

LE ROYAUME

My rule of life through devotion to Traditional French
Catholicism and the Renaissance of Catholic France

by

Walter Adams

Le Royaume

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Joan and Thérèse Publications

Dedicated to

Josey and Emery, who make up my cherished family

About the Author

These writings are personal reflections on my conversion to and ensuing spiritual journey through the Catholic Church.

I hold an undergraduate degree in Economics from Princeton University and a Master's Degree in Public and Private Management from Yale University.

I am married and the father of one child. Though raised a Methodist in the Bible Belt and surrounded with evangelicalism as a youth, I converted to the Catholic Church prior to my marriage in 1985.

Touched deeply by the life of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and imbued with a filial love for Mary, I set out on a life-long spiritual journey to "seek first" Christ's Kingdom with Thérèse as my guide.

Eventually led to confront my inner most being on that lonely, mystical hill of Calvary, I discovered through Mary's maternal guidance and Thérèse's sisterly care that Jesus had called another mighty saint to walk with me and to protect me through that dark and awful night of self-confrontation that leads us in Christ to true freedom. That saint, a spiritual sister to Thérèse, was Joan of Arc.

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Forward

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)

St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) – German Jewish Philosopher and Saint

August 9 is the Feast Day of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, known familiarly in philosophical circles as Edith Stein. The reader no doubt will sense her strong influence in the development of this book and rule of life.

Edith was a German Jewish philosopher who studied under Edmund Husserl, the father of modern day Phenomenology. She later converted to the Catholic Faith, joined the Discalced Carmelite Order (the same as St. Thérèse of Lisieux), and eventually was martyred by the Nazis. Out of fear, friends moved her from Germany to a convent in the Netherlands, where, at the time, it was thought that she would be safe from the growing menace of the German regime. Sadly, we now know that nowhere in Europe would one be safe from the scourge. They found her, removed her from the convent, took her to Auschwitz, and executed her.

I refer to St. Teresa most frequently as Edith Stein. This certainly is not meant to deflect from her recognized holiness as a Catholic saint nor from the proper use of her Carmelite name. The reason is because she has had the most profound impact on my life precisely in the realm of philosophy where she is best known by her birth name. Edith not only was a student of Husserl, he was her mentor. She cared for him in his ailing life prior to death. Phenomenologists both in Europe and the United States recognized the value of her contributions. They asked her to continue developing the field even after joining the Carmelites, a task she received permission to do.

One astonishing aspect to her work is the integration of Phenomenology with medieval Scholasticism. After joining the Church, she ran headlong into St. Thomas Aquinas, the master of

Scholastic philosophy. Rather than abandon her previous life's work, she set about reconciling the two.

"Her philosophical development, though quite consistent, clearly falls into two phases: first phenomenology and then a synthesis of scholasticism and phenomenology... Internally it represents the merger of two philosophies which was prompted by her desire for system and is the result of the efforts of many years to portray the basic framework of St. Thomas's philosophy from a phenomenological perspective." ~ Introduction to Edith Stein. *Potency and Act* (The Collected Works of Edith Stein) (Kindle Locations 67-68 and 103-104). Kindle Edition.

Edith saw this as an expression of her mission in life. She resisted moving back into psychology, another of her fields of expertise, as this might prevent her from fulfilling that mission.

"...she wrote Finke on January 6, that if she accepted she 'would have to teach psychology, and once again I would lack the freedom for what seems to be my proper mission: critically comparing scholastic and recent philosophy.'" ~Edith Stein. *Potency and Act* (The Collected Works of Edith Stein) (Kindle Locations 116-118). Kindle Edition.

She took it upon herself to demonstrate that both philosophical expressions work in concert and together add to the foundation of human education.

"In this letter Stein gives us a first reason why she desired to be clear about the philosophical mission of her life: all her writings were leading up to 'laying the foundations of education.'" ~ Edith Stein. *Potency and Act* (The Collected Works of Edith Stein) (Kindle Locations 162-163). Kindle Edition.

Though I knew about Edith Stein for many years, I only felt the intensity and depth of her influence in my life as I began integrating her thoughts into my own writings. She fascinated me by her discussion of the writings of the mystic St. John of the Cross in her work *The Science of the Cross*. Many spiritual books can be found on John of the Cross, but this was the first time I had come across such powerful philosophical interpretations. I added more and more of Edith's brilliant insights to my own impoverished spiritual and philosophical models. Before long, Edith Stein blossomed into a prominent influence in the development of my own thinking. She elevated my thought.

Not long ago, a friend of ours we came to know through my writings, a Captain in the Navy, wrote me from her current assignment in Iraq. She, too, had a burgeoning devotion to Edith's works and had noticed it in mine. She asked me how we normal folks were to grasp the immense expansiveness of her mind. My response was that, of course, I struggle with keeping up as well; however, the biggest help in reading Edith Stein is to understand her mission as referenced above. Her language and terminology reflect her Phenomenological background. It helps to become somewhat familiar with the field and its key terms while studying this "phenomenal" mind.

Edith Stein single handedly re-oriented my work as I anticipate its direction into the decade of my 60s. She has bequeathed to me a divinely inspired philosophical garment to place discreetly over my less honorable work, that the poorness and inadequacies of my writings might be more efficacious than otherwise. She opened the door for me to understand the natural philosophical in light of its relationship to the supernatural.

“A rational understanding of the world, that is, a metaphysics—in the end, surely, the intention, tacit or overt, of all philosophy—can be gained only by natural and supernatural reason working together.” ~ Stein, Edith. Knowledge and Faith (The Collected Works of Edith Stein, vol. 8) . ICS Publications. Kindle Edition.

I am thankful that God inspired me by the magnificent mind of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. She deserves to be highlighted in the Forward to this book. St. Teresa, pray for us!

