believe." On that rainy noon, around 70,000 people stood in the Cova da Iria, among them avowed atheists, scoffers, and anticlerical journalists of the Lisbon press who had come to document the Church's embarrassment. What they documented instead — in the secular daily papers of the country — was a phenomenon in which the sun spun like a wheel of fire, cast colors over the crowd, and seemed to hurl itself toward the earth, while the soaked clothes of the witnesses dried within minutes.

One must grasp the weight of this: here an apparition announces a miracle with a date, and it happens before tens of thousands of hostile witnesses.

Whoever takes Fatima seriously — and the Church has recognized it after the strictest examination — must also take seriously what was said there.

And what was said there is of shattering gravity.

THE FIRST SECRET: THE VISION OF HELL

On July 13, 1917, the Mother of God entrusted a three-part secret to the children. Sister Lúcia wrote it down decades later in obedience to her bishop. The first part is a look into the abyss:

"Our Lady showed us a great sea of fire which seemed to be under the earth. Plunged in this fire were demons and souls in human form, like transparent burning embers, all blackened or burnished bronze, floating about in the conflagration, now raised into the air by the flames that issued from within themselves ... amid shrieks and groans of pain and despair, which horrified us and made us tremble with fear."

Three children between seven and ten years of age see hell. Not as a metaphor, not as a "state of distance from God," as modern theology likes to paraphrase it — but as a burning reality. Jacinta, the youngest, will be marked by this sight for the rest of her short life; she will pray and offer sacrifices without ceasing "for poor sinners," so that no one need go there.

The Mother of God explains:

"You have seen hell, where the souls of poor sinners go. To save them, God wishes to establish in the world devotion to my Immaculate Heart. If what I say to you is done, many souls will be saved and there will be peace."

Sister Lúcia later specified *which* sins fill hell: more souls go to hell because of the **sins of the flesh** than for any other reason — not because they are the gravest, but because they are the **most frequent and the least repented**. Here the circle closes back to Quito: the “filthy sea” of impurity saturating the atmosphere. A society that has declared fornication normality, pornography a leisure activity, and repentance a therapy exercise produces, according to this statement, lost souls on an industrial scale — not because God is cruel, but because no one converts anymore, since no one knows anymore that there is anything to convert from.

THE SECOND SECRET: RUSSIA AND THE FORETOLD WORLD WAR

"The war is going to end; but if people do not cease offending God, a worse one will break out during the pontificate of Pius XI. When you see a night illumined by an unknown light, know that this is the great sign given you by God that He is about to punish the world for its crimes, by means of war, famine, and persecutions of the Church and of the Holy Father."

Note the precision: in 1917, in the middle of the First World War, the Second is announced — together with the name of the pope under whose pontificate it will begin, and together with a foresign. That foresign came: in the night of January 25–26, 1938, an extraordinary aurora illuminated large parts of Europe — a celestial phenomenon that no one could explain in this intensity and extent. Sister Lúcia recognized it immediately as the announced “unknown light.” A few weeks later Hitler annexed Austria.

"To prevent this, I shall come to ask for the consecration of Russia to my Immaculate Heart, and the Communion of Reparation on the First Saturdays. If my requests are heeded, Russia will be converted, and there will be peace; if not, she will spread her errors throughout the world, causing wars and persecutions of the Church. The good will be martyred; the Holy Father will have much to suffer; various nations will be annihilated."

In 1917 Russia was a backward agrarian country in collapse. A few months after this message the Bolsheviks seized power — and "Russia's errors," militant atheism and materialism, covered half the world in the following decades, cost millions of martyrs their lives, and in secularized form shape the thinking of the West to this day.

But then the sentence that carries everything — the promise to which this entire book holds fast:

"In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph. The Holy Father will consecrate Russia to me, and she will be converted, and a period of peace will be granted to the world."

THE THIRD SECRET: THE BISHOP IN WHITE

Sister Lúcia wrote down the third part on January 3, 1944. The envelope traveled to Rome, into the archive of the Holy Office — and remained sealed there for more than half a century. John XXIII read it in 1959 and decided to remain silent. Paul VI read it in 1965 — and remained silent. John Paul II read it after the assassination attempt of 1981. Only on June 26, 2000 was the text published by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith under Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger:

"After the two parts which I have already explained, at the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendor that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: Penance, Penance, Penance!"

"And we saw ... a Bishop dressed in White; we had the impression that it was the Holy Father. Various other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious going up a steep mountain, at the top of which there was a big Cross ... before reaching there the Holy Father passed through a big city half in ruins and half trembling, with halting step, afflicted with pain and sorrow, he prayed for the souls of the corpses he met on his way; having reached the top of the mountain, on his knees at the foot of the big Cross he was killed by a group of soldiers who fired bullets and arrows at him, and in the same way there died one after another the other Bishops, Priests, men and women Religious, and various lay people of different ranks and positions."

The official interpretation of the year 2000 read this vision as already largely fulfilled: in the assassination attempt on John Paul II on May 13, 1981 — the anniversary of the first apparition — and in the martyrdom of Christians under the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. But the image of the half-ruined city, the corpses in the streets, the clergy and people dying together coincides strikingly with the Akita message of 1973, that the coming chastisement will spare "neither priests nor faithful." Fulfilled

past, or coming future? Precisely at this question the three great controversies ignited.

THE THREE CONTROVERSIES

First: Has the secret been published in full? Critics — most famously the Italian journalist Antonio Socci in *The Fourth Secret of Fatima* (2006), but also Father Paul Kramer and others — doubt that the vision published in 2000 is the entire text. Their arguments: witnesses who claimed to have read the secret hinted that it also contained concrete *words* of Our Lady — yet the published version contains not a single prophetic speech of Mary, only the vision. Sister Lúcia herself remarked in a 1944 letter, in substance, that the secret is "in the 13th chapter of the Apocalypse" — the chapter that deals with the beast and the great apostasy, which is hard to reconcile with a purely retrospective interpretation. Socci's thesis: there were two documents — the published vision and a second, shorter sheet of about 20 to 25 lines with the actual words of the Mother of God, which was never published. The Holy See — Cardinal Ratzinger, Cardinal Bertone, and Sister Lúcia herself, who is said to have confirmed the completeness several times before her death in 2005 — rejects this and maintains the completeness of the publication.

Second: Was Russia ever validly consecrated? The Mother of God demanded expressly in Tuy in 1929: the pope, *in union with all the bishops of the world*, should consecrate *Russia by name* to the Immaculate Heart. The history of the acts of consecration reads like a chronicle of the almost: Pius XII consecrated the world in 1942 (Russia not by name, without the bishops) and the peoples of Russia in 1952 (without the bishops). Paul VI renewed the consecration of the world in 1964. John Paul II carried out

acts of consecration in 1981 and 1982, then on March 25, 1984, on St. Peter's Square, the consecration of the world in union with the previously invited bishops — with special, but again not explicit, reference to those peoples "for whom You yourself await our consecration and entrustment." Only Pope Francis, on March 25, 2022 — under the impact of the war in Ukraine — expressly consecrated *Russia and Ukraine* to the Immaculate Heart, in union with the bishops. Whether the 1984 consecration fulfilled the condition has been disputed for decades; we shall return in the second part to Father Amorth's weighty testimony on this.

Third: the rumors of withholding. In traditionalist circles, further-reaching theses circulate — from the "theological crisis of faith" thesis (the suppressed part concerns a far-reaching apostasy *within* the Church itself, which would explain Lúcia's reference to Apocalypse 13) to fringe positions such as the thesis that the "Sister Lúcia" appearing publicly after 1960 was no longer the original seer — the latter is rejected as unfounded by the overwhelming majority of Church historians, by Lúcia's family, and by the Holy See.

For the diagnosis of this book the decisive point is: one *needs* no suppressed version of the secret. The themes around which the controversy revolves — crisis of faith, confusion in the Church, chastisement — already follow compellingly from the undisputedly approved messages of Quito, La Salette, Fatima, and Akita themselves.

THE SMALL, OVERLOOKED SENTENCES

Besides the three secrets, the authenticated Fatima messages contain sentences that stand in the shadow of the great visions — and yet strike our present like needle pricks:

"Many marriages are not good; they do not please Our Lord and are not of God."

The divorce rate in Western countries today stands at around 45 percent. Many divorced Catholics marry again; numerous countries have legalized same-sex marriage; German bishops are working on Church blessings for homosexual couples.

"Certain fashions will be introduced that will offend Our Lord very much."

In 1917, when women's ankles were still covered, this sentence was scarcely intelligible. Today, in the age of a body cult that has banished the biblical standards of modesty to the museum, it comments on itself.

And finally — as a gift, not a threat — the **promise of the First Saturdays**, given at Pontevedra on December 10, 1925:

"I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who, on the First Saturdays of five consecutive months, shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for fifteen minutes while meditating on the mysteries, with the intention of making reparation to my Immaculate Heart."

Read that sentence twice. Heaven offers a concrete, dated, verifiable assurance: assistance at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation. The price: five First Saturdays. Confession, Communion, the Rosary, fifteen minutes of meditation. It is as if the Mother who knows what is coming had thrown her children a life ring — and the fewest have ever taken the trouble to reach for it.



CHAPTER 4

AKITA 1973: THE WEeping STATUE AND THE FIRE FROM THE SKY

JAPAN, A CONVENT, A STATUE OF WOOD

More than half a century after Fatima, at the other end of the world: Yuza-wadai near Akita, northern Japan. In a small convent, Sister Agnes Sasagawa receives messages while a wooden statue of Mary weeps human tears 101 times before witnesses — and later before running television cameras; scientific analyses confirmed human tear fluid. The responsible bishop, after long examination, recognized the events as supernatural. Remarkably, Cardinal Ratzinger, then Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, is reported to have described the message of Akita as essentially identical to the third secret of Fatima.

The messages of Akita are the darkest of the whole series — and the most precise concerning the Church herself.

