



*“I was amazed at the feast
that Christ prepared for
the blessed Church, His bride.
As I entered, I saw there:
prophets, martyrs, and the just,
the apostles with the priests;
then Baptism and the cross;
on the altar there was placed
Christ’s own Body and His Blood
for the pardon of all sins.”*

– From the Maronite Divine Liturgy

*“The Catholic Church is the last
place left to take refuge from the
madness of the world.”*

– G. K. Chesterton

Maronite Monks of Adoration

November 2015

“Blessed Are You, O Holy Church”

It’s that time of year again, November, when the Catholic Church begins a new liturgical year. The Roman Church will begin its new church year with the First Sunday of Advent at the end of the month. The Maronite Church, in contrast, has already begun a new church year on the first of November with a sort of liturgical “preseason.” In this liturgical “preseason” the Maronites dedicate one or two Sundays (depending on the calendar) to the Mystery of the Church. These Sundays are called *the Sundays of the Consecration and Renewal of the Church*. These celebrations offer us the opportunity to reflect upon the Mystery of the Church and, as people often make New Year’s resolutions on January 1st, we can perhaps make some resolutions at the start of the new church year to deepen our Christian lives.

The Synod of Bishops on the Family has just ended and we will be awaiting Pope Francis’ recommendations flowing from the synod. The family is known in Catholic theology as the *Domus Ecclesiae* – the Church in miniature: its most fundamental unit. So in celebrating the Consecration and Renewal of the Church we can reflect how we can renew our baptismal consecration, the foundation of the Church, and renew Her particularly in the family. As the family goes, so goes the Church.

As is well known the synod took place against the backdrop of an increasing demonic war against the family. Remember the words of Sister Lucia of Fatima quoted in the previous newsletter: *“The final battle between the Lord and the reign of Satan will be about marriage and the family. Don’t be afraid, because anyone*

of this inevitable “evolution”? Public enemy number one: the Catholic Church.

So what is our response to this? We renew the Church by renewing its most basic unit: the family. And that renewal comes about by uniting ourselves, not to a program, but to a person: Jesus Christ the Incarnate Son of God. He said to us, “I have come that you may have life.” That life is sanctifying grace: a share in the very life of God. We don’t have it naturally in ourselves because of the effects of original sin. We cannot save



ourselves naturally through our own efforts. God’s grace is always mediated through the Church – His Mystical Body. To see this lived out we take a look at a particular Catholic family: a father, mother and their eight children (this is a real family whose name we will keep anonymous).

Three of the eight children have religious vocations. One of the boys is a professed religious brother, another boy is a novice in the same community and one of the girls is a professed religious sister. When interviewed the parents explained how they raised their children to know what was of supreme importance in their lives: their eternal salvation. The father explained that he and his wife didn’t do anything special to promote religious vocations in their family. For them living out the faith was first and foremost. *“We basically made their lives very God-centered, very Christ centered,” he explained, adding that everything was based upon that first question found in traditional catechisms. “Why did God make us”? “We brought them up to say*



ultimately your aim is to get to heaven.” Note: the important thing is not what career they will have or how much money they will make but their eternal souls.

The children were also taught to view Jesus, Mary and Joseph as their extended family. The family also said their morning and evening prayers, in addition to an evening rosary. *“Saying the rosary every single day as a family has been huge for us,”* the father added. Remember the saying, “the family that prays together stays together?” And what the Blessed Mother said

about the importance of the rosary at Fatima?

In the home, instead of watching current television shows, the family was entertained with more wholesome movies from the 1940s. The music played in the house was of a more innocent genre as well. The children attended a Catholic school where the faith was vibrantly lived and as a result were formed in a Catholic subculture. They read the lives of the saints and were taught to bring their needs to Mary, their Heavenly Mother. The children were encouraged to pray to find out what God wants them to do, and then dedicate your life to that.

The above is no pious tale but a current lived reality. It takes sacrifice to live the above. It means going against what the world offers as “salvation.”

But the world’s salvation is simply slavery. Slavery to materialism, slavery to lust, slavery to pride. Recall the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. Jesus Christ offers true freedom and salvation.

When we have enough families living the above

who operates for the sanctity of marriage and the family will always be contended and opposed in every way...however, Our Lady has already crushed its head."

The Devil knows that if he can destroy the family, he will have destroyed the Church. During the synod a superb presentation was made to the synod Fathers by Dr. Anca-Maria Cernea, head of the Romanian Association of Catholic Doctors. When her parents were engaged, the Communists arrested her father and imprisoned him for 17 years. Her mother awaited all that time for him not even knowing if he was alive. In her presentation she stated strongly that the real threat to the family was **spiritual**. And she defined the danger thus: *"We, as Catholic doctors, defending life and family, can see this is, first of all, a spiritual battle. Material poverty and consumerism are not the primary cause*



*of the family crisis. The primary cause of the sexual and cultural revolution is ideological. Our Lady of Fatima has said that Russia's errors would spread all over the world. It was first done under a violent form, classical Marxism, by killing tens of millions. Now it is being done mostly by cultural Marxism. There is continuity from Lenin's sex revolution, through Gramsci and the Frankfurt school, to the current day gay-rights and gender ideology. Classical Marxism pretended to redesign society, through violent take-over of property. Now the revolution goes deeper; it pretends to redefine family, sex identity and human nature. This ideology calls itself progressive. **But it is nothing else than the ancient serpent's offer, for man to take control, to replace God, to arrange salvation here, in this world. It's an error of religious nature, it's Gnosticism...The Church's mission is to save souls. Evil in the world, comes from sin. Not from income disparity or 'climate change.'** The solution is: **Evangelization. Conversion.**"*

The elites of government, the media, the corporations, big labor, government education, the universities (both secular and many 'Catholic') have all fallen for this temptation. You can see why G.K. Chesterton said the above quote (and that was some time ago!). These elites have decided that Western Christian culture is repressive and overdue for "reform." It must therefore "evolve" into a more "humane" society. So guess whose in the way



then truly will the Church be renewed. In the Gospels Our Lord challenged us to *“be perfect as your Heavenly Father is perfect.”* He calls us to be extraordinary: not ordinary and living as if on automatic pilot. The Servant of God Fr. John Hardon SJ summed up our current situation rather succinctly: *“The only Catholics who will survive in America are heroic Catholics. All the others will be wiped out.”*

We must ask ourselves, “What is our salvation worth?” By renewing our family lives in holiness we will renew the Church. Then the Church will, as Our Lord said, be the “salt of the earth and the light of the world.” ✠