Introduction

St. Joan of Arc leading me to Le Royaume

St. Joan of Arc leading me to Le Royaume

One of the truly remarkable aspects of Roman Catholicism is the incredible view, that is, the world view through which we perceive our state of happiness. As I stand in the Church and look out, I see panoramic landscapes with beautiful vistas that include roaring rivers, mysterious forests, contemplative plains, majestic mountains, and deep echoing valleys. I do not see different things from what others see; I simply see things differently. This alternative view compels me to ask the question of "Why" with as much fervor, or more, than the question of "How."

That is why I can never leave this land, no matter how much sin spoils and pollutes the scenery. Many refuse to journey through this marvelous land because of the sins of its inhabitants; I refuse to leave despite these same sins. The land is beautiful and life-giving; I don't want to leave. I only want us to take better care of its environment. It would make no sense to leave, for at the end of the journey is Heaven, a place and the reality long forgotten or ignored by the modern mind. Reaching Heaven is the only point of life. This journey through Catholicism is the only way to get there.

One of the most startling discoveries I made in this inspiring land was other people. I am referring not only to people we see in our local parishes and churches but to people whom we call saints. Saints are very real people. They walked the path of dogma before us and have reached that reality called Heaven. And the King of Kings, through Whom all things were created, the Savior of the human race, Jesus Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity, true man and true God, gives us the help and friendship of these wonderful souls as we make our journey. We walk not alone, but in the reality of friends here in our material world and also with our friends in the heavenly world, that is, the saints. St. Thérèse of

Lisieux, a French Carmelite nun who died in 1897, saved my life in 1984. That is the mysterious and mystical world of the saints and Roman Catholicism.

With all of this in mind, I would like to say a few words about St. Joan of Arc. Joan of Arc lived a life of evangelical simplicity while accomplishing astounding miracles in God's name. In only seven weeks, she permanently crippled the awful and terrifying Hundred Years War by her victories, or, as I like to say it: Jesus Christ saved France through the life sacrifice of Joan of Arc.

This astounding person lived one of the most intriguing lives in all of human history. An unlettered girl of seventeen, she was given command of the armies of France, defeated the armies of England, and led Charles VII through enemy territory to Rheims to be crowned king. She did all of this in obedience to the voices of Saint Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and Saint Margaret of Antioch, who represented the King of Kings. There is really no one comparable to her in all of history, save Jesus Christ Himself and the Holy Virgin who gave Him birth. Afterwards, her reward was to be tried for heresy in a corrupt, English and Burgundian kangaroo inquisitional court while Charles VII, the king whom she had miraculously just crowned, sat idly by doing nothing to save her. She was cruelly burned at the stake, posthumously exonerated a quarter of a century later, and five hundred years after that declared an official saint.

It took twenty-two years for my goodwill imbued with the hearts of St. Thérèse and the Virgin Mary to come to fruition in sanctifying grace. When I made this act of true repentance, the King and the Queen of Heaven sent St. Joan of Arc to lead me. Joan of Arc has inspired me with hope and courage to move forward on my

journey with St. Thérèse as my sister, the Mother of God as my mother, and the Lord of Lords as my brother and savior.

I am in awe of her life and live in deep gratitude for her role in my own life as I stumble along joyfully on the path of the dogmatic creed of Roman Catholicism. Joan is a sister, a friend, a spiritual leader. She was given to me by the Virgin Mary to guide me according to the will of her Son. My sins still befall me; however, my friends here on earth and from the Heavens beyond help pull me up, clean me off, and set me back straight. I think the reason I have been given this help is simply that I am too weak and confused to do it myself. I say God bless that. I would not want to make this journey any other way.

Légimité

The genus of Le Royaume

Légitimité and Le Royaume

“...in fixing the genus of a thing, we subsume it under a higher universal, of which it is a species.” ~ Wikipedia

Légitimité in our sense is the spiritual and philosophical genus we call Royaume France and below which the more specific Le Royaume, the Kingdom Blessed of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, is subsumed as a species. Légitimité in our definition of Royaume France is the spirit of St. Mary Magdalene who carried the contemplative spirituality of the apostolic age from the foot of the cross to what we know today as France. Through Mary Magdalene, Our Lord consecrated what would become France to the Immaculate Heart of Mary through the Magdalene’s life of contemplation in Provence. “Légitimite” Royaume France, therefore, provides the higher form through which the lower form of Le Royaume branches out. French Légitimité in our model is a form in potency of the divine order of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in the mind of God which acts in time and space as the eternal Kingdom of Catholic and Royal France in the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and which speciates here as Joan and Thérèse’s Le Royaume. The latter is my rule of life and summation of devotion to St. Joan and St. Thérèse and the subject matter of this book. Légitimite Royaume France drives my devotion to these saintly sisters, and my devotion to them, in turn, reflects the former.

Royaume France and Le Royaume developed independently of the French Catholic Légitimiste movement; however, we quickly and comfortably began to shadow the Légitimistes and saw in its substance the same spirit. The ongoing reconciliation reflected here is an attempt to demonstrate the congruity and spiritual brotherhood between the two.

What is the Royal *Légitimiste* Heart?

We continue to bring together the Royal Hearts of RoyaumeFrance with one of its key inspirations, *Légitimité*. A succinct working definition of either is challenging. *Légitimité* in general stands for organizing society according to the hierarchy of objective Truth as opposed to the amorphous premises and first philosophies of the egalitarian, revolutionary political Left – Right spectrum. *Légitimité* refuses to allow the revolutionary republican left and right “wings” to dictate the terms or to establish the premises of the socio-political debate. For the *Légitimiste*, Truth leads to a free society, not the other way around. The modern era’s moral license, called “freedom” by progressive revolutionaries, leads to oppression precisely because the revolutionary order ignores Truth as the primary principle. Therefore, Truth precedes freedom, not the other way around, and all are subject to the Truth, even a Monarch. It holds that all, no matter one’s religion, culture, country of origin, net worth, or social status are subject to the universal, objective and immutable natural laws of moral conduct established by our Creator as a form of Moral Realism.