CARDINALS AGAINST CARDINALS

"The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church, in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops. The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confrères. Churches and altars will be

sacked. The Church will be full of those who accept compromises."

In 1973 that sounded like a distant possibility. Today it reads like a collection of headlines: cardinals publicly accusing one another of heresy; bishops' conferences on a collision course with Rome; priests who, for their fidelity to the inherited teaching and liturgy, are disciplined not by enemies of the Church but by their own superiors. The faithful priest of our day often stands between the hammer and the anvil: if he speaks the Word of God without abbreviation, his own bishop falls upon him — and with him those laypeople who have lost all interest in the unadulterated faith. "Full of those who accept compromises" — a more merciless description of ecclesial mediocrity is scarcely conceivable.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE GREAT CHASTISEMENT

Then the sentence that sets Akita apart in the history of the apparitions — the clearest announcement of chastisement ever spoken in an approved message:

"In order that the world might know His anger, the Heavenly Father is preparing to inflict a great chastisement on all mankind ... If men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity. It will be a punishment greater than the deluge, such as one will never have seen before. Fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity ... the good as well as the bad, sparing neither priests nor faithful. The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead."

Every word deserves attention. "Greater than the deluge" — the deluge is in Holy Scripture the archetype of the purifying judgment over a humanity whose "every thought and inclination was only evil." "Fire will fall from the sky" — that is the language of Sodom and Gomorrah, those cities that perished in fire because not even ten righteous men could be found in them. "A great part of humanity" — note well: a *great* part, not the *greater* part; the formulation points to enormous, but not majority, losses. "Sparing neither priests nor faithful" — the judgment strikes the Church as well; here the vision of the third Fatima secret resounds, in which pope, bishops, priests, and laity fall together.

And — perhaps the hardest word:

"If sins increase in number and gravity, there will no longer be
pardon for them."

Not because God's mercy would come to an end. But because forgiveness presupposes repentance — and a world that has abolished the concept of sin can no longer repent. The door of mercy stands open, but no one passes through it anymore, because no one believes anymore that there is anything to forgive. That is the real catastrophe of our time — and the reason why, according to the testimony of all these messages, God in the end reaches for the last remedy: He chastises *because* He loves and wills conversion. Like a father who at the last moment yanks his child back from the precipice — even if the grip hurts.

"ALL WILL SEEM LOST"

Yet in the midst of the darkest message stands the brightest sentence:

"To test the faith and trust of the just, there will be occasions when all will seem lost and paralyzed. That will then be the happy beginning of the complete restoration."

Engrave this sentence in your memory. It is the key to interpreting the coming events: the moment of apparently total collapse — when the accustomed way of life is gone, when perhaps large parts of the infrastructure are destroyed, when God, as it were, "wipes the slate clean" — precisely this moment is not the end, but the *happy beginning*. Whoever knows this can walk through the darkness without despairing.

"To free men from the bondage of these heresies, those whom the merciful love of my Most Holy Son has destined for the restoration will need great strength of will, constancy, valor, and confidence in God."

THE ONLY WEAPONS

And then Akita names — with the sobriety of a military assessment — the equipment for the coming time:

"The only arms which will remain for you will be the Rosary and the Sign left by my Son. Each day recite the prayers of the Rosary; with the Rosary, pray for the Pope, the bishops, and the priests."

Not stockpiled cellars, not weapons, not bunkers: the Rosary and the Cross. And — this is remarkable — the prayer is directed expressly *for* pope, bishops, and priests. In the face of the disorder in the Church, nothing would be easier and nothing more counterproductive than to curse the

shepherds. The instruction runs the other way: to pray for them, so that something changes. Anger destroys the angry; prayer changes the world.

A further Akita statement, handed down in substance, rounds out the picture and will become important in the hypothetical scenario of the final part: after the chastisement there will be about **twenty-five years of good harvest** — a time of peace and reinvigorated faith — in the course of which, however, men will again grow lukewarm. Theologians who were consulted surmise that the Antichrist will appear only *after* this phase, when the lukewarmness will be even worse than today. That coincides with La Salette: there too the Antichrist follows only after the great tribulation and the restoration — an important indication that the coming chastisement is *not* the end of the world, but a purification within history.



CHAPTER 5

PADRE PIO: THE MAN WITH THE STIGMATA AND THE QUESTION OF WHEN



THE WITNESS

If there was one man in the 20th century who knew the invisible world at first hand, it was Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887–1968). For fifty years the Capuchin of San Giovanni Rotondo bore the bleeding wounds of Christ. He read the souls of penitents, he fought — literally, bodily — with demons, and millions made pilgrimage to him. The Church canonized him in 2002. What this man said about the coming times therefore carries a weight of its own.

THE PROPHECY ON THE VERANDA

The incident took place, according to the testimony of a spiritual son of Padre Pio, around the years 1963/64 — note the date: exactly the threshold at which the exorcists registered the collapse. Padre Pio used to spend a quarter of an hour after the Angelus at 6 p.m. with his spiritual children on the veranda of the friary. From these intimate evening hours many precious words have been handed down.

On one of those evenings the circle put to him the question that had been on everyone's lips since Fatima: *When* will the triumph of the Immaculate Heart come? Is there still long to wait?

The Padre recollected himself deeply — as always in those moments when he knew he had something of weight to convey — and said with clear, decisive words:

"Né io né voi lo vedremo ma questi bambini qui, sì... loro lo vedranno!"

"Neither I nor you will see it, but these children here, yes... they will see it!"

And he pointed to the children of the friends present — children of about ten years at the time.

THE CALCULATION

The arithmetic of this prophecy is of unsettling simplicity:

- Event: ca. 1963/64
- Age of the children at the time: ca. 10 years
- Birth years of the children: ca. 1953/54
- Age of these "children" today (2026): about 72 to 73 years

The reporter drew the conclusion that forces itself on everyone: if these children are to *live to see* the triumph of the Immaculate Heart, "then it is obvious, dear friends: not many years can pass!"

And since, according to the testimony of all the apparitions, the triumph comes *after* the purification — after the tribulation, after the chastisement — then with the triumph, that which precedes it also moves within tangible reach. If this prophecy is true, we are not living in just any time. We are living in the time *immediately before*.

With this, the first part of this book is complete: four centuries of warnings that converged with growing precision on the middle of the 20th century — on an apostasy that comes from within, on a Church in crisis, on a chastisement that purifies, and on a triumph that follows.

The second question remains. The warnings said: *shortly after the middle of the 20th century*. The exorcists say: *1963*. So what happened then?



**PART II — THE YEAR 1963:
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE
CHURCH?**



CHAPTER 6

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL: THE GREAT OPENING

AGGIORNAMENTO

The most obvious event of those threshold years lies open before everyone's eyes — so open that its scope is easily overlooked: the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), commonly called "Vatican II" — the greatest reform of the Catholic Church in centuries.

It was convoked by Pope John XXIII under the watchword *aggiornamento* — "bringing up to date." The Church was to open herself to the modern world, speak its language, respond to the "signs of the times." The Council was continued under Paul VI. The driving theologians — Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, Hans Küng, the young Joseph Ratzinger — and the cardinals of the so-called "Rhine Alliance" (Frings, König, Suenens, Döpfner) pushed through, against the Roman Curia, a course that rebuilt the Church in nearly every area of life.

To forestall misunderstandings: this book does not claim that the Council as such was invalid or its intentions thoroughly evil. It documents *what* was changed — and leaves it to the reader to lay the changes beside the prophecies of the first part.

THE CENTRAL CHANGES

1. The liturgical reform (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*). From the Latin Tridentine Mass, whose essential features were over 1,500 years old, came the *Novus Ordo* in 1969: vernacular instead of Latin, the priest facing the people instead of facing the tabernacle together with them, new Eucharistic prayers, a stronger theology of meal rather than sacrifice. For the individual believer this was the greatest upheaval in everyday experience — from one Sunday to the next, the Mass that his ancestors had celebrated for countless generations looked, sounded, and felt different.

2. Religious liberty (*Dignitatis Humanae*). Every human being has the civil right to choose his religion freely — a break with the *Syllabus errorum* of Pius IX (1864), which had condemned exactly this thesis.

3. Ecumenism (*Unitatis Redintegratio*). Protestants and Orthodox are for the first time recognized as "separated brethren" and real ecclesial communities — no longer as heretics. In 1965 the mutual excommunication with Constantinople was lifted.

4. Non-Christian religions (*Nostra Aetate*). Recognition of elements of truth in Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism; express distancing from the charge of deicide against the Jewish people.

5. A new understanding of the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). The Church as the "People of God" on pilgrimage, not primarily as a hierarchical pyramid; emphasis on the common priesthood of all the baptized; the doctrine of episcopal collegiality.

6. Promotion of the laity (*Apostolicam Actuositatem*). Laypeople become active bearers of the Church's mission; parish councils, lector and Communion-helper ministries arise.

7. Understanding of revelation (*Dei Verbum*). Scripture and Tradition as one common source; promotion of Bible reading by the laity.

8. Opening to the modern world (*Gaudium et Spes*). The "joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties" of the people of today are also those of the Church; dialogue with science, democracy, and human rights — instead of anathema against modernity.

THE BALANCE SHEET

What followed is statistically undeniable — and it followed not slowly, but immediately: from the late 1960s onward, priestly vocations, Mass attendance, and entries into religious orders collapsed massively, above all in Europe and North America. Tens of thousands of priests and religious abandoned their state. There came the split with the Society of St. Pius X (Archbishop Lefebvre, 1970; episcopal consecrations 1988) — a schism, open to this day, over liturgy, religious liberty, and ecumenism. Under the banner of a diffuse "spirit of the Council," progressive interpretations often went far beyond the Council texts. And over everything settled a crisis of identity and authority: the growing uncertainty as to what is even still bindingly Catholic.

The opening of the windows of which John XXIII had spoken fell, moreover, at the most unfavorable historical moment imaginable: the decade of the sexual revolution, the drug culture, the revolt against every au-

thority. The Church lowered her walls at exactly the moment when the storm broke loose outside.

But the real finding lies deeper than statistics and zeitgeist. Many consider the dispute over the Council a dispute over externals — Latin or vernacular, the direction of celebration, church music. That is a fundamental error. It was not only forms that were changed. It was the *weapons*. Of that the next chapter speaks.



CHAPTER 7

THE DISARMED CHURCH: WHAT WAS DELETED FROM THE RITES



ONE EXAMPLE THAT EXPLAINS EVERYTHING: HOLY WATER

To understand what happened, a single example suffices — one familiar to every Catholic, and whose transformation almost no one knows: holy water.

The old rite (*Rituale Romanum* of 1614, in force until 1969) consisted of four acts in fixed order:

1. **Exorcism of the salt:** the priest spoke: "*Exorcizo te, creatura salis...*" — "I exorcize you, creature of salt..." — and expressly commanded the devil to depart from the salt.
2. **Blessing of the salt** with a prayer designating it for "the salvation of believers."
3. **Exorcism of the water:** again an express adjuration — "*Exorcizo te, creatura aquae...*" — with the invocation to drive out all power of the enemy and to make the water fit for **expelling demons**.
4. **Union of salt and water in the form of a cross** in the name of the Holy Trinity.

The language was direct, combative, exorcistic. Holy water counted — true to the tradition since the early Church — as a sacramental with objectively effective power against evil. Every holy-water font at the church entrance was, in the literal sense, an armory.

The new rite (De Benedictionibus, prepared from 1969, editio typica 1984) cut and defused this drastically:

- The exorcisms over salt and water are **deleted**.
- The addition of salt has become **optional**.
- The new blessing prayers speak predominantly of cleansing, remembrance of baptism, and renewal of faith; the petition for protection against the devil has either disappeared entirely or been softened into a general petition for "protection from all evil."
- The direct address to the "creatures" of salt and water vanished — to the reformers it counted as "pre-rational."

Consider what that means in the light of this book's introduction: sacramentals work *ex opere operantis Ecclesiae* — from the believing action of the Church. A Church that, in her own rites, ceases to command the enemy and instead merely asks in general terms for good things has reforged her swords into greeting cards. And the same happened by no means only with holy water: the rite of baptism, the last rites, confession, priestly ordination, and matrimony were also altered and greatly weakened in their protective language. The old Ritual contained hundreds of specific blessings — for seed fields, wells, bells, houses, horses, bees, breweries, pilgrims' staffs, traveling cases, printing presses — many with exorcistic elements. The new book of blessings drastically reduced this richness and removed nearly all the exorcistic portions.

THE QUANTITATIVE FINDING: WHICH WORDS DISAPPEARED

What becomes visible exemplarily in the holy water can be measured across the entire vocabulary of the liturgy. Researchers such as Michael Davies, Klaus Gamber, and most recently Lauren Pristas (professor at Caldwell University) have systematically compared the old and the new liturgy. The result reads like a wanted list of vanished terms. Markedly rarer or deleted:

- *diabolus* — the devil
- *daemon / daemones* — demon, demons
- *satanas* — Satan
- *inimicus* — the enemy (traditional designation of Satan)
- *hostis* — the foe (likewise Satan)
- *insidiae diaboli* — the snares of the devil
- *infernus / infernus* — hell
- *aeterna damnatio* — eternal damnation
- *ira Dei* — the wrath of God
- *iudicium* — judgment

Pristas's analysis of the Sunday collects showed: numerous orations that spoke expressly of temptation, of evil, of the snares of the enemy and of punishment were either deleted or reformulated. The reformers' rule of thumb: negative, "threatening" vocabulary gave way to positive terms — peace, love, unity, hope, dignity.

Hold that beside Baudelaire's word from the beginning of this book. The devil's greatest trick was to convince the world that he does not exist. And here, in black and white, the finding: within a few years, the devil was ed-

ited out of the official prayer of the Church. Not by his friends — by his opponents themselves. If the Church stops speaking of evil, who is left to warn the world?

FOUR CONCRETE EXAMPLES

1. The St. Michael Prayer after every Mass. By order of Pope Leo XIII (1886, intensified 1904), after every "Low Mass" worldwide the faithful prayed together:

"Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen."

For over eighty years this prayer was the last word that hundreds of millions of Catholics heard at every Mass — a daily, world-encircling barrage against the enemy. With the reform of 1964 it was **completely abolished**. Only in 1994 did John Paul II recommend that it at least be prayed privately again.

2. The baptismal exorcism. The old rite of baptism contained three exorcisms over the candidate, among them the *exsufflation* — the breathing upon the child with the words: "*Exi ab eo, immunde spiritus, et da locum Spiritui Sancto Paraclito*" — "Depart from him, unclean spirit, and give place to the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete" — as well as the direct adjuration "I exorcize you, unclean spirit..." In the new rite a single, linguistically softened exorcism remained, which is more petition than command: "We

pray for this child: set him free from original sin ... and be his shield against the power of evil..." In terms of speech-act logic, the imperative exorcism — the command in the name of Christ — was replaced by a petition, an indirect act of asking. The difference is the same as between a policeman confronting the burglar with full authority and a householder politely requesting that he kindly leave.

3. The Confiteor. In the old confession of sin the believer confessed before God, the Virgin Mary, "blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the Saints" — in the new one (1969) only before God "and you, my brothers and sisters." The Archangel Michael, the vanquisher of Satan, whose liturgical function was traditionally that of guardian at the threshold of the sacred action, was deleted here as well. Indeed, it is striking: precisely the **protector of the Church** was removed with conspicuous thoroughness from nearly every area of the liturgy — as if someone had systematically withdrawn the sentry first.

4. The solemn exorcism itself. Even the last bulwark was not spared. The official solemn exorcism was newly issued in 1999 (*De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam*) — with reworked language and a tendency to place the deprecativ exorcism (the petition to God) on equal footing with, or above, the imperative one (the direct command to the demon). The sharpest criticism came from those who had to know: from the practicing exorcists. Father Gabriele Amorth, the chief exorcist of the Diocese of Rome († 2016), a man with tens of thousands of cases, said publicly and repeatedly: the old rite is *more effective*; the reform "made the devil glad." He himself refused to use the new rite and remained, his whole life, with the old one of 1614.

THE CRITICS — AND THE MOST ASTONISHING TESTIMONY

Critics such as Klaus Gamber, Martin Mosebach, Roberto de Mattei — and no less a figure than Joseph Ratzinger himself — see in all these individual measures one red thread:

- **Reduction of the supernatural** — the invisible world of angels, demons, grace, and judgment recedes;
- **erasure of the consciousness of sin and of eschatology** — death, judgment, hell, and heaven disappear from preaching and prayer;
- **suppression of the idea of sacrifice and atonement** in favor of community and meal;
- **anthropocentric instead of theocentric orientation** — man moves into the center in place of God;
- **weakening of the sacramentals** as weapons against evil.

Ratzinger — the later Pope Benedict XVI, once himself a Council theologian — wrote in 1997 in *Milestones* the sentence that sounds like a verdict: **"I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is to a large extent due to the disintegration of the liturgy."**

The most astonishing testimony, however, comes from the man who pushed the reform through: from Paul VI himself. On November 15, 1972, in a general audience, he delivered the famous address *"Confronto col Diavolo"* — "Confronting the Devil":

"Evil is not merely a deficiency; it is an efficiency, a living, spiritual being, perverted and perverting. A terrible reality. Mysterious and frightening. (...) Whoever refuses to acknowledge its ex-

istence, or whoever makes of it a principle in itself that does not, like every creature, have its origin in God, or whoever explains it as a pseudo-reality, a conceptual, fanciful construct for the unknown causes of our misfortunes, departs from biblical and ecclesiastical teaching."

In the same year, Paul VI uttered what is perhaps the most quoted papal word of the century: the **"smoke of Satan"** has **"entered the temple of God through some crack."**

One must pause to grasp the enormity of this self-diagnosis. The pope under whom the liturgy was cleansed of the devil — that is, cleansed of *speech about* the devil — declares publicly a few years later that the devil himself has entered the Church. It is as if the commander of a fortress had first withdrawn the guards and oiled the gates — and now stood on the battlements crying: the enemy is in the city.

But how did the enemy get in? Through which "crack"? Here the assured documents leave the field, and the testimonies begin — the darkest of recent Church history.



CHAPTER 8

THE SMOKE OF SATAN: THE DARK TESTIMONIES

Preliminary note: the reports treated in this chapter are not ecclesiastically recognized and cannot be proven documentarily. They are testimonies and assertions of individual priests, reproduced here as such — not as established facts. They are documented because they were unofficially confirmed by several highly regarded clergymen, because they fit conspicuously into the picture drawn so far — and because the reader has a right to know even what is disturbing, in order to judge it for himself.

PADRE PIO AND THE THIRD SECRET: THE AMORTH INTERVIEW

In 2011 the Spanish journalist and author José María Zavala conducted a long conversation with Father Gabriele Amorth — that chief exorcist of Rome whom we have already met. Amorth set one condition: the interview was to be published only after his death. Amorth died in 2016; the conversation appeared in 2017 in Zavala's book *El Secreto Mejor Guardado de Fátima* ("The Best-Kept Secret of Fatima").

Amorth's credibility in this matter is extraordinary: he knew Padre Pio personally for **26 years** — their first meeting took place when Amorth was

seventeen — and was even permitted, at times, to read the saint's spiritual diary.

The decisive conversation with Padre Pio Amorth dates "around 1960" — he was already a priest then. To his question whether the third secret of Fatima had to do with the loss of faith in the Church, Pio is said to have answered with great sadness:

"You know, Gabriele? It is Satan who has been introduced into the bosom of the Church, and within a very short time he will come to rule a false Church."

When Zavala asked further — whether this concerned some kind of Antichrist — Amorth responded only with a "knowing smile."

Even more revealing is what did *not* preoccupy Pio. Asked whether the saint had also spoken of earthquakes, wars, plagues, or famines, Amorth answered: such things had not really troubled him, "terrible as they may be, except for the great apostasy within the Church. **That was the question that really tormented him, and for which he prayed and offered a great part of his suffering.**" And upon express follow-up, Amorth confirmed: this apostasy — the great falling-away from the faith within the Church — is the actual content of the third secret.

Lay this statement beside the clues from Chapter 3: beside Lúcia's reference to the 13th chapter of the Apocalypse, beside the missing words of the Mother of God in the published version, beside the decades-long hesitation of three popes to publish the text. And lay it beside the disputed sentence of La Salette: "Rome will lose the faith." The lines converge with uncanny consistency on the same point.

In the same conversation, Amorth also reaffirmed his position on the consecration of Russia: the consecration by John Paul II in 1984 was **not sufficient**, because Russia was not expressly named — Amorth stood on St. Peter's Square as an eyewitness. The letter dated 1989, in which Sister Lúcia is supposed to have declared the consecration accepted, he held to be **not authentic**: Cardinal Bertone never produced a photocopy of the original — incomprehensible for a document of such weight. As remedies Amorth named expressly: the consecration of Russia, the Rosary, prayer, and penance.

THE REPORTS OF SATANIC RITUALS IN THE VATICAN: "WINDSWEPT HOUSE"

The second strand is the darkest. From the milieu of the 1960s — that is, exactly in the window of time in which the exorcists registered the collapse of their effectiveness, in which Padre Pio spoke of Satan's entry "into the bosom of the Church," and on which Paul VI later looked back with the word about the "smoke of Satan" — there exist reports that satanic rituals were performed in the Vatican itself: a kind of enthronement of the adversary in the heart of the Church, carried out by a network of apostate clerics.

These claims became best known through Father **Malachi Martin** (1921–1999) — and his testimony carries weight because he was no outsider: the Irish Jesuit lived in Rome from 1958 to 1964, served as a close associate of the influential Council cardinal Augustin Bea, carried out sensitive missions for the Holy See, and later assisted at exorcisms. In 1996 he published the novel "**Windswept House: A Vatican Novel**" — by his own account no ordinary novel, but "faction": real events and real people, masked

in novel form for reasons of protection, with names and dates changed. Martin expressly compared his method to Truman Capote's "In Cold Blood," and insisted in radio interviews that roughly 85 to 95 percent of the book rested on actual events and real persons. The enthronement of Lucifer in the prologue he called, in so many words, "non-fiction" — a factual account.

THE PROLOGUE: THE ENTHRONEMENT OF THE FALLEN ARCHANGEL

The first chapters of the book set the scene with oppressive precision. It opens in the year 1957: six foreign ministers gather in Rome on March 25 to lay the foundation stone for a "new edifice of nations" — the prelude to European unification, drawn by Martin as the beginning of a new worldly order, against whose globalist ambitions Pope Pius XII warns in the book's opening scenes. Then follows the actual key scene, headed "1963":

In the night of **June 29, 1963** — the feast of the Apostles Peter and Paul, only days after the election of Paul VI and on the eve of his coronation — a ceremony is performed in the **Chapel of St. Paul inside the Vatican** which Martin calls "The Enthronement of the Fallen Archangel Lucifer." Because the full satanic liturgy cannot be carried out inside the Vatican itself without risk of discovery, the ritual is coupled by telephone link with a **simultaneous parallel ceremony in South Carolina** in the United States: there, in a "target chapel," clerics and laymen perform the complete rites — by Martin's express description a Black Mass, that is, the traditional Latin Mass turned into its opposite, complete with an animal sacrifice and a drugged young girl as ritual victim. In the Roman chapel, meanwhile, high-ranking prelates respond — according to Martin, at least one cardinal

was present, along with important laymen, business leaders, and politicians. The participants in the conspiracy swear oaths signed with their own blood. The purpose of the rite: that Lucifer should henceforth be enthroned "in his appropriate place" within the Church and prepare the way for the "prince" — a coming heretical leader of the Church.

The rest of the novel unfolds the consequences: a network of initiated clerics protects and promotes one another over decades, deliberately driving forward the hollowing-out of the supernatural, the toleration of heresy and liturgical abuse, and the system of sexual abuse and its cover-up — while international circles seek to take over the Church as a ready-made infrastructure for a One-World Religion under a globalist banner. A dying pope leaves his successor a secret account of the situation; the "Slavic Pope" — easily recognizable as John Paul II, down to the assassination attempt of 1981 — wrestles with whether he has the strength for the final battle, and seeks his answer, of all people, from an aged nun connected with the apparitions of Fatima. Toward the end the reader learns that Paul VI himself warned his successor in writing that, because of the Enthronement, the Church could no longer be governed from the Vatican.

A remarkable detail was supplied by Father Brian Harrison, a doctor of theology and personal friend of Martin's in the last decade of his life: Martin confirmed to him privately that the ceremony really did take place in the Chapel of St. Paul and began at midnight in the night of June 30 to July 1, 1963. And to the question why the Satanists inverted the old Latin Mass and not the new one, the perhaps most unsettling answer of the whole affair is recorded from Martin: even the Satanists know which Mass is the real one. For the thesis of this book — that the defusing of the old

rites was no accident — this is a detail of peculiar evidential force from the darkest imaginable direction.

THE REAL GIRL BEHIND THE NOVEL: THE CASE OF "AGNES"

For a long time one could object that Martin was the only source. Yet behind the most shattering scene of the prologue — the abused girl — there stands, according to concurring reports, a **real person** who later confirmed her story to investigators, Church offices, and trustworthy priests. Martin gave her the protective name "**Agnes**" in the novel; to this day she withholds her real name. She is married, the mother of grown children, lives in a Southern state of the USA — and has remained a practicing Catholic all her life.

Her testimony, documented over years, runs as follows: in the fall of **1957**, as an **eleven-year-old girl** in Greenville, South Carolina — according to documents that surfaced later, at St. Mary parish — she was raped in the course of a satanic ritual. She was brought there by her own father, who belonged to the cult. Involved in the ritual, according to her testimony, were the then Bishop of Charleston, John Russell, and a young, rapidly rising priest: **Joseph Bernardin** — who would later, as Cardinal of Chicago, become the most powerful churchman in North America. Part of the ritual, according to her testimony, was the desecration of a consecrated Host — exactly the sacrilege the Mother of God had announced in Quito three and a half centuries earlier. One detail of her testimony is moving: as a child she physically resisted — "out of the knowledge that God had made me good, not bad as I was being told I was."

What lifts this case out of the realm of mere rumor is the density of the attestation: over more than twelve years, "Agnes" has testified to her story unchanged **in sworn depositions, in affidavits submitted in support of others' lawsuits, in direct confrontations with Bernardin himself, and in letters and calls to Church and Vatican offices.** In the fall of 1992 she passed a **polygraph examination** concerning the events — according to later reports, several. Father Charles Fiore, one of Malachi Martin's closest friends, who knew and accompanied her over years, expressly confirmed shortly before his death that she had affirmed the whole story to him and that he found her credible. In early **1990** she told her story to Malachi Martin — he had been recommended to her as someone who could bring her information to the Vatican, which alone held jurisdiction over a bishop. From this testimony Martin fashioned the prologue of "Windswept House": the scene was heightened literarily and, for dramatic reasons, merged with the Roman enthronement night of 1963 (the real event "Agnes" dates to 1957 in Greenville), but the core — the ritual violation of a child by clerics in the course of a satanic rite, together with the desecration of the Host — comes from her. Thirty-four years after the deed she visited the aged Bishop Russell in a nursing home; according to the report of the organization Roman Catholic Faithful, in his lucid moments he agreed to testify against Bernardin if asked — and died before it came to that. Later she supported, with an affidavit, the abuse lawsuit of the former seminarian Steven Cook against Bernardin.

And the story reaches into the present: in **2019** the Vatican journalist Marco Tosatti and other media reported on a Church-internal dossier that had surfaced, whose oldest accusation concerns exactly the case of 1957 — the abuse of a minor at St. Mary parish in Greenville by the young priest

Bernardin with the participation of the later Bishop Russell, **as part of a satanic rite including the profanation of the Eucharist** — and reported that the victim had already contacted the Archdiocese of Chicago by telephone and letter in 1993. Commentators read the documents as a late confirmation of the "Agnes" story.

Honesty demands the counter-reckoning here as well: none of these accusations was ever proven in court. Cardinal Bernardin (d. 1996) always denied wrongdoing; the only public abuse lawsuit against him — Steven Cook's — was later withdrawn by Cook, though the circumstances of that withdrawal remained disputed in their turn. Secular criticism further points out that, for the Vatican ceremony itself, Martin is the only direct source. All of this must be stated. And yet the finding remains: a real victim with a testimony consistent over decades, sworn, and tested by polygraph; a Vatican insider who retracted nothing until his death; and Church-internal documents that record exactly the same incident decades later.

But in honesty one must say: *if* there is anything true in these reports, then the last piece of the puzzle fits in with terrifying precision. Then the "smoke of Satan" would have a place of origin and a date. Then it would be explained why the sacramentals — which work *ex opere operantis Ecclesiae*, from the spiritual state of the Church — failed precisely from this point in time. Then the disputed sentence of La Salette would gain a dreadful actuality, and Padre Pio's word about the "false Church that will rule within a very short time" would have been no metaphor, but a statement of fact from first hand.

Let the reader judge for himself. For the diagnosis of this book, the last puzzle piece is not even necessary: the documented finding — the prophesied crisis, the measurable defusing of the rites, the statistical collapse of the life of faith, the failure of the exorcisms, the pope's own self-diagnosis — stands even without the darkest testimonies.

THE BATTLE OVER THE OLD MASS — TO THIS DAY

That all this is not a matter of museum nostalgia is shown by the bitter battle waged over the old liturgy down to our own days. Benedict XVI freed the traditional Mass broadly again in 2007 with *Summorum Pontificum* as the "extraordinary form" — in it the original holy-water rite with its exorcisms also lives on. Pope Francis drastically restricted this permission again in 2021 with *Traditionis Custodes*. And in the year 2026, traditional communities such as the Society of St. Pius X, which continue to celebrate according to the old rite, were put under massive pressure by the Vatican under Pope Leo XIV not to consecrate new bishops — under threat of excommunication.

It is a remarkable constellation: a Church that seeks dialogue with nearly every current of the zeitgeist knows no tolerance toward one single group — toward those who simply wish to do what all Catholics did until 1969. As if upon the old form — with its exorcisms, its idea of atonement, its Saint Michael — there lay a particular ban. Akita had foretold it: "The priests who venerate me will be scorned and opposed by their confrères."



CHAPTER 9

THE APE OF THE CHURCH: FULTON SHEEN'S PROPHECY OF THE COUNTER-CHURCH



A RADIO BISHOP LOOKS INTO OUR CENTURY

Before we draw the diagnosis from the findings gathered so far, one last concept is missing — the one that gives this book its title. It comes not from some obscure sectarian, but from one of the most respected churchmen of America: Archbishop **Fulton J. Sheen** (1895–1979), the legendary radio and television preacher whose broadcasts reached millions and whose cause for beatification is underway — the Church today lists him as a "Venerable Servant of God."

On January 26, 1947 — two years after the end of the war, a decade before the events of Greenville, sixteen years before the night in the Chapel of St. Paul — Sheen delivered an address in the NBC series "Catholic Hour" entitled "Signs of the Times," which he deepened in 1948 in his book "Communism and the Conscience of the West." In it he described how the Antichrist would appear: not with horns and the smell of sulfur, but as a philanthropist — full of apparent love for humanity, with glib talk of freedom and equality, yet with one great secret he will tell to no one: he does not believe in God. His religion will be **brotherhood without the fatherhood of God** — and with it he will deceive even the elect. And then the sentence that became proverbial:

*"He will set up a counter-church which will be the **ape of the Church**, because he, the Devil, is the **ape of God**. It will have all the notes and characteristics of the Church, but in reverse and emptied of its divine content. It will be a mystical body of the Antichrist that will in all externals resemble the mystical body of Christ."*

Read this definition twice, for it is of surgical precision: **all the characteristics — but emptied**. Not the destruction of the forms, but the emptying of the forms. The same buildings, the same vestments, the same offices, the same words — only the divine content is gone. A Church that looks like the Church, sounds like the Church, officiates like the Church — and is one no longer.

THE ANCIENT ROOT: DIABOLUS SIMIA DEI

Sheen's coinage was no invention, but the sharpening of an ancient theological topos. Already the Church Fathers — tradition names Tertullian and Augustine — coined the formula "**Diabolus simia Dei**": the devil is the ape of God. The thought behind it is of compelling logic: Satan is a creature, not a creator. He can bring forth nothing of his own — no being, no truth, no beauty. His only art is **mimicry**: parody, inversion, the counterfeiting of the genuine. The Black Mass is the Mass backwards. The Antichrist is the imitation of Christ. The counter-church is the imitation of the Church. The term was current for centuries — as late as 1677 a German treatise appeared under the title "Simia Dei, God's Ape," on the seductive arts of Satan.

And here the circle closes back to the Baudelaire quotation with which this book began. The two sentences are two stages of the same strategy: **stage one** — the devil convinces the world that he does not exist; with that, the sentry is withdrawn. **Stage two** — the now invisible one no longer fights the holy from without, for open enmity would only rally and strengthen the faithful. He copies it from within. Whoever wants to destroy the genuine without waking resistance replaces it with a counterfeit that no one recognizes as such, because it resembles the original to the point of confusion.

THE MARKS OF THE COUNTER-CHURCH

Sheen did not stop at the definition. He described — in 1947! — the marks of this coming counter-church in features that take the breath of today's reader away:

A religion without a cross. No sacrifice, no atonement, no scandal — only well-being. **A religion without a world to come.** No judgment, no hell, no heaven — salvation is relocated into this world: social questions, politics, world improvement. **A religion to destroy religions** — worldly, ecumenical, and global, a loose federation of churches and religions under one common roof, "catholic" now only in the sense of "international." And its bait, so Sheen, would be tailored exactly to modern man: the lonely, frustrated man who desperately needs God and yet refuses to adore Him will hunger for community and enlargement of purpose — and the counter-church will offer him both **without demanding personal amendment and without admission of personal guilt.**

Hold this list beside the findings of Chapters 6 and 7: the erasure of cross, sacrifice, and atonement from the prayers; the disappearance of judgment, hell, and devil from the vocabulary; the shift from the supernatural to the social; the boundless ecumenism; and a practice in which millions receive Communion but hardly anyone still confesses — religion without confession of guilt. Sheen did not write a critique of the state of things in 2026. He wrote a prophecy. That it reads like an inventory is the whole point.

Honesty demands the historical context: in the immediate setting of 1948, Sheen was aiming at **communism** — the counter-church that claims infallibility when its visible head speaks "from Moscow" on economics and politics. The application of the concept to developments within the Church is later interpretation and no magisterial determination. But Sheen himself thought bigger than the politics of the day: communism was for him only the first mask of that religion of "brotherhood without the fatherhood of God" — and masks, as the ape of God teaches, get changed.

WHY THIS CONCEPT BINDS EVERYTHING TOGETHER

The "ape of the Church" is the missing link between all the strands of this book — which is why the book bears its name:

It explains **Padre Pio's word to Amorth** with theological exactness: "It is Satan who has been introduced into the bosom of the Church, and within a very short time he will come to rule a **false Church**." The true Church does not fall — by Christ's promise it cannot. A counterfeit overlays it, in the same buildings, under the same titles. It gives the disputed **La Salette sentence** ("Rome will lose the faith and become the seat of the Anti-

christ") its precise, non-heretical frame of interpretation: what is lost is not the faith *of* the Church, but the faith *in* the institutions; the rock remains, but the ape seats himself upon it. It interprets the **Enthronement of 1963** as what it was meant to be: not the conquest of the Church — that is impossible — but the ceremonial founding charter of the mimicry. And it explains the **liturgical findings** of Chapter 7 in a single sentence of Sheen's: keep all the characteristics, empty out the divine content. That is precisely the measurable finding of the word lists: the form of the prayers remained — devil, hell, judgment, atonement, and Saint Michael were removed.

Even the observation of the exorcists falls into place: sacramentals work from the faith of the acting Church. But a mimicked, emptied form has no authority. The demon does not yield to costumes.

THE CONSOLATION IN THE CONCEPT

And yet precisely in this darkest of all concepts lies a peculiar consolation — and Sheen himself pronounced it. He stressed that, in speaking of the rise of the Antichrist, he did **not fear for the Church**: it is not infallibility that is in danger, but the world; not Transubstantiation that will perish, but the home; not the sacraments, but the moral law. The ape can copy the Church, but he cannot replace her; he can overlay her, but he cannot destroy her. And a counterfeit always logically presupposes the original: whoever recognizes the counter-church has thereby proven that the true Church exists and remains recognizable — in every valid sacrament, in every faithful priest, in every family that prays the Rosary.

The task of the believer in the time of the ape is thereby clearly outlined, and it coincides exactly with La Salette's call to the "apostles of the last

times": not panic, not schism, not bitterness — but **discernment**. Hold to the original: to the unabridged teaching, the worthily celebrated sacraments, the state of grace, the daily Rosary. The ape can mimic everything — except one thing: grace. By it one recognizes where the Church is.



PART III — DIAGNOSIS, OUTLOOK, AND THE WAY BACK



CHAPTER 10

A SOCIETY WITHOUT CONSCIOUSNESS OF SIN

THE INVISIBLE DISEASE

Let us summarize what the first two parts have yielded — and draw the consequence from which our age shrinks with all its might.

Four centuries of approved apparitions foretold, for the time "shortly after the middle of the 20th century," an apostasy that breaks over the Church not from outside but from within: through corrupted shepherds, profaned sacraments, a darkening of the intelligence of the leaders, a "filthy sea" of impurity, and the disappearance of the consciousness of sin. Exactly in this window of time, the rites of the Church were systematically cleansed of the language of combat: devil, hell, judgment, atonement, Saint Michael — edited out. Exactly from this window of time onward, the exorcisms fail. And exactly since then, what no one can deny any longer has come to pass: the society of the West has almost completely lost the faith.

But — and this is the real point of this book — the loss of faith does not affect only those who have turned their backs on the Church. In its most insidious form it affects precisely those who have *stayed*.

MORTAL SIN AS THE NORMAL STATE

For what is the result of sixty years in which sin, hell, and judgment were no longer preached, no longer taught, no longer spoken of? The result is a generation of practicing Christians who, without knowing it, live permanently in the state of mortal sin — and cannot even suspect it, because no one ever taught them the standards.

Test yourself against the unchanged teaching of the Church as it held for twenty centuries:

- **Cohabitation before marriage** is, by this teaching, grave sin — today around 79 percent of couples live together before the wedding, including those who marry in church.
- **Artificial contraception** is grave sin — today the overwhelming majority of Catholic married couples practice it without ever having heard that this would be matter for confession.
- **Pornography** is grave sin against the sixth commandment — today, according to surveys, around 90 percent of men and 50 percent of women consume it regularly.
- **Missing Sunday Mass** without a serious reason is grave sin — for most of the baptized, Mass has long since become Christmas folklore.
- **Receiving Communion in the state of grave sin** is a sacrilege — and yet today practically every Mass-goer goes to Communion, while the confessionals stand empty or have been removed altogether.

Here the prophecy of Quito is fulfilled in its full tragedy: "My Most Holy Son will see Himself trampled by filthy feet" — not first by Satanists, but Sunday after Sunday by devout people of good will, to whom no one has ever said what they are doing. The guilt lies less with the faithful than with the shepherds who fell silent — La Salette: "There is no longer anyone to implore mercy and forgiveness for the people." But that does not change the objective situation: a Church full of communicants without confession is, measured by the teaching of all the centuries, a Church in permanent sacrilege.

And Akita draws the consequence that hangs over all this like the sword of Damocles: "If sins increase in number and gravity, there will no longer be pardon for them" — not because God would not *want* to forgive, but because no one *asks* for forgiveness anymore. A world without consciousness of sin is a world that has cut itself off from mercy itself. The devil's trick is thereby complete: he has not only convinced the world that he does not exist — he has convinced the baptized that there is nothing to repent of.

SODOM — OR: WHEN TEN RIGHTEOUS CAN NO LONGER BE FOUND

Holy Scripture knows this condition. It has given it a name that has become a byword: **Sodom and Gomorrah**. There too, sin — above all the sin of the flesh — was no longer the exception but the proud norm. There too, there was no longer anyone to admonish. And the most shattering thing in this narrative is not the fire that fell from heaven. It is Abraham's bargaining with God: *If fifty righteous are found — will You spare? Forty? Thirty? Ten?* God was ready for every concession. Ten could not be found.

Exactly this pattern is what the apparitions trace for our time: God does not punish out of vindictiveness, but because the self-healing powers of a society are exhausted that can no longer distinguish good from evil. La Salette: "Mankind must expect to be ruled with an iron rod" — the rod, the stick, is the last language a child understands who no longer listens to any other. Akita: "Fire will fall from the sky" — the language of Sodom. And Fatima compresses the meaning of it all into the one word of the angel with the flaming sword: "Penance, Penance, Penance!"

The chastisement is thus not the opposite of God's love. It is — according to the unanimous testimony of these messages — its final form: the intervention of a father who would rather pull his child back wounded than let it run into the abyss. He chastises in order to restore order where man has destroyed every order.



CHAPTER 11

BAAL RETURNS: THE CHILD SACRIFICE OF MODERNITY



THE OLDEST IDOL IN THE WORLD

Whoever searches Holy Scripture for the face of evil keeps striking the same name: **Baal** — and his even darker relative **Moloch**. The idols of the Canaanites were no harmless nature deities. Their cult demanded the utmost: the sacrifice of one's own children. In the Valley of Hinnom before the gates of Jerusalem, at the place of sacrifice called Topheth, "they made their sons and daughters pass through the fire" — so runs the standing, shuddering formula of Scripture. Even kings of Israel fell to this cult: Ahaz and Manasseh sacrificed their own sons.

No crime is condemned in the Old Testament with comparable severity. The Law threatens the worshipper of Moloch with extermination (Leviticus 18:21; 20:2–5). The prophet Jeremiah descends specially into the Valley of Hinnom to proclaim judgment over Jerusalem there — because of the blood of the innocent (Jeremiah 19). And the Psalmist names *to whom* these sacrifices truly belonged:

"They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons. They poured out innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters ... and the land was desecrated by blood-guilt." (Psalm 106:37–38)

This is the key: according to the testimony of Scripture and of the Church Fathers, the idols of the pagans were no mere products of fantasy — behind them stood real fallen spirits. "What the pagans sacrifice, they sacrifice to demons and not to God," writes Paul (1 Corinthians 10:20). Baal and Moloch were masks. But the demons behind them have not died. Demons do not die. They only change masks.

How deeply this crime burned itself into the memory of the people of God is shown by a linguistic detail of shattering force: from the name of the Valley of Hinnom — Hebrew *Ge-Hinnom* — came the word **Gehenna**: the very name Jesus himself uses for hell. The place where Israel sacrificed its children became the byword for damnation.

THE MASK OF THE PRESENT

And here a parallel forces itself upon us which cannot be evaded once one has seen it. Our age looks down on the Canaanites with horror and superiority: what barbarism, to sacrifice children! But what if the same cult lives on in our midst — sterile, legal, medically dressed up, without fire and without idol, but with the same substance: the surrendered life of one's own child?

Abortion can be understood — in a figurative sense — as the child sacrifice of modernity. The sacrifice is no longer offered on the altar of Baal, but on the altars of the new idols: self-realization, career, convenience, sexual "freedom" without consequences — and above all on the altar of that principle which La Salette named as the root of the apostasy: **"Each individual will want to guide himself."** The modern battle-cry is "self-determination" — and it is exactly the formula by which one's own self is set above

the life of the weakest. The masks are new. The logic is three thousand years old: the child is given so that one's own life can go on as one wills.

Whoever considers this a pious exaggeration should look at the numbers.

THE NUMBERS: A HOLOCAUST IN PERMANENCE

An important preliminary remark for honesty's sake: there is **no exact worldwide count** of abortions. All global figures are model-based estimates — above all by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Guttmacher Institute — with considerable margins of uncertainty. With this caveat, however, a well-founded order of magnitude can be given, and even the most cautious reading of this order of magnitude takes one's breath away:

- For the period **1990–1994**, about **50.4 million abortions per year** were estimated.
- For **2010–2014**, about **56.3 million per year** — the increase is attributable mainly to population growth.
- The newer, more comprehensive estimate by WHO and Guttmacher (Bearak et al., *Lancet Global Health* 2020) arrives, for **2015–2019**, at around **73 million abortions per year** — that corresponds to about **200,000 per day**. This value also holds for the most recent available figures.

A methodological note is in order: the 73-million figure rests on a revised, broader methodology and is not directly comparable with the older values (50–56 million). The abortion *rate* itself remained relatively stable — about 40 per 1,000 women (1990–1994) compared with 39 per 1,000

(2015–2019); the absolute number rose mainly because the number of women of childbearing age grew.

If one sums the annual averages over time — roughly 50 million per year in the early 2000s, rising to around 73 million in recent years — the period **2000 to 2025** alone yields an order of magnitude of roughly **1.4 to 1.7 billion abortions worldwide**.

One must translate this number to grasp it. 200,000 per day — that is a major city every few days. 73 million per year — that exceeds, year after year, the total death toll of the Second World War, the bloodiest war in human history. And summed over a quarter of a century: a number on the order of the entire population of China or India. It is, soberly stated, the numerically greatest killing of innocents that has ever taken place on this earth — and it is taking place not in the Bronze Age, but now, today, in this hour, flanked by laws, financed by states, applauded as progress.

The Catholic tradition has its own category for sins of this rank: the **sins that cry to heaven** — those whose blood, like the blood of Abel, "cries out to God from the earth" (Genesis 4:10). The deliberate murder of the innocent stands at their head. If the blood of *one* Abel already cried to heaven — what does the blood of one and a half billion cry?

WHAT THIS MEANS IN THE LIGHT OF THE PROPHECIES

Now fit this chapter into the overall picture of this book, and the lines close with oppressive consistency:

Quito 1610: "They will focus **particularly on the children** in order to sustain this general corruption." For four hundred years this was read as a word about education and seduction. It has been fulfilled in that way too.

But in the light of the numbers it gains a second, more literal meaning: the attack on the children today begins before birth — and millions never even reach the corruption, because they never see the light of the world.

Fatima 1917: the sins of the flesh fill hell "because they are the most frequent and the least repented." Abortion is, in the mass, the final consequence of precisely these sins — the attempt to dispose of the fruit of fornication, the sacrifice that the cult of lust demands. The "filthy sea" of Quito and the Topheth of modernity are communicating vessels.

Akita 1973: "If sins increase in number and gravity, there will no longer be pardon for them." Is there a sin that has increased in number and gravity like this one? And — graver still — that is so little repented, because entire societies have declared it a human right? Here it also becomes intelligible why the exorcists have registered a growing power of the demons for decades: if the spirits behind Baal and Moloch were "fed" and legitimized by the sacrifice of innocent blood, then today, in the hiddenness of a de-godded world, more of this blood flows to them than in all the centuries of antiquity combined. The devil has no need to build altars. He has clinics.

Sodom and the measure: in the previous chapter stood the image of Abraham bargaining for ten righteous men. Here stands its counter-image: a planet on which innocent blood is shed two hundred thousand times a day and "the land is desecrated by blood-guilt" (Psalm 106). If the logic of Scripture holds — and all the apparitions of this book confirm it — then the coming chastisement is, not least, Heaven's answer to this one uninterrupted cry.

A WORD TO THE MOTHERS — MERCY, NOT
CONDEMNATION

A book that speaks these things must at the same time say the following with all clarity: the indictment of this chapter is directed at the **system** — at the legislators, the profiteers, the ideology, the spirit behind the masks. It is not directed first at the individual woman. Countless women were pushed into this act — by partners, families, doctors, by hardship, fear, and a society that told them it was nothing. Many have carried a silent wound ever since, which no one is permitted to name, because officially nothing happened.

To them above all belongs the Gospel of this book: **there is no sin that confession cannot blot out.** Christ did not come to judge the wounded but to heal them. Sincere confession erases this guilt too, completely — and the Church knows paths of healing and reconciliation for mothers (and fathers) after an abortion. Whoever carries this wound, lay it down; it is no reason for despair, but the most urgent reason to take the first step in Chapter 13. And whoever does not carry it, let him pray and make reparation vicariously — for this too the "apostles of the last times" are called: to make atonement for the blood that has been shed, which otherwise would only cry for vengeance.

Baal has returned, but his sentence was pronounced long ago. The Valley of Hinnom gave hell its name — yet over that valley, since Golgotha, stands another Blood, which "speaks better than the blood of Abel" (Hebrews 12:24): not for vengeance, but for mercy. Between these two voices is decided what comes.



CHAPTER 12

THE COMING CHASTISEMENT: A HYPOTHETICAL SCENARIO



Preliminary note: no one knows the day or the hour — Christ himself said so, and no genuine private revelation contradicts him. What follows is no timetable, but the honest attempt to lay the statements of all the sources treated here side by side into one coherent overall picture: a hypothetical scenario showing what, according to these sources, is to be reckoned with — no more, but also no less.

WHAT THE SOURCES DESCRIBE IN AGREEMENT

If one superimposes Quito, La Salette, Fatima, Akita, and the testimonies of Padre Pio, the following picture emerges:

- 1. The apostasy comes first — and it is already here.** All the sources place before the chastisement a great apostasy that begins within the Church. Padre Pio called it the thing "that really tormented him"; according to Amorth it is the core of the third secret. This part of the prophecy does not lie ahead of us. It is fulfilled — we are living in the midst of it.
- 2. The chastisement comes in stages.** La Salette speaks of punishments "which will follow one after the other for more than thirty-five years," and of the principle of abandonment: "God will abandon mankind to itself." The first phase of the chastisement would accordingly be no single event,

but the accelerating self-disintegration: discord "among those who reign, in every society and in every family" — political division, breaking families, loneliness, epidemics of the soul. This too is already observable present.

3. The climax: a sudden, global event. Akita describes it without circumlocution: fire from the sky, a punishment "greater than the deluge," wiping out "a great part of humanity" — the good as well as the bad, priests as well as laity. La Salette adds the accompanying cosmic signs: altered seasons, failed harvests, earthquakes and convulsions through "water and fire," cities swallowed up — and a moon with a "feeble reddish light." The third Fatima secret shows the aftermath: a city half in ruins, corpses along the way, a suffering and finally murdered pope amid his dying clergy. In what the event concretely consists — whether war, whether a cosmic phenomenon, whether both intertwined — the sources do not say; their imagery (fire from the sky that spares neither good nor bad) would allow for either. Akita's wording suggests, moreover, that the accustomed way of life will end completely — possibly including the destruction of large parts of the infrastructure, as though the slate had to be wiped entirely clean so that something new could be written.

4. The survivors and the turning point. "The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead" (Akita) — a time of utmost trial in which "all will seem lost and paralyzed." And exactly then, says the same message, begins "the happy beginning of the complete restoration." Fatima names the goal: the conversion of Russia, a "period of peace" granted to the world, the triumph of the Immaculate Heart. La Salette describes the same time: the Gospel preached everywhere, unity among the workers of Christ, men living in the fear of God.

5. Afterward: about 25 good years — and only much later the Anti-christ. The Akita statement, handed down in substance, of the "about twenty-five years of good harvest," after which men will again grow lukewarm, also puts the Antichrist passages of La Salette in their place: the real final battle would accordingly lie *after* the time of peace. The coming chastisement would thus not be the end of the world, but a purification *within* history — terrible, but limited, and followed by one of the brightest epochs of Christendom.

THE QUESTION OF THE TIMING

And the when? Three clues can be named — as clues, not as a date:

First, the Quito axis: the corruption was announced "from the end of the 19th century and shortly after the middle of the 20th" — it has come to pass and has meanwhile seized every domain named in the messages, down to points that seemed unimaginable even twenty years ago. The diagnostic phase of the prophecies is completely fulfilled; what remains outstanding is only their consequence.

Second, the Pio calculation: "These children here will see it." The children of 1963/64 are today 72 to 73 years old. If the prophecy is to be fulfilled, purification *and* triumph must fall within the remaining lifespan of this generation. In the words of the reporter: "not many years can pass."

Third, the principle of all the apparitions: the chastisement is *conditional*. "If men do not repent and better themselves..." (Akita). Nineveh was spared because it did penance. The timing is thus no astronomical constant but depends — this is the truly staggering message — also on us: on the number of those who pray, make reparation, and live in the state of

grace. Perhaps we are the ten righteous for whom Abraham bargained. That is exactly why this book ends not with the scenario, but with the guide.



CHAPTER 13

THE GUIDE: HOW TO PREPARE YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY



THE LOGIC OF PREPARATION

Whoever hears of coming catastrophes instinctively thinks of provisions, generators, escape plans. The sources of this book think differently — and their logic is compelling: if what is coming is a *spiritual* judgment upon a *spiritual* disease, then the only effective preparation is a spiritual one. Akita says it literally: "The **only** arms which will remain for you will be the Rosary and the Sign left by my Son." Not the most important weapons. The only ones.

No one forbids prudent practical provision for emergencies. But whoever fills the cellar and leaves the soul empty has not understood the message: the decisive thing is not to *survive* the event — Akita says expressly that it will strike good and bad alike. The decisive thing is to meet it in the **state of grace**, ready for "the great leap from time into eternity" (Quito). Here, in this reversal of priorities, lies the whole difference between fear and peace.

From all the sources treated, a clear, concrete plan in seven points emerges.

1. BACK INTO THE STATE OF GRACE: CONFESSION

The first and most important step is at the same time the one our age has most thoroughly forgotten: a **good, complete confession of one's whole life** — and thereafter regular confession, roughly monthly.

Whoever has read the chapters of this book knows: the probability is high that even the practicing Christian of today lives unknowingly in objectively grave sin — because no one ever told him. The way back begins with an honest examination of conscience according to the **Ten Commandments** and the unabridged teaching of the Church: How do things stand with purity (pornography, fornication, cohabitation without marriage, contraception)? With the Sunday obligation? With the occult (horoscopes, fortune-telling, esotericism — the "spiritism" of La Salette)? With forgiveness, honesty, love of neighbor? Then: confess everything, without embellishment, with the earnest resolve of amendment — and never again receive Communion in the state of grave sin. With that, the personal sacrilege ends, and the heart becomes, for the first time in a long while, capable of grace again.

2. THE DAILY WEAPON: THE ROSARY

Fatima repeated it in every single apparition, Akita called it the "only weapon," Father Amorth named it as remedy: **Pray the Rosary every day**. Daily. Not as a pious extra, but as survival equipment.

Whoever is not used to it should begin small, but begin today: five decades (about 20 minutes), if need be at first a single decade — but daily, best at a fixed hour, best together as a family. The family Rosary in the evening is the strongest protective wall a house can have. And pray it, as Akita in-

structs, expressly also **for the Pope, the bishops, and the priests** — not against them. Cursing the shepherds is counterproductive; praying for them is the lever on which the restoration of the Church hangs.

3. THE FIRST SATURDAYS OF REPARATION

The promise of Pontevedra (1925) is perhaps the most underestimated offer of Heaven in modern times: whoever, on **five consecutive First Saturdays**, confesses, receives Holy Communion, prays five decades of the Rosary, and keeps the Mother of God company for fifteen minutes in meditation — all with the intention of reparation to her Immaculate Heart — to him she promises assistance **at the hour of death with all the graces necessary for salvation**. In view of a judgment that will spare "neither priests nor faithful," there is no more important insurance. Begin on the next First Saturday.

4. WORTHY RECEPTION OF THE SACRAMENTS

- **Eucharist:** receive only in the state of grace, with reverence and thanksgiving. Better to forgo Communion once and confess first than to continue the sacrilege.
- **Anointing of the Sick:** call the priest in good time — for yourself and for your relatives. The "misguided affection" that does not wish to "alarm" the dying (Quito) robs him of the most important grace of his life. Discuss it openly in the family: *When it comes to that point with me, bring me the priest.*
- **Sunday Mass:** without exception. Where possible, seek out a Mass that is celebrated reverently; many find in the traditional liturgy,

with its unabridged language of the sacred, a particular source of strength.

5. CLEANSE AND PROTECT THE HOME

Belief in the objective power of the sacramentals belongs to the oldest patrimony of the Church — even if it has been largely erased from the new books:

- Keep **holy water** in the house and use it daily (sign yourself and your children with it); where possible, ask a priest for water blessed according to the **old rite**, with exorcism and salt.
- **Blessed objects**: a crucifix in every bedroom, the Miraculous Medal, the scapular, a **house blessed** by a priest.
- Pray the **St. Michael Prayer** of Leo XIII daily — the prayer that protected the whole Church for eighty years until it fell silent in 1964. In your own family it need not remain silent.
- **Remove everything occult from the house**: esotericism, tarot, horoscopes, charms, occult media. One cannot ask protection against the enemy and at the same time hold the door open for him.

6. THE LIFE OF THE "APOSTLES OF THE LAST TIMES"

La Salette has left behind the job description for our time: poverty and humility, prayer and mortification, chastity, silence, union with God, readiness for unrecognized suffering. Translated into daily life:

- **Detachment** from abundance: live more simply, need less, give generously. Whoever lets go now can have nothing torn from him later.

- **Mortification and reparation:** small voluntary sacrifices (fasting, renunciation, Friday abstinence from meat, the patient carrying of the daily cross), offered up for the conversion of sinners — as the children of Fatima did. "Penance, penance, penance" is not a threat but a work order.
- **Chastity** according to one's state — and an uncompromising break with pornography, that sin which, according to Sister Lúcia's word, costs more souls than any other.
- **Sobriety with media:** the "filthy sea" saturates the atmosphere through the screens. Whoever wants to protect his soul must control the inflows — in himself, and all the more in his children.

7. SAVE THE CHILDREN

"They will focus particularly on the children" (Quito). Then the answer must be: we focus particularly on the children. Parents — not school, not state, not screen — are the first catechists. Hand on the unabridged faith to the children: who God is, what sin is, what grace is, how to confess, how to pray the Rosary, who Saint Michael is and who the guardian angel is. Pray with them, model confession for them, defend their innocence like a treasure — for that is exactly what it is, according to the testimony of all the apparitions: the enemy's most precious target.

NO FEAR

And finally the most important thing, which carries all the rest: **fear is not the posture of the Christian**. None of the four apparitions ends in threat; each ends in promise. Whoever lives in the state of grace, prays the

Rosary daily, keeps the First Saturdays, and has consecrated his house to the Lord has done everything Heaven has asked — and for him what is coming is not the downfall but, in Akita's word, "the happy beginning of the complete restoration." One does not prepare because one is afraid. One prepares so that one need not be.



CONCLUSION — IN THE END, THE IMMACULATE HEART WILL TRIUMPH



This book has traced a wide arc: from a convent in the Quito of 1610, over a mountain in the French Alps, a Portuguese shepherds' field, and a Japanese convent, into the session halls of the Second Vatican Council and into the darkest testimonies about the Rome of the 1960s.

The balance can be drawn in a few sentences.

Our society has almost completely lost the faith. Not through one great fall, but through a long forgetting that was precisely foretold four hundred years ago. The concepts without which faith is unthinkable — sin, grace, judgment, hell, devil — were removed from the world and finally, this is the incomprehensible part, from the books of the Church herself. And as the words disappeared, the old idols returned under new masks — up to and including the child sacrifice of modernity, which day after day lets innocent blood cry to heaven two hundred thousand times. A generation grew up to whom no one explained evil anymore — and which therefore stands defenseless before it.

Even practicing Christians today often live unknowingly in mortal sin — they receive Communion without confession, live against commandments of whose binding force no one ever told them, and consider normal what all the Christian centuries would have called sacrilege. Not out of malice, but because the understanding of sin and of evil is simply no

longer taught. The devil's greatest trick is accomplished: he has become invisible — in the middle of the house of God. And where he still works, he works not as an open enemy but as a counterfeiter: as the ape of God, setting up a counter-church that resembles the Church in all her characteristics — only emptied of her divine content. That is the ape of the Church which gives this book its name.

Very many prophecies — the ecclesiastically approved ones first among them — point in agreement to a very difficult time in which, as once over Sodom and Gomorrah, the wrath of God will strike mankind: not as the whim of a cruel God, but as the last service of love of a Father who restores the order that His children have destroyed and without which they cannot live. Fire will fall from the sky, says Akita; a great part of mankind will perish, good and bad, priests and laity. And afterward — on this all the sources are equally agreed — comes not the end, but the spring: the Gospel preached everywhere, the time of peace, the good harvest.

And the way through this time is clearly defined and lies open before every one of us. Fatima put it into the simplest words, and they are the real message of this book: **stop living in sin — and pray the Rosary every day.** Confession and the state of grace, the daily Rosary, the First Saturdays, consecration to the Immaculate Heart, reparation and a pure life: that is the whole equipment. It costs no money, it demands no learning, it is as accessible to the child as to the scholar. Precisely therein lies its divine signature.

Padre Pio said the children of that day would see it. Those children are old people today. The time is short — but it is *time of grace*, given precisely so

that as many as possible may find their way home before the door closes and opens again upon a new world.

The last word therefore belongs not to fear, but to the Mother who for four centuries never tired of warning because she never tired of loving — and who has left us her promise like an anchor in the storm:

| *"In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."*

Whoever belongs to her stands, at the end, on the side of victory.



APPENDIX I — THE MOST IMPORTANT PRAYERS AND PRACTICES



The Prayer to Saint Michael the Archangel (Leo XIII):

Holy Archangel Michael, defend us in battle; be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan and all the evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

The Fatima Prayer (after each decade of the Rosary):

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to Heaven, especially those most in need of Thy mercy.

The First Saturdays of Reparation (Pontevedra 1925) — on five consecutive First Saturdays, with the intention of reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary:

1. Confession (also possible in the days before or after, provided one receives Communion in the state of grace)
2. Reception of Holy Communion
3. Five decades of the Rosary

4. Fifteen minutes of meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary ("keeping the Mother of God company")

Daily Order of the Prepared — a Short Rule:

- Morning: morning prayer, morning offering, St. Michael Prayer
- During the day: fidelity to duty, small sacrifices, aspirations
- Evening: Rosary (with the family if possible), brief examination of conscience, holy water
- Weekly: Sunday Mass (worthily), Friday renunciation
- Monthly: confession, First Saturday
- In the home: crucifix, holy water, blessed medals, nothing occult



APPENDIX II — A GUIDE TO THE EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE BEFORE HOLY CONFESSION



Chapter 10 of this book has shown: most people of our time — practicing Christians included — simply no longer know what actually counts as sin, because no one ever taught them. This guide seeks to close that gap. It follows the proven order of the Ten Commandments and the classical examination-of-conscience manuals, and is meant as a practical preparation for Holy Confession — the first and most important step of the guide in Chapter 13.

PREPARATION

Take time and silence. Ask the Holy Spirit for light to recognize your sins, for true contrition, and for the firm resolve to amend your life. Go through the following questions honestly before God — without fear, for He is merciful.

Prayer before the examination of conscience:

Come, Holy Spirit, enlighten my mind that I may know my sins. Move my heart to sincere contrition and grant me the grace to begin a new life. Holy Mother Mary, refuge of sinners, pray for me. Amen.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD

1. You shall believe in one God.

- Have I doubted God or denied the faith?
- Have I prayed daily — or neglected prayer?
- Have I engaged in superstitious things (horoscopes, fortune-telling, esotericism, the occult)?
- Have I placed God at the center of my life — or money, success, pleasure, other people?
- Have I been ashamed of my faith or concealed it where I should have given witness?

2. You shall not dishonor the name of God.

- Have I spoken the name of God, of Jesus, of Mary, or of the saints carelessly or in cursing?
- Have I mocked God, the faith, the Church, or consecrated persons?
- Have I sworn falsely or rashly?
- Have I broken a vow or promise made to God?

3. You shall keep holy the day of the Lord.

- Have I missed Holy Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation — through my own fault?
- Was I inattentive, bored, without inner devotion at Mass?
- Have I done unnecessary work on Sunday, not required to relieve genuine need?
- Have I truly kept Sunday as the day of the Lord, of the family, and of rest?

4. Honor your father and your mother.

- Have I owed and given my parents respect, love, obedience, and (in their old age) help?
- Have I spoken badly about them or caused them sorrow?
- Have I shown due respect to superiors, teachers, lawful authority?
- As a parent: have I raised my children in the faith, given them a good example, loved them — but also disciplined them?
- Have I cared for my family — in time, attention, love?

5. You shall not kill.

- Have I carried hatred, anger, vindictiveness, resentment in my heart?
- Have I harmed others by words or deeds — hurt, humiliated, bullied them?
- Have I damaged my own health through excess (food, drink, drugs, alcohol, nicotine)?
- Have I been involved in abortion, in assisting it, or in advocating it?
- Have I refused forgiveness — or failed to ask forgiveness myself?
- Have I recklessly endangered the lives of others in traffic?

6 and 9. You shall not commit adultery — and you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or husband.

- Have I admitted and entertained unchaste thoughts and desires?
- Have I viewed or consumed pornographic content?
- Have I committed self-abuse (masturbation)?
- Have I had sexual relations outside of marriage, or led relationships contrary to Christian marriage?

- As a married person: have I been faithful to my spouse — in thought, word, deed? Have I nurtured married love?
- Have I used artificial contraception?
- Have I led others into sin through unchaste talk, dress, or behavior?

7 and 10. You shall not steal — and you shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

- Have I taken, kept, or damaged the property of others?
- Have I stolen at work (time, materials, dishonest accounting)?
- Have I evaded taxes or obtained social benefits dishonestly?
- Have I failed to repay debts, or failed to pay just wages?
- Have I nourished envy and greed within me?
- Have I given to the poor what I could? Was I generous?
- Have I lived wastefully or stingily?

8. You shall not bear false witness.

- Have I lied — out of convenience, vanity, cowardice, advantage?
- Have I spread gossip or slander about others?
- Have I betrayed secrets entrusted to me?
- Have I judged others rashly?
- Have I been false and hypocritical in dealing with others?
- Have I made amends where I could (reputation, damage, forgiveness)?

THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE CHURCH

- Have I attended Holy Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation?

- Have I kept the prescribed fasting and abstinence on Fridays and during Lent?
- Have I confessed at least once a year and received Communion during the Easter season?
- Have I supported the Church through my contribution (church tax or tithe, donations, active help)?

DUTIES OF ONE'S STATE OF LIFE AND PROFESSION

- Have I faithfully fulfilled my duties in family, work, school?
- Was I diligent, honest, reliable — or lazy, negligent, unreliable?
- Have I used my talents and time well — or wasted them on screens, entertainment, comfort?
- Have I cultivated my spiritual life: prayer, spiritual reading, reception of the sacraments?

THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS — AN AID TO SELF- EXAMINATION

- **Pride:** Have I raised myself above others, overestimated myself, sought praise?
- **Avarice:** Have I clung to money, been hard toward my neighbor?
- **Lust:** Have I offended against purity in thoughts, looks, words, or deeds?
- **Envy:** Have I been vexed by the happiness or success of others?
- **Gluttony/Intemperance:** Have I lost right measure in eating, drinking, consumption, screen time?

- **Anger:** Have I been unrestrained, quick-tempered, vindictive?
- **Sloth:** Have I been sluggish in doing good, especially in spiritual things?

THE ACT OF CONTRITION

O my God, with all my heart I am sorry for all my sins, because by them I have deserved the punishments of hell, and above all because I have offended You, the highest and most lovable Good. I detest my sins, and with the help of Your grace I firmly resolve to amend my life and to sin no more. Amen.

THE ORDER OF CONFESSION

1. Enter and greet: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen."
2. "My last confession was ... (weeks / months / years) ago."
3. Confess your sins — grave sins by kind and number, venial sins as you remember them.
4. Conclude: "These are my sins. I am sorry for them, I repent of them, and I resolve to amend my life."
5. The priest gives counsel and a penance. You pray the Act of Contrition. The priest speaks the absolution — you answer: "Amen."
6. After confession: perform the penance, thank God — and live in the grace that has been restored to you.

"But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more." (Romans 5:20)



End of the book.

"Fight, children of light, you, the few who can see." — La Salette