

# TERROR OF DEMONS



# TERROR - OF - DEMONS

RECLAIMING  
TRADITIONAL  
CATHOLIC  
MASCULINITY

KENNEDY HALL

TAN Books  
Gastonia, North Carolina

*Terror of Demons: Reclaiming Traditional Catholic Masculinity* © 2021  
Kennedy Hall

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## PROTESTATION

**I**N all that I shall say in this book, I submit to what is taught by our mother, the Holy Roman Church; if there is anything in it contrary to this, it will be without my knowledge. Therefore, for the love of Our Lord, I beg the learned men who read this book to look at it very carefully and make known to me any faults of this nature, and any other kinds of errors, which may be in it. If there is anything good in it, let this be to the glory and honor of God in the service of his most sacred Mother, our Patroness and Lady.<sup>1</sup>

KENNEDY HALL

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1 Adapted from the protestation given by St. Teresa of Avila in *The Way of Perfection*.





## PREFACE

*“Undertake this journey eagerly for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the reward of imperishable glory in the kingdom of heaven.”*

—Blessed Pope Urban II

I wrote this book because Catholic men need a book like this. I also wrote this book as a spiritual exercise for myself. Every day, I seek to be a better and manlier Catholic, so I thought I should put this in print. The content of this book is challenging, and I continue to be challenged by it. There is a host of useful books to read on every aspect of the spiritual and moral life, but, to my mind, it is hard to find a resource that is a one-stop shop for men who want to develop heroic virtue. I have a book in my bedside table drawer called *The DIY Bible*. The book explains how to fix most issues that come up in the realm of home improvement and maintenance. There is the odd job that requires a specialist who is highly trained, but in reading through that book, I realized I could fix most things if I put in the work. In a similar manner, this book will act as a guide for most things that pertain to Catholic masculinity.

If taken seriously, this book will help you grow in virtue and seek true Catholic masculinity. For some, this will mean a radical change in lifestyle; for others, it will mean using this book as something to reignite a fire to go from

good to excellent. You will be equipped to identify the demands of true manliness and utilize strategies to fight. You will equip yourself to work alongside St. Michael and watch him *cast into hell Satan and all evil spirits who wander around the earth seeking the ruin of souls.*

Before you begin reading, it is necessary to understand something: *the devil will not like you reading this book, and he will come after you.* Even in the writing process, I encountered constant resistance. This book will help you go from the highway to hell to the narrow path. If you are already on the narrow path, it will help you supercharge your steps on the stairway to heaven. The devil hates virtue, he hates losing souls to God, and he wants to keep you in a state of mortal sin or spiritual complacency. Once he realizes that you are kicking things into high gear, he will throw many tantrums, and so will his legions. Prepare yourself and please say a Hail Mary for the author.

Because of this impending attack, you need to make three fundamental commitments as a baseline:

1. Make the Rosary a daily habit. Maybe you already pray the Rosary daily; this is good. If you don't, you have to start. It takes about fifteen to twenty minutes to pray a five-decade Rosary. Split it up into chunks if you have to, or simply skip watching another rerun of a sitcom or stop wasting your time watching the news. Our Lady has appeared multiple times over the past few centuries, and she has always insisted on praying the Rosary. If you aren't going to commit to the Rosary, then you aren't serious about salvation.

2. Get all the evil images out of your life.<sup>1</sup> This means *all* of the evil images. Of course, it is easy to identify the explicitly evil, pornographic material, but all sexually suggestive material must go. If you are addicted to evil images, you may literally have to destroy your phone and throw away your computer. Isn't that a little bit extreme? Am I really supposed to throw out an expensive piece of technology just because I can use it to watch evil images? Yes! First, this remedy will be temporary until you get a handle on things, and secondly, you may need to make a choice: throw away the tech or throw away your soul. We will go into more detail later in the book on how to make your home safe from evil images, but for now, if you have an issue, take drastic and surgical steps. If you watch evil images on your phone or computer today and then slip in the shower and break your neck and die before confessing, you will be damned. This should be frightening. Time to be scared straight.
3. Make a good examination of conscience and go to confession as soon as possible. You need to be sure that you have confessed all your known mortal sins in order to live in a state of grace. If you aren't living in a state of grace, then your intellect is darkened and you will be more susceptible to demonic influence as you read this book. If you are in a

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1 Throughout this book, the phrase "evil images" will be used solely to describe the evil of pornography; though evil images can also include impure thoughts, memories, and phantasms (picture-thoughts of the imagination).

state of mortal sin, you are weak, and when you are weak, you are soft; when you are soft, you cease to be a man. Do not be soft. Get to confession and make sure you are cleaned up.