The only “*légitimate*” authority is that which observes, presupposes, and subjects itself to the Natural Law, and protects the rights of all under its authority to live in peace and freedom by that same Law. From this first degree of *Légitimité*, the Natural Law, which anyone may assimilate, we have two more, ascending upward and encompassing the religious-minded in general followed by the Catholic Christian in particular who acknowledges Christ as King and our final authority over all by virtue of all things being created through him.

The Royal Heart embraces these same authoritarian concepts yet expresses them from a spiritual standpoint. For the Royal Heart, the Légitimite Monarchy is more than a socio-political institution; it is a spiritual vocation.

“The Royal Heart is one that is born not of earth but of the Heavenly Kingdom. We are unable to explain to others our devotion to the Monarchy without revealing a few of the sacred rooms in the castle of our soul. For, devotion to the Monarchy is much more than a devotion to an earthly socio-political model, it is an outpouring of our love for the true Form of the Kingdom of Heaven with its Divine Order beginning with Jesus Christ as King of all Kings and cascading downward, in a Divine Aristocracy, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary with the rest of the communion of saints.” ~ Beyond the Counterrevolution, Walter Adams

Thus, there is a natural synchronicity between the two. They tend to evolve together as like two vines winding up a post. The spiritual Royal Heart points to the institutional Légitimé, and vice-versa. Both are spiritual and institutional with each speaking to a particular aspect of the Form that we believe to be heavenly.

How, then, do we develop and bring forth what we will now call The Royal Légitimiste Heart? Our model at RoyaumeFrance combined with Légitimé suggests the following ascension, or ladder.

1. Holy Realism – What is objectively true and outside ourselves in the mind of God should form the foundation of our understanding of the world. The context for understanding through observation and scientific inquiry must be the ultra-real heavenly universals. This would be as opposed to forming an understanding of the world solely through scientific inquiry and demanding that

the heavenly universals “prove” themselves before being believed. The former was the basis for Catholic Faith through the first half of Christian history.

2. Empathic Devotion – We seek to see the world as St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse see it. Their understanding becomes our understanding; their viewpoint becomes our viewpoint.

3. Goodwill – Through Empathic Devotion, we accept the truths of our Holy Realism with a heart of goodwill. We must seek to unite ourselves to them and to sacrifice all that prevents us from doing so. This heart of goodwill opens the heavenly floodgates of Catholic Hope, which is the desire to obtain these heavenly truths. It makes our empathy with the saints almost primordial since we share God, who is all in all. We see this unity with heaven as a pathway through unity with the hearts of the saints (*dulia*), the Blessed Virgin Mary (*hyper-dulia*), and to the Sacred Heart of Jesus (*latria*).

4. Intellect – Our desire for unity of hearts with the saints should direct our intellectual ideation and conceptual framework. We perceive and model what is “true” on earth by understanding what is “true” in heaven. This is the intellectual activity of the City of God, as oppose to that of the City of Man, whereby what is “true” on earth dictates what must be “true” in heaven. Goodwill directs the intellect by pointing to that which it desires and knows to be true, and the intellect then informs the will that we might “seek first the Kingdom.” Through the acts of our will, we bring the Kingdom of God “on earth as is in heaven” rather than “in heaven as on earth” which is the path to perdition.

A biblical model representing the ascending ladder above would be that of the Old Testament heroine Judith. Faced with

approaching defeat, her city elders presented a challenge for God, that they would wait five days, and if no heavenly help came, they would surrender. To this she replied, giving us an astonishing formula for Holy Realism, Goodwill, and Intellect that must be that of the Royal Légitimiste Heart.

“Listen to me, rulers of the people of Beth’uli’a! What you have said to the people today is not right; you have even sworn and pronounced this oath between God and you, promising to surrender the city to our enemies unless the Lord turns and helps us within so many days. Who are you, that have put God to the test this day, and are setting yourselves up in the place of m God among the sons of men? You are putting the Lord Almighty to the test—but you will never know anything! You cannot plumb the depths of the human heart, nor find out what a man is thinking; how do you expect to search out God, who made all these things, and find out his mind or comprehend his thought? No, my brethren, do not provoke the Lord our God to anger. For if he does not choose to help us within these five days, he has power to protect us within any time he pleases, or even to destroy us in the presence of our enemies. Do not try to bind the purposes of the Lord our God; for God is not like man, to be threatened, nor like a human being, to be won over by pleading. Therefore, while we wait for his deliverance, let us call upon him to help us, and he will hear our voice, if it pleases him.”

“Now therefore, brethren, let us set an example to our brethren, for their lives depend upon us, and the sanctuary and the temple and the altar rest upon us. In spite of everything let us give thanks to the Lord our God, who is putting us to the test as he did our forefathers. Remember what he did with Abraham, and how he tested Isaac, and what happened to Jacob in Mesopota’mia in Syria, while he was keeping the sheep of La’ban, his mother’s brother. For

he has not tried us with fire, as he did them, to search their hearts, nor has he taken revenge upon us; but the Lord scourges those who draw near to him, in order to admonish them.”

~ Judith, Chapter 8, Ignatius Press; Midwest Theological Forum. The Didache Bible: with Commentaries Based on the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Kindle Locations 24390-24399 and 24409-24413). Ignatius Press. Kindle Edition.

Holy Realism

Holy Realism as a foundation for understanding Le Royaume

Holy Realism – How devotion to Mary’s Catholic and Royal France can evangelize the world

We can evangelize the world most effectively through the Old Evangelization, the one through which the Church built Christendom in Europe, followed by the New Christendom in the Americas, while evangelizing the far corners of the world in between in the model of St. Francis Xavier. Holy Realism drove the Old Evangelizers, and, in particular, inspired them through the burning fire of the Holy Spirit, Who kept before their eyes the form of the supernatural truth that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church. ¹

In the modern age where Christendom seems dead and the notion of Extra Ecclesiam Nulla Salus an empty paleoconservative throwback to a bygone era, one might be excused for wondering just how devotion to Christendom, the Catholic Monarchy, and more precisely to the Renaissance of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Catholic and Royal France could have any practical impact on a society that more and more perceives a Catholic Church that no longer believes such things. Yet, this return to the Old Evangelization, to Holy Realism, and to that fire of the Holy Spirit previously mentioned is, in this writer’s mind, the most effective way to carry out Our Lord’s command to make disciples of all the nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to obey all that He commanded us (Matthew 28:19-20). Trying to soft-peddle and make ourselves “relevant” to the modern secular atheistic culture simply will not get the job done. To this end, we will review Le Royaume’s

¹ Desire and Deception. Coulombe, Charles. 3rd Ed., ebook, Tumbler House, 2009

mission and how we hope to evangelize for Our Lord Jesus Christ through it.

Below are the Mission and Vision statements for Le Royaume.

Le Royaume's Mission Statement:

"Le Royaume's mission is to inspire souls through Truth, Beauty, and Goodness to seek the subjective application of the objective fruits of Christ's Redemption in sanctifying grace by a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith and to develop a spiritual Vision that will open their hearts to efficacious actual graces that will aid them in growing and persevering in that sanctifying grace and in developing a Catholic worldview in social, cultural, and political affairs.

Le Royaume primarily fulfills her mission by inspiring souls to engage in a contemplative Eucharistic journey in total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary and through the holy, beautiful combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Through the influence of the primary means, Le Royaume fulfills her mission secondarily by evangelically advocating God's love through the beautiful spiritual pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism and devotion to the Renaissance of Catholic France."

In short, "To Jesus through Mary in the friendship and sisterly care of Sts. Joan and Thérèse!"

Le Royaume's over-arching Vision established by Jesus Christ for the universal Church:

"Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well." (Mt 6:33) "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy

Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”
(Matthew 6:9-10).

Le Royaume’s particular Vision Statement born of the traditional mystical relationship between the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Joan of Arc, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and the Kingdom of France:

“The sovereign establishment on earth as it is in Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Kingdom of France bathed in the mystically beautiful light of the combined spirituality of Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux.”

The Vision statements are clearly ultra-real forms that we know through our Faith exist in the perfection of God’s Mind and in the Heavens He created. The over-arching Vision is an ultra-real directive from Our Lord Himself, while the particular Vision regarding France is an ultra-real directive from St. Michael, St. Catherine, and St. Margaret to St. Joan of Arc.

The Redemption in the Mission is an act of eternal significance based on the ultra-realism of God’s saving plan. The need to make a dogmatic confession of Catholic Faith in order to subjectively apply the objective fruits of that Redemption to be saved also reflects the Holy Realism of the necessity of the Catholic Church and that outside the Catholic Church there is no salvation.

The Holy Realism built into all of this commands us through the “obedience to the Faith” (Romans 1:5) to submit our intellect to the truths revealed to us by God. Faith, the teachings of the Church, and the commands of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:20) form our intellects (Good Will before the Intellect). They become the premises upon which we build our logic and rationality. They are the premises upon which we decide what is true in the world and what is false. We “believe so that we may understand” (St. Anselm of Canterbury). We do not first see if we can understand before

accepting the revelation of God in Christ and through the Catholic Church He founded (The Intellect before Good Will).²

The success of Le Royaume's mission, and we might argue of that of all the Church, hinges on this point. Those who follow the path of Holy Realism will find God and within them a spirit of counterrevolution against the prevailing winds of modern culture. Those who reject Holy Realism and seek to conform the commands and teachings of Christ to their own limited and skewed understanding first, likely are doomed to a life of revolutionary rejection of God and willing cooperation with the modern culture and the spirit of this world. This Holy Realism and the acceptance of the Church as the Body and Bride of Christ and the only institution on the face of this earth founded by Him as the sole means to salvation are essential points of evangelization and for winning souls for Christ.

Through Le Royaume's mission grounded in Holy Realism, the Holy Spirit molds us in will and intellect through the latria of Eucharistic Adoration, the hyper-dulia of True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the dulia of devotion to St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. We are led into truth as opposed to defining truth for ourselves and then attempting to fit the Church into our limited and finite schemata.

How, then, do we marry the ultra-real to our day-to-day living so as to "develop a spiritual Vision that will open their hearts to efficacious actual graces that will aid them in growing and persevering in that sanctifying grace and in developing a Catholic worldview in social, cultural, and political affairs"? Here Le

² Ibid.

Royaume applies a bit of paleo conservatism grounded in tradition and history. Because of our great love for and devotion to Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux, we find our hearts drawn fervently to France as the Eldest Daughter of the Church. We observe how France historically, though however imperfectly, drew its life from the ultra-real vision given to her by St. Joan. We observe how this ultra-real vision formed their customs, their celebrations, and their political attitudes, particularly toward their devotion to the Catholic Monarchy. Through a paleoconservative lens, we see a model for our own lives here in the material world. This is the power in devotion to the Renaissance of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Catholic France. This is why we refer to it as a pedagogy. This devotion becomes a path, a guiding light, by which we ascend St. John of the Cross' Mt. Carmel to the center of St. Teresa of Avila's Interior Castle, to which Le Royaume refers as the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Christ reigns in all his glory.

In no way do we accept criticism that we are mere Romantics who hold a naive view of Medieval France. We are well aware of the shortcomings in Christendom. However, the criticism misses a crucial point. Whereas Christendom was far from perfect, it did have the true ultra-real form as its goal. Christendom lives despite our having killed its manifestation on earth. Because Christendom is a true ultra-real form, she will resurrect. It is our duty to fight the spiritual battle for that resurrection. Conversely to Christendom, our modern culture and political process boast of nothing but revolutionary forms inspired by Hell. Their end is perdition.

Thus, we are far from Romanticism. We are grounded in the ultra-real forms given to us by Christ and through His only Church. Our paleoconservative pedagogical model in the existing material order is "the Blessed Virgin Mary's Kingdom of France bathed in

the mystically beautiful light of the combined spirituality of Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux.”

This devotional method can work on a universal basis, in ways not at all related to Catholic and Royal France (from Le Royaume’s same Vision and Mission statement):

“Le Royaume does not assume Traditional French Catholicism to be normative for the Church as a whole nor superior to any other focused interest. On the contrary, our interest in French Catholic spirituality leads us to appreciate the richness of cultural expression throughout the universal Church. The more we love Le Royaume de France, the more we come to appreciate the unique roles other cultures play in the Church and what the Church does in uniting us all as a family in the Faith.”

Let those of us with a French Catholic and Royal Heart go forward then to evangelize the world through our Traditional French Catholic spirituality.

“Using the historically, traditionally established mystical relationship between the Kingdom of France and the Immaculate Heart of Mary as its model and foundation, Le Royaume seeks to restore the preeminence of the Roman Catholic Church in the hearts of men and women and through the renewal of hearts, to further that preeminence in government, culture, and society at large.”

Holy Realism, Catholic Hope, St. Joan and St. Thérèse

The key to Catholic Hope is Holy Realism. “For, true fulfillment and joy come not in understanding how to live; they come through seeking that for which we would die. That for which we would die is that in which we truly hope” (From my book, *Seek First the Kingdom – The March of Hope*). That for which we would die must be objectively real and outside of us; otherwise, we do not Hope virtuously in the Kingdom of God, we hope basely in ourselves and the Kingdom of Man. To “get out of ourselves,” into the Kingdom of God, we need Holy Realism.

St. John of the Cross teaches us that “one can only hope for what one does not possess, hope will be the more perfect the less one possesses.” (Stein). In fact, St. Teresa Benedicta refers to John of the Cross’s writings as demonstrations of Holy Realism:

...“the original inner receptivity of the soul reborn in the Holy Spirit. Whatever the soul encounters is received in an appropriate manner and with corresponding depth, and finds in the soul a living, mobile, docile energy that allows itself to be easily and joyfully led and molded by that which it has received, unhampered by any mistaken inhibitions and rigidity. Such realism, when it leads a holy soul to accept the truths of faith, becomes the science of the saints. If the mystery of the cross becomes its inner form, it turns into a science of the cross.” “ (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

This Holy Realism is the key to unlocking the mysteries of the Kingdom of God “on earth as it is in Heaven” which is, in itself, a statement of Holy Realism from the very lips of Our Lord. The Realism of which I (and Our Lord in the prayer he taught us) speak is decidedly Platonic and not Aristotelian. Platonic Extreme Realism is that of St. Augustine and St. Anselm along with the Church in

general prior to the 13th century.³ Aristotelian Moderate Realism is that of St. Thomas Aquinas (whom I love and who has been enormously influential on me) and innumerable saints and scholars since him. Aquinas' "baptism" of Aristotle made the latter the standard for Catholic Theology; though, Aquinas did not abandon Extreme Realism himself. He simply brought us a wealth of new insights from "the philosopher," as he termed Aristotle. It was not, perhaps, Aquinas replacing one with the other as much as it was we who floundered on understanding the value of both. Let us not blame Aquinas if we are dull students.

This distinction is vitally important. Without Platonic Realism and its insistence on the reality of universals objectively outside and distinct from us, we will never move from opinion to belief. Without moving from opinion to belief in an objective universal outside ourselves, we will never "hope for what one does not possess." We will always possess it, as an opinion in our own mind. No one wants to die for their opinion. The Moderate Realism of Aristotle leaves the universal forms in our own minds, in our own possession. Therefore, we never truly hope. We merely have opinions (even very strong opinions that we might mistake for true belief) that lead to hopeful thinking rather than true Faith (belief in that which is objectively outside ourselves) that leads to true Hope (in what we do not possess since it resides objectively outside ourselves).

This is precisely the "new world view" I received from St. Joan of Arc on my journey along The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed (from Seek First the Kingdom):

³ Coulombe, Charles, Desire and Deception. Formerly footnoted.

Joan of Arc was the chosen guide
On the path of the Dogmatic Creed next
No one can see the Kingdom
Without Hope that forms our desire

“Joan of Arc will lead you”
Spoke my saintly sister Thérèse
“To a new world view”
“Your actions belie your words of faith!”

“Joan of Arc acts
According to her faith”
“She is no practical non-believer!”
Saintly Thérèse smiled with eyes dancing

“Unlike her, brother,
You honor God only with lips!”
“You hope in yourself” Thérèse continued
“While whispering faith in God”
“You cannot see the Kingdom
With your old point of view”

“Joan of Arc will show you
The glorious new world view
That will animate you with love
And create the appropriate desire in you”

My “new world view” leading to a powerful, life-changing new desire was a radical new dimension using Holy Realism as my new eye-glass. It is like holding a lens to your eye reversed such that everything is blurred and then turning it over to see with vivid distinction. The Moderate Realism that put the intellect before the will was blurry and insufficient:

The Dance of Freedom was to continue on
The trail of the Dogmatic Creed
Stretched further...
Faith had not yet animated me

Turning the lens over and putting my will before my intellect (Platonic Extreme Realism), I allowed St. Joan of Arc to lead me into truth by plan of the divine will and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary as Mediatrix of All Graces. Under Moderate Realism, I balked. Flipping the lens over to Extreme Realism gave me the clear new world view enabling my will to march forward and through that act of will to be taught through the intellect under St. Joan's care and guidance.

The Freedom Dance continues merrily on...
Imagine my astonishment
When the Queen announced
Through my saintly sister Thérèse
That Joan of Arc was to the fore...

Holy Realism gave me "hope for what I did not possess." It gave me a vision of "that for which I would die" rather than seeking simply to "understand how to live." That movement of the will then subjected the intellect "to be easily and joyfully led and molded by that which it has received, unhampered by any mistaken inhibitions and rigidity." (Stein)

What then, is the result?

"Such realism, when it leads a holy soul to accept the truths of faith, becomes the science of the saints. If the mystery of the cross becomes its inner form, it turns into a science of the cross." " (The

Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

**Holy Realism – My journey with St. Joan of Arc began with
“I believe so that I may understand”**

Credo ut intelligam – “I believe so that I may understand.” (St. Anselm of Canterbury)

Continuing with this theme of the Extreme Realist “new world view” I received through the guidance of St. Joan of Arc by the Divine Will and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we press forward on the March of Hope toward the Kingdom along The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

St. Anselm’s motto above, similarly to St. Augustine’s “Believe so that you may understand,” sums up the effect of the clear lens of Platonic Extreme Realism through which we see the Kingdom of God more distinctly and with far more definition and color than through the fuzzier Moderate Realism of Aristotle, or, worst of all, the opaque blackness of secular materialism. When we read a sign through a fuzzy, backwards lens, we know the letters exist; however, that knowledge does us little good in terms of interpreting the letters. We know enough to believe that the sign will tell us how we should proceed, but we remain confused and therefore unsteady in our steps and unsure about which direction we should walk. On the contrary, when we reverse the lens and see clearly, we understand what the letters mean and walk with confidence.

Catholic Christian Platonic Realism, as understood by St. Augustine and St. Anselm and seemingly forgotten in the modern era, reverses the fuzzy lens requiring that we know and understand before we can believe (intellect before will), such that “we believe so that we might understand” (will before intellect). Our good will clears our sight, and we then know whom to follow and which forks

in the road to take. We know how we should form our intellect. It gives us an authentic point of view from which to form our intellect. "Our point of view is the eye-glass through which we peer into the night as did king Gilgamesh; it is the foundation for our actions, words, and intellectual development. Our point of view leads us to decide whose footprints we will follow" (from my book, *Seek First the Kingdom – The March of Hope*). With our good will, we are willing to be led into truth following the footprints of the saints, rather than demanding that we understand truth before we are willing to believe. This is why without Faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11:6). Faith leads us to Hope. We do not think our way to Hope. We believe that we might know how to think. There, we find the theological virtue of Hope.

This is why it was important that my journey on the Trail of the Freedom Dance, as told in *Journey to Christendom – The Freedom Dance* (my first book), came first. The certainty of faith I received on the evening of my conversion, the Feast Day of St. Thérèse, brought me out of the Dark Forest of materialism and into the sure light of the "Son" on the trail. The certainty of Faith she gave me through her intercession and care helped me stumble along until the moment when Jesus Christ rewarded my good will and opened the gates to a panoramic view. From chapter 12 of *Journey to Christendom – The Freedom Dance*:

"Oh you see, dear brother," she (St. Thérèse)

Slowed for me

"It is the very certainty that makes you

Free"

"You are free to act, others only to

Speculate"

“For so many in the Dark Forest
From where you came” she cried out
“Are slaves to useless arguments
And words”
“Always wondering if they are right,
Never free to dance”
“Or so often” she continued on
“They wear the chains of power
Driven arguments”
“Trying to prove, no less, to
Themselves their own thoughts”
“For they see” she finally stopped to
Look at me square
“All things in themselves, they are
Their own gods, you see”
“Lost to mortality and speculation,
But we have a certainty we trust”

That certainty that I came to trust led me by the grace of God
Our Savior to the March of Hope with St. Joan of Arc.

St. Thérèse’s care over my soul and her guidance and protection on my spiritual journey “To Christendom,” (a real Universal) brought me step-by-step to the gates of the Kingdom as I stumbled and struggled to see through the backwards, fuzzy lens of Moderate Realism that held these universals in my own mind, grounded in my subjective understanding and resulting in mere opinions and trepidation. Yet, despite my doubts, opinions, and fears, St. Thérèse guided me through her own lens by the Divine Will and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This is the clear view in the Kingdom of God. On July 17, 2006, the day we celebrate

St. Joan of Arc's victorious entry into Rheims, that gate opened, and I could see a Kingdom, a Castle in the distance through St. Thérèse and St. Joan's lenses. I knew that this Kingdom was real; it is an objective universal outside myself. I knew that this Kingdom was from all eternity in the Mind of God as an objective reality. It was Extreme. And it was Real. To put it again in the words of Seek First the Kingdom – The March of Hope:

“Set your hearts on his kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well.’

How this majestic proclamation rang through my soul! It was as if Our Lord and Our Lady wrote a personal prescription to heal my devastated heart, a heart broken into tiny pieces as the result of seeking first in my life everything other than God's kingdom. This was the verse that imbued my heart throughout the balance of the retreat. It was my personal direction from the Virgin Mary.

‘Seek first the Kingdom of God’ was my new first philosophy and driving force. It became the foundation for a new world view. Just as I came to know during my conversion in 1984 that Jesus was truly present in the Eucharist, that Mary was the Mother of God and my Queen, and that St. Thérèse of Lisieux was my spiritual sister, I knew immediately at that retreat over twenty years later that my life would be put in order only by redirecting my priorities and all of my values in life toward the kingdom that Jesus Christ established.

I left the retreat with the sure knowledge that the answer to life's deepest questions, the pathway to peace and happiness, and the journey of hope to the great eternity promised by God require the rejection of the world as seen through the lenses of our modern culture. Only by orienting my life to the values, philosophies,

reasoning, culture, and spirit of Christ's kingdom would I find the restoration of my life here and the hope of life resurrected hereafter.

My world view changed. I now desired heaven."

Empathic Devotion

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – Overview

In this series I will relate the story of my journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux through the lens of the Carmelite spirituality of St. John of the Cross.

As St. John of the Cross' writings are far too rich and deep and substantive in truth for me to understand functionally, I will be relying on *The Science of the Cross* by St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein) as my reference. At this juncture on my own journey, a secondary resource is most helpful. Even though my intellect can assess the genius of St. Teresa Benedicta no more effectively than it can that of St. John of the Cross, the former developed her manuscript with weaker souls like me in mind. Having glimpsed the Ascent of Mt. Carmel as what would appear to be a peer of St. John's, Teresa Benedicta descends in charity to the rest of us that we might have more spiritual clarity and make progress more effectively and quickly through her insights into St. John of the Cross. For that, I am eternally grateful.

As intimated above, this series will not be academic, nor will it be anything other than the testimonial of a regular soul that desires to share its experience. This desire to share is driven by fraternal charity; however, it would be dishonest not to reveal that the ultimate driving force behind this writing is to systematize St. John within the framework of my own experience so that I might follow better the Divine will and love God more thoroughly. In short, writing is one of the critical activities that moves me along the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with my saintly sisters, Joan and Thérèse. I need to write because my instinct is to organize and synthesize my thoughts in a kinesthetic, inductive process in order to understand what the Holy Spirit through the Immaculate Heart of Mary is

trying to teach me. God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, builds on our nature rather than destroys it according to St. Thomas Aquinas.

So, this will be the same story I have told in previous writings; however, this time it will be told through the more specific lens of Carmelite spirituality and only as a soul with no more gifts than mine can describe it.

The reason for this Carmelite focus is that my spirituality by nature and by the grace of God is an amalgam of the combined spiritualities of St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Joan of Arc. Their combined spirituality is for me “the most beautiful color in the Heavens.” It is through their intercession, sisterly care, sharing of spiritual gifts, guidance, and protection on my journey that they serve for me as a proximate means of God’s love through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. It should not be a surprise that St. Thérèse and St. Joan, kindred spirits themselves and both being Secondary Co-Patronesses of France, would lead me through the salvic Dogmas and Doctrines of the Church using the Carmelite spirituality of John of the Cross as a light on our path toward the Kingdom I was told to seek by the Blessed Virgin Mary.

My objective, beyond what I have explained above, is quite simply to inspire souls to seek the Kingdom themselves with the aid of St. Joan and St. Thérèse through a dogmatic confession of the Catholic faith and in total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – St. John of the Cross’ Mt. Carmel

My initial experience with Carmelite spirituality was similar to St. Teresa Benedicta’s.

“Picking up a book at random, Edith began to read. It was St. Teresa of Avila’s *The Book of Her Life*. Edith was so taken by this Spanish marvel of God’s grace that she read through the book, it seems, without a break. On closing the volume, she had to confess to herself: ‘This is truth.’ ” (*The Science of the Cross* by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

My own experience in this matter that led me to the exact same conclusion was with St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Only a few months after I joined the Catholic Church while in my late twenties, I visited a Catholic bookstore where I came across *The Story of a Soul* – the Autobiography of St. Thérèse of Lisieux. I had no idea who St. Thérèse of Lisieux was, but for some reason, I wanted to read that book. Later, as I was reading it, I thought to myself, “What she is saying is true. I really don’t understand what she is saying. But I know that what she is saying is true.” I had no idea that at that moment, I was beginning *My Journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed* with St. Thérèse. I desired to know that truth that she was saying, as I do still to this day, and my life with all of its joys, heartaches, successes, and failures would be, and still is, that journey into the depths of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ reigns in all of His glory.

Only a year later, on the Feast of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, I consecrated myself to the Immaculate Heart of Mary using the formula of St. Louis de Montfort. I already had met St. Joan of Arc prior to all of this. In the summer after my high school graduation, I joined a small group of classmates for a six-week study in Brittany,

France. Before heading back to the United States, we visited the island fortress of Mont Saint-Michel where stood before the chapel door a statue of St. Joan of Arc. I asked my teacher, "Who is that?" "Ah, c'est Jeanne d'Arc!" was her reply. Jeanne d'Arc and I had been introduced. I later would come to know that Joan of Arc was a kindred spirit with Thérèse, as the latter herself revealed.

So, once consecrated to Our Lady, I was all prepared, it seems, to begin my journey. St. Thérèse, St. Joan, and the most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary were imbued in my interior life which was then starting to be nourished by Jesus Christ through His Church and her sacraments. Whereas there is only one Church and one way to the Kingdom through Jesus Christ, there is, in fact, a wide variety in our approach. If you will excuse mixing a metaphor, just as a beautiful panoramic meadow by a lake in front of majestic mountains is made up of a wide variety of flowers, creeks, and trees, the panoramic Kingdom of God likewise consists of a wide variety of kindred souls making up the beautiful colors in the landscape. Which path through the meadow would we take? Who were my kindred souls? What spiritual DNA binds us together through the Holy Spirit?

The answer came through the initial step in my journey after reading St. Thérèse. My fascination with her spirituality led me to take on the challenge of reading the works of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, the founders of the Discalced Carmelites. Again, I had the "St. Teresa Benedicta" moment and the same as I had reading Thérèse's book. I did not understand them, but I knew that "what they said was truth."

Off we went, with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux leading me down the path that is the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed,

under the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin, and in the footsteps of St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross. These were my kindred souls. This was my family. This was Carmel, and even more specifically, it was Carmel through the combined spirituality of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, radiating that beautiful color in the field that would inspire hope in me through the faith I had received already from the overflow of Joan and Thérèse's spiritual gifts. This hope under the watchful eyes of my two saintly sisters would drive me forward into St. John's night and toward his Mt. Carmel.

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – departure, path, and goal

This St. Teresa Benedicta moment is critical in my understanding of the Journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. This trail is a very Carmelite path. It is a journey through a land so beyond human nature that it is darkness to the intellect. The light on this trail is so bright that we are unable to see. Yet, we do possess it; we do see, just not in a way sourced through our own efforts and exalted through our natural abilities. St. Teresa Benedicta's "This is truth" moment while reading St. Teresa of Avila was similar to my own with regard to reading St. Thérèse, "I do not understand what she is saying, but I know that what she is saying is true."

"I do not understand what she is saying, but I know that what she is saying is true" was my point of departure led by St. Thérèse. From that moment forward, I desired to know and live fully in that truth; though, the fullness of that goal cannot be known in this life. Over the years I certainly would go through many very dark valleys, feeling horrifyingly lost at times, before obtaining any natural sense of where I might be. Yet, St. Thérèse, with the Immaculate Virgin Mary and St. Joan of Arc, were always guiding me through the grace of God, Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in the manner He desired that I might receive His blessings through my celestial family.

St. John of the Cross, through St. Teresa Benedicta's explanation, tells us,

“Detachment is designated as a night through which the soul must pass. It is this in a threefold sense: in regard to the point of departure, the path, and the goal. The point of departure is the desire for the things of this world, which the soul must renounce.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

My point of departure with “I do not understand what she is saying, but I know that what she is saying is true” was a darkness, an unknowing of something that is, in fact, known. St. John of the Cross calls it “dark knowledge,”

“In fact, we are set upon a sure way, albeit a dark way, one engulfed by night, the way of faith. It is a way, for it leads to the goal of union. But it is a nocturnal way, since in comparison to the clear insight of the natural understanding, faith is a dark knowledge: it acquaints us with something but we do not get to see it.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

I could see truth through the writings of St. Thérèse; yet, I could not see it. This truth was a real substance; yet, I could not imagine it, for I had no natural, sensible ability to see it as it was in its fullness. It was too bright, too supernatural; thus, it was and remains “darkness” to my intellect.

This was ever so slightly different from the moment I received the great gift of faith in the Eucharist and the Church on the Feast Day of St. Thérèse in the fall of 1984. On that evening, while attending a Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA) class in preparation for marrying my beautiful wife, I was struck immediately by the authority of the Catholic Church. In a split second more, I realized that if she, the Church, were truly the apostolic Church, then what she says about the Eucharist must be

true. It all happened in a couple of seconds. Our Lady, the Virgin Mary had been prepping me before that night. A week or so before, I was completely swept off my feet by the prayer of the Hail Mary, a prayer I honestly had no recollection of hearing prior to that night. I was mesmerized by the possibility that one could pray to the Mother of God. I found the idea so attractive that I began to pray to her for help and assistance. A week or two later, on the Feast Day of St. Thérèse, my heart and mind opened to Our Lord's grace.

Still, this was understandable intellectual light; though, it touched my soul supernaturally and breathed new life into it. In that moment of grace, I understood what I came to understand, that the Church was the true Church and the Eucharist was the true and substantial Body and Blood of Christ (though, how this is, of course, is a mystery beyond comprehension). Conversely, reading St. Thérèse, I did not understand what I came to understand. In that nuanced sense I say that my "I do not understand what she is saying, but I know that what she is saying is true" moment was my point of departure in the "darkness of faith" on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. The path was the night of faith, of unknowing what is known, as received from Jesus Christ, through His Church on earth, and through St. Louis de Montfort's consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, all in perfect hierarchical and aristocratic form as revealed to me on that grace-filled night on St. Thérèse's Day. The goal, of course, that Kingdom I was told by the Blessed Virgin to "seek first," is the Divine Union of Love and is an end I cannot possess in its fullness on earth but only can move toward it in this life through Hope to obtain it in Heaven.

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – The March of Hope

One of the great sufferings we experience when we depart any place is that of our attachments for those things we enjoyed there. For St. John of the Cross, our point of departure on our journey to union with God, that to which I refer metaphorically as my Journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse, must be the renunciation of the desire for all things of this world in order to make room for God.

“The saint calls the point of departure or the first segment the dark night of the senses. What is actually entailed here is the mortification of joy in the desire for all things.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Preparing me for the Journey entailed a very difficult twenty-year period. For twenty years, I was unable to detach myself sufficiently from love for worldly pleasure, things, and others’ respect. This led me to a point of such desperation that I finally cried out to the Mother of God in a spirit of complete surrender. I was worn-down and dying from the weight of my sins and my inordinate desires for the things of this world.

“That the domination of desires is truly darkness in the soul is demonstrated in full: the appetites weary and torment the soul, darken, besmirch and weaken her, rob her of the Spirit of God because she turns away from him by her surrender to the animal spirit.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

My cry was heard, and Our Lady mediated the graces I needed from the Holy Spirit to reject the world and all of its empty promises, at least in spirit if not always in action. Therein was the

dilemma of integrity. However, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, my soul was transformed in grace to begin this journey, however imperfectly.

“On the other hand, something entirely new is begun when the Dark Night starts. The entirely comfortable being – at – home in the world, the satiety of pleasures that it offers, the demand for these pleasures and the matter – of – course consent to these demands – all of this that human nature considers bright daily life – all of this is darkness in God’s eyes and incompatible with the divine light. It has to be totally uprooted if room for God is to be made in the soul.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

However, one must do more than simply reject the world; one must replace that love for the world with love for God and the things of God. In other words, one must “seek first the kingdom” of God over the things of the world. One does not simply turn away from desire for the world (an act we call repentance); one turns toward desire for God (something we call Hope).

“Everything with which the Spirit naturally occupies itself must be taken from it. It must be educated to know God and to rejoice only in him. First of all, this is achieved by offering to the natural faculties something that attracts them more powerfully and satisfies them more than what they naturally know and enjoy.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

It was for this purpose that Our Lady, after instructing me to “seek first the kingdom,” opened my heart through grace obtained by her mediation to a great love for and devotion to St. Joan of Arc. With St. Thérèse, her natural ally in Heaven, St. Joan ushered in by

God's divine providence the presence in my soul of a real and substantive Kingdom. Not surprisingly, given the care and influence of my two saintly sisters, Joan and Thérèse, both secondary co