### **Online Resources**

Throughout the book, the reader will notice that at times he will be instructed to visit a website. To access these resources, go to [meaningofcatholic.com/terrorofdemons](http://meaningofcatholic.com/terrorofdemons). Here you will find a host of helpful resources that help to implement the contents of the book into daily life.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**T**O my wife. I owe you more than I can say. Without you, I would not be the man I am. Because of you and the children whom you have given me, fighting against the culture is a daily joy. Every man needs a woman to fight for; I could not ask for one better. If I were to write down all my thoughts, “the world itself, I think, would not be able to contain the books that should be written” (Jn. 21:25). One lifetime is not enough.

To Nonno, Giuseppe Viani. God rest your soul. If I become half the man you were, I will be twice the man I am now. We all stand on the shoulders of giants, and I stand on the strongest. Thank you for giving me a heritage in faith worth fighting for.

Finally, to glorious St. Joseph. Like in Scripture, there is scant mention of your name in this book, but your perfected virtue and masculinity is woven into every page. St. Joseph, Terror of Demons, pray for us!

KENNEDY HALL  
St. Joseph the Worker  
Anno Domini MMXX



## INTRODUCTION

**Y**EARS ago, I sat in a pew at St. Peter's Cathedral Basilica in my hometown of London, Ontario. I looked over at three men whom I respected very much as they knelt in prayer before Mass. It was an 8:30 a.m. Mass, a Sunday, and also the morning of a very important football game for us at Catholic Central High School (CCH). We had a tradition at CCH wherein we attended Mass the morning of every game throughout the season. We never played on Sundays, but it was the Ontario Western Bowl semi-final, and the game scheduled for the previous day had been snowed-out. It was the first week of December, and this is what happens in the southwestern Ontario snow-belt. We were playing on artificial turf, so a snowplow was used to clear off the field in order for us to play the game. For any Americans reading this, you should imagine the most stereotypical scene of Canadian football, as we played football in sub-zero weather with sidelines marked by walls of snow. It was an incredible game. We won, and the following week, we went on to win a Western Bowl championship at a much warmer indoor venue in Toronto.

What does this story about high school football have to do with Catholic masculinity? Well, I am more concerned with the three men I saw kneeling at Mass than I am with the game. You see, these were our three coaches—our head coach and two assistants. These three men were giants to

me not only because they were physically imposing football coaches but also because they were true leaders. They commanded my respect, and I would have done anything they asked. These men were Roman Catholic men.

I didn't grow up in a family that practiced the Faith. In fact, I barely remember going to Easter or Christmas Mass as a child, except perhaps with my Nonno and Nonna. May God rest their souls. My mother is an Italian immigrant, and my father descends from English Catholics. In typical post-Vatican II fashion, the older generation was pious, and the boomer generation had more or less given up on the Faith a long time ago. My mother has kept the Faith to a degree, and I pray for her to become a consistent, practicing Catholic. My father, who was a Latin Mass altar-server for his whole life until the 1970 "wreckovation" of the Mass, comes to church when our children receive sacraments. I love my father, and I pray he will find his way home so we can spend eternity together. In fact, I have joked with him that my wife and I seem to have a new child every year because it means he has to step into a church at least annually for a baptism.

In any case, I grew up with nothing more than a vague cultural Catholicism and a less than ideal Catholic education. In fact, my "education" was so feeble that I distinctly remember a religion teacher in grade ten saying that we should "not think of the Holy Bible as true necessarily but as a book with really good messages." That's right, a secondary school religion teacher told his students that the Holy Bible shouldn't be thought of as "true."

Despite the lack of religious formation and the fact that I was leading a relatively sinful life, the image of those men kneeling in prayer was somehow still etched into my



brain. In my early twenties, while applying to Teachers College, the memory of these men kneeling in prayer was invaluable in my reconsideration of the Faith. At any rate, at this time I was essentially a lapsed Catholic and a secular humanist. I was not an atheist in the truest sense of the word, even though I tried to be, God forgive me. Like many men, I held that Catholicism was superstitious and out of touch with the modern world. I believed I was so much smarter than people who were fooled by religion. I was arrogant, and although I was academic, I was foolish. Despite my arrogance, in spite of my foolishness, I knew there was something to Catholicism, something that pulled on my heartstrings. I couldn't bring myself to believe that I was above these men who believed the Faith and who had done so much for me. Cutting through the fog of my pretentious worldview was a sliver of integrity. I had many vices, and I was not living in a state of grace. I was not on my way to heaven, but somehow I still believed in some vague notion of history and tradition. I knew that gratitude had to be extended to my ancestors and that somewhere deep down I wasn't as smart as I thought I was. I owed it to those three coaches and others to give the faith a second look. I wanted to be a high school teacher, I wanted to coach. In essence, I wanted to be like them. I couldn't bring myself to believe that these men were somehow foolish. The memory of these three men on their *knees* made them stand *tall* in my mind.

My conversion was at times slow, and at other times lightning fast, as these things tend to be. Years later, I now find myself a Rosary-praying, Latin Mass-attending Catholic father of four who hopes to share the Faith that saved his

soul. It is a mystery to me how I arrived here, and I guess I will see all the dots connected when, God willing, I share in the Beatific Vision. Until then, I cannot ignore the fire in my soul that compels me to do all I can to inspire other men to embrace the Catholic faith.

Our culture is effeminate, our men are soft, and our souls are being cast into hell at an alarming rate. Men spend more time staring at evil images on their phone than they do staring at the cross or an icon of the Most Blessed Virgin. Men are weaker than they have ever been, and our civilization is perishing before our very eyes as a result. We have given into feminism, religious indifferentism, scientism, and paganism. We defer to every other “ism” besides the only true “ism,” Catholicism. The highway to hell is an eight-lane expressway at this point, and it is time for men to wake up and smell the sulfur. “For wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat” (Mt. 7:13). This saying of Jesus Christ could be the motto of our society and is the best descriptor of the plight of men today. We are gallivanting down the wide path; we are walking off a cliff into the depths of eternal hellfire. We do not even realize it because we won’t stop to look up from the evil images on our iPhones. Our Lord told us that many will walk the path to destruction. It is not a matter of whether some men will go to hell but rather *how many*. Do you know where you are headed? We dare not hope that all men will achieve salvation, and we dare not count ourselves as part of the saved if we continue to live as we are. It has long been the time for men to wake up, stand up, grow up, and man up. We need more than mere men; we need *traditional Catholic men*.

## THE DEVIL IS REAL AND HE WANTS YOUR SOUL

*“Not all, nor even a majority, are saved. . . . They are indeed many, if regarded by themselves, but they are few in comparison with the far larger number of those who shall be punished with the devil.”*

—St. Augustine

*“The Devil is like a mad dog tied by a chain. Beyond the length of the chain he cannot catch hold of anyone. And you, therefore, keep your distance. If you get too close you will be caught. Remember, the Devil has only one door with which to enter into our soul: our will.”*

—St. Padre Pio

**I**F you were to ask your average Catholic about the reality of the devil, sadly I would imagine that many would scoff at the idea. Surveys show that most baptized Catholics do not believe in the infernal dragon and his henchmen.<sup>1</sup> Even weekly Mass attendees have grown soft in their belief about the enemy. Sure, many will give lip service to the notion of some sort of “personified evil force.” Some will

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1 David Nussman, “Most US Catholics Don’t Believe in Devil,” *Church Militant*, August 30, 2017, <https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/most-us-catholics-dont-believe-in-devil>.

admit with hesitation that the devil is at work in evil people. But the idea that the devil and demons actively work to damn the average person is beyond the pale.

The devil is a fallen angel, as is every demon. The account of the fall of Lucifer is in at least two places in the Old Testament:

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, who didst rise in the morning? how art thou fallen to the earth, that didst wound the nations? And thou saidst in thy heart: I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God, I will sit in the mountain of the covenant, in the sides of the north. I will ascend above the height of the clouds, I will be like the most High. But yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, into the depth of the pit. They that shall see thee, shall turn toward thee, and behold thee. Is this the man that troubled the earth, that shook kingdoms, That made the world a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof, that opened not the prison to his prisoners? (Is. 14:12–17)

Thou a cherub stretched out, and protecting, and I set thee in the holy mountain of God, thou hast walked in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day of thy creation, until iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise, thy inner parts were filled with iniquity, and thou hast sinned: and I cast thee out from the mountain of God, and destroyed thee, O covering cherub, out of the midst of the stones of fire. (Ez. 28:14–16)

In both of these passages from the Old Testament prophets, we see mention of the fallen angel Lucifer. Lucifer was highly regarded in the eyes of God, but due to pride, he was cast down as a punishment. Tradition and Scripture hold that Lucifer was the highest of angels, thus his fall was the most drastic. The expression “the corruption of the best is the worst” would apply to Lucifer. The name Lucifer

means “morning star” or “bringer of light.” It is ironic that other false religions speak of “enlightenment.” It is also telling that the most philosophically absurd and morally degenerate era in the last one thousand years is called the Enlightenment. It makes you wonder from whence comes this source of “light.”

The reality of the devil is a scriptural truth. Furthermore, one need only consult the experiences of exorcists and saints. To deny the reality of the devil is to deny the teachings of the Catholic Church, and to deny the teachings of the Church is to cease to be Catholic. For a Catholic, it isn’t enough to simply acknowledge the existence of the devil any more than it isn’t enough to simply acknowledge the existence of God. Understanding that God exists is the first step on the path to catholicity. But what we do with this belief is more important.

The devil believes in the existence of God but that was not enough to keep him in God’s good graces. In fact, Satanists believe in God, and many of them even believe in the Real Presence of the Eucharist. This is why consecrated Hosts are often stolen for nefarious purposes. Sadly, the proliferation of Communion in the hand has made the stealing of Hosts more doable due to the careless nature in which many handle the Body of Christ. You need to live as though God is real and not be satisfied with mere belief. You prove the strength of your belief in God by going to Mass, frequenting the sacraments, and living a moral life. Since the active and destructive work of the devil is seen throughout the history of the faith, we ought to take it seriously and recognize that Satan’s existence is a fact. Jesus

Christ dealt directly with the devil and went beyond simply acknowledging his existence, so we should act accordingly.

In the same manner, we must go beyond simple acknowledgment of the devil and make the transition from belief to action. The devil and his legions are constantly working to destroy your life, to tempt you to sin, and to bring you to hell. Therefore, you must be on the offense and not only be in a reactionary or defensive posture. Some people have told me that they think I am too extreme or paranoid when I speak about the devil as a relentless enemy. They are mistaken.

St. Peter tells us, “Be sober and watch: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist ye, strong in faith: knowing that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world” (1 Pt. 5:8–9).

The first pope makes it clear that the devil is a predator, like a roaring lion. This means that he preys on the vulnerable and loves to make a show of his power. It also means that we resist the devil by staying strong, as predators do not go after those they cannot overcome. This passage also reminds us to not pay any attention to the roaring. The devil is like a mad man who seeks to intimidate by posturing with loud noises.

Furthermore, St. Peter tells us that the same affliction befalls your brethren who are in the world. The devil is after all of us, especially those of us who seek to live in God’s good graces. All men are in the same situation in that they must resist the predator and pay no mind to his showmanship and pompous peacocking. We must support our brethren and remember that all of us may fall at any moment.

There is an episode of the show *The World's Deadliest Gangs* that follows a criminal who found his way into a prison gang. This man was a hardened criminal, and both inside and outside of jail, he made his living as a hit man for motorcycle gangs. At a certain point, he was put in jail for a considerable sentence and, like most hardened criminals, he sought refuge in the prison version of the gang to which he belonged on the outside. He estimates that in prison alone, he had killed more than twenty men. That being said, he was not completely without a moral code, as is no one (see Rom. 1:20–21).

At a certain point, this man heard of a hit set up outside of the prison to be carried out by a fellow gang member who was just released. This criminal associate was tasked with murdering the wife and child of a rival gang member. Even in this world of unspeakable sin, the man profiled in this television show felt the prick of his conscience and made it clear to the gang hierarchy that he would no longer be a part of the organization. He was going rogue. He was fine with the collateral damage of gang warfare, but he would not involve innocent women and children. And they say there is no honor among thieves! In any case, as you can imagine, this made him a marked man. He found himself stuck inside the walls of a prison full of some of the most dangerous people on earth, many of whom wanted him dead. He couldn't join another gang, because prison gangs usually separate along racial lines. He couldn't start his own gang, because the sheer power of opposition was too strong. His only option was to fend for himself. At a certain point in the show, the interviewer asked the man while they were walking around the prison yard, "Some

would say you are being paranoid, what do you say to that?” His reply, “I am not paranoid. I am hyper vigilant. I know everyone here wants to kill me, so I act accordingly.”

It may seem odd to include this example from a show about gangsters and murderers. But there are more similarities between you and this man than you think. None of us are without sin, and at one point, even if in infancy, we were all part of the devil’s gang. At baptism, we were pulled out of the devil’s ranks and he has been after us ever since. Some of us have done horrible things, while some of us have remained closer to the straight and narrow path. No matter; in the eyes of the devil, all of us have defected from his camp and have gone rogue. Like the man from this show, we are not being paranoid if we think the devil is under every rock. We might be mistaken at times, but we aren’t being paranoid. We are showing hyper vigilance by acknowledging that there are demonic criminals all around us who seek the ruin of our soul, like the St. Michael prayer so clearly says.

Now, luckily for us, we are not required to do this on our own. In fact, if we return to the passage from St. Peter, we see the first pope went on to say, “But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory in Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a little, will himself perfect you, and confirm you, and establish you” (1 Pt. 5:10). St. Peter does an incredible job demonstrating to us how we are to deal with the devil.

Firstly, he makes it very clear that we are to stay sober. This means that we must keep a clear mind and stay free from sins that take away our ability to reason. Secondly, he reminds us of the predatory nature of the devil. Thus, we should stand on guard, as the devil spends his time searching out our ruin. Thirdly, he tells us that our brothers experience



the same travail and that we must remain strong. Finally, he explains to us that it is from God that we receive the grace necessary to withstand the evil one. Our temporal suffering by way of temptation and spiritual battle is ordained for our perfection. Through triumph over trials, we may establish ourselves amongst the elect who spend eternity with God.

It is simply a fact that the devil is constantly after you, and the sooner you recognize this fact, the sooner you can get to work.

### **How Do We Defend Ourselves?**

*“Have courage and do not fear the assaults of the devil. Remember this forever; it is a healthy sign if the devil shouts and roars around your conscience, since this shows that he is not inside your will.”*

—St. Padre Pio

The simplest way to defend ourselves from Satan is to stay in a *state of grace*. This entire book is geared toward helping you live in a state of grace and thrive as part of the Church Militant. To be in a state of grace, we need to avoid committing *mortal sins*, and if we do commit them, we need to go to confession as soon as possible. When we commit a mortal sin, we essentially open a door to the demonic. This greatly weakens us in our efforts to defend against temptation, and over time, our intellect is darkened. Is it any wonder why our society seems insane? Given the proliferation of grave sins such as pornography and fornication—which many participate in often—it is likely that a large portion of people are persisting in sinful lifestyles that they know are

wrong. Whether or not someone has full knowledge of each individual sin, we can't know, but we know that Saint Paul attests to the inborn nature of the moral law in the hearts of all men when he compares Jews and Gentiles: "Who shew the work of the law written in their hearts, *their conscience bearing witness to them*, and their thoughts between themselves accusing, or also defending one another" (Rom 2:15, emphasis added). Whole swaths of people are literally less intelligent than they would otherwise be. Our society is sinful, therefore our society is stupid.

Mortal sins are serious sins that reject the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in our soul. The word *mortal* has its root in the word *mors*, which is the Latin word for death. When we commit a mortal sin, we are no longer in friendship with God and there is no room for God to dwell in our hearts. Mortal sin destroys in our soul the virtue of charity that is infused at Baptism and renewed by the sacrament of confession. The virtue of charity is our union with God. The Council of Trent declared that we maintain the virtues of faith and hope after we commit a mortal sin, both of which encourage us to seek out the sacrament of confession. But the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* explains that "whoever offends God, even by one mortal sin, instantly forfeits whatever merits he may have previously acquired through the sufferings and death of Christ, and is entirely shut out from the gates of heaven." Just one unconfessed mortal sin is sufficient for damnation and eternal hellfire. This is because we have broken our relationship with God through charity. Thus, we should clarify the three stipulations required in order to meet the criteria for a sin to be mortal:

1. *Serious or grave matter.* This often means that the action is clearly evil or severely disordered. This would include many common activities: looking at evil images, contraception, intentionally missing Mass, recreational drug use, etc.
2. *Sufficient knowledge or reflection.* This means we know we are committing a sinful act and that we have had sufficient reflection for it to be intentional. Some may tell you that the knowledge portion renders most sins less serious than a mortal sin because most people do not have a knowledge of the Faith. It is worth nothing that knowledge does *not* mean understanding. Furthermore, nowhere in any dogmatic teaching or Scripture does it say that we must have specific theological knowledge in order to commit mortal sin. Everyone is born with a sense of the natural law, meaning that an understanding of morality, even if imperfect, is built into our nature. St. Paul says, “All have sinned, and do need the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption, that is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 3:23–24).
3. *Full consent of the will.* This means that we must freely choose to commit a grave sin in order for it to be a mortal sin. If there is any significant impediment to our will, then it is possible that the sin is not mortal but only venial (venial sins are less serious sins).

### **How to Distinguish Mortal and Venial Sins**

*“To be silent when we are impelled to utter words injurious to God or to our neighbour, is an act of virtue; but to be silent in confessing our sins is the ruin of the soul.”*

—St. Alphonsus

It is true that at times we may not be certain if we have met the three necessary criteria. In this case, I would err on the side of caution and confess the sin. In fact, even venial sins should be confessed in order to gain graces to stop committing any sin at all. For example, I work with many other people, which means I need to be on guard against gossip and harmful backbiting. There have been times where I have at least passively participated in conversations that were rife with gossip. If I actively participated with the intent of denigrating someone’s character, then I could have committed the mortal sin of detraction—seeking to destroy a reputation. On the other hand, if I passively tolerated the insults and gossip, then I would be committing a venial sin rather than a mortal sin. This is because I didn’t fully participate in the sinful activity, but I failed to act virtuously. In this case, I would bring this to confession in order to obtain the graces to stop participating in gossip altogether. This is a little known fact about the sacrament: confession not only cleanses mortal sin but also gives grace to overcome sin in the future.

It is possible for a sin to be mortal in one circumstance and venial in another. It should be noted, however, that, as already stated from the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, only one mortal sin is necessary for us to forfeit heaven.

Most of our sins are not mortal, but virtually all people commit at least one mortal sin, if not more, throughout their life. Do not hedge your bets, and move swiftly to the sacrament of confession if you have any doubts. God will be pleased with your fervor for holiness, and you will grow closer to him through your efforts. Only be careful to guard yourself against the vice of scrupulosity.

Everyone has sinned (excluding Our Lord and Our Lady), and everyone is in need of redemption. The crucifixion of Our Lord Jesus Christ was for you as much as for anyone who has ever lived. There are some saints who have lived lives free of mortal sin, like St. Thérèse de Lisieux, but this is the exception. Do not count yourself among the exceptions. Ironically, the greatest saints who lived free of mortal sin viewed themselves as wretched sinners. Their humility propelled them to always rely on God's mercy in the confessional. St. Dominic Savio, a young pupil of St. John Bosco, died as a young boy who seems to have never committed a mortal sin. He had a motto: *Death before sin!* Adopt this motto, make it your own, and repeat it to yourself when tempted by the devil.

In later chapters, we will discuss specific ways to arm ourselves and our homes against the demonic, as well as ways to fortify ourselves against temptations to sin.

### **Ignorance Is Not Bliss**

*“Yes, dear Lord, if all the tortures that captives undergo in this land, if all the stark intensity of their sufferings should be my lot, I offer myself for it with all my heart.”*

—St. Jean de Brebeuf

There is no salvation outside of the Catholic Church. This is a hard teaching but a teaching nonetheless. In ages past, this was understood with clarity and conviction. Sadly, many Catholic laymen and clerics are made squeamish by this doctrine. However, it is the foundational truth that drives all missionary zeal and the desire to convert sinners. If the Catholic Church is not the only ark of salvation, then we can dispense with the demands of the one true Faith. Jesus Christ makes this very clear when he says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father, but by me” (Jn. 14:6). Notice he does not say, “I am one of the truths, I am one of the ways.” Jesus Christ is the only Savior, the only Messiah.

Without Christ, we are all damned, and we must accept this hard truth in order to see God face to face. Furthermore, Christ established the Catholic Church. Our Church is not an invisible assembly of anonymous Christians; it is a visible Church with sacraments and a hierarchy. There are things we must believe in order to be Catholic. Mere belief in Jesus Christ as Lord is not enough, regardless of what many Christians may profess. Catholic missionaries of the past understood this.

The North American Martyrs, including St. Jean de Brebeuf, St. Isaac Jogues, and their companions, all died brutal

deaths for the conversion of the native inhabitants they encountered. These men traveled across the Atlantic ocean and walked thousands of kilometers throughout the Great Lakes region. They did so in order that they might convert the pagan aboriginals, specifically the Huron, Algonquin, and Iroquois tribes.

At first, they had relative success in converting the Algonquins, but the Huron and Iroquois tribes were more hostile. Our insane culture has labeled all missionaries of the past as colonizers who sought to forcefully impose a civilization on the native people. But this is historically inaccurate when you analyze the lives of the martyrs. They wintered with the Algonquin tribe and adapted to their way of life. They lived in their dwellings, ate their food, and learned their crafts. Meanwhile, they taught them the Catholic faith, bringing them to baptism and saving their souls. If the North American Martyrs were concerned with any sort of colonization, it was a colonization of salvation.

Initially, Brebeuf had very little success with the Huron tribe, and because of this, he returned home, only to return years later. Throughout his unsuccessful first journey, he lived in extreme hardship, often going days without food. Why on earth did he return to such a tumultuous existence? He did so because he believed, rightly so, that the native people were at great risk of damnation if they were not baptized and incorporated into the Roman Catholic Church.

Speaking of their evangelization method, Brebeuf wrote that they began their catechizing efforts with the memorable truth that at death the immortal soul is separated from the body, going either to heaven or to hell. If you are ever told that it is uncharitable to speak so plainly of damnation

in evangelization efforts, please disregard that nonsense. True Christian charity desires the salvation of every soul. How can we preach the Good News if we do not make clear the bad news?

On one occasion, St. Isaac Jogues and a companion were captured by the Iroquois and beaten severely with knotted sticks. Their hair, beards, and nails were torn off, and their forefingers were bitten through. The Iroquois bit off the priests's index fingers and thumbs to render them incapable of offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. However, Pope Urban VIII granted Jogues special permission to offer Mass with mutilated hands, saying, "It would be unjust that a martyr for Christ should not drink the Blood of Christ." Some years into his journey, St. Isaac Jogues suffered martyrdom at the hands of the Iroquois when they hacked off his head with a tomahawk. After the death of Jogues, the Iroquois attacked the Huron community where St. Jean de Brebeuf was living. Brebeuf had experienced much more success on his second attempt with the Hurons than on his previous. They were converting and coming to know Our Lord through the sacraments.

The torture of St. Jean de Brebeuf and his companion at the hands of the Iroquois was as heinous as anything you could imagine. Through the humiliation of having every inch of their naked bodies beaten with sticks, St. Jean de Brebeuf continued to comfort his newly found spiritual children who witnessed his passion. Hatchets heated to a red-hot temperature were applied under their armpits and beside their bowels. Necklaces of smoldering blades were placed around their necks. The sadistic torturers then girdled them with bark soaked in pitch and resin (fire igniting



liquids) and set them ablaze. Through all of this, St. Jean de Brebeuf continued to preach the Gospel and to offer his life as a passion for the souls of the natives. The Iroquois were so enraged by the saving truth of Jesus Christ that they cut off his nose, gagged his mouth, and tore off his lips. The persecutors went on to inundate him and his priest companion with boiling water as a type of diabolical baptism. Large pieces of the priests' flesh were cut off their living bodies and roasted as food, again to mock the Blessed Sacrament of the Most Holy Eucharist. The martyrs finally died as their hearts were cut out of their chests while they were still living. Like St. Longinus, the Roman centurion who thrust the spear into the side of Christ, the persecutors and tribes who witnessed this death converted to the one true Faith.

We spit in the face of the North American Martyrs if we pretend that salvation is achieved by all. We make a mockery of their martyrdom if we spread the foolish notion that ignorance of Christ excuses a man from hellfire. St. Jean, St. Isaac, and their companions gave of themselves in the most gruesome of fashions in order to save just one soul. They knew that ignorance is not bliss and that only one unconfessed mortal sin or unbaptized soul can make a man the eternal property of the prince of darkness. Do not fall for the devil's deception that all religions are sufficient for salvation. Waste not even a moment with the absurd notion that ignorance excuses a man from his sins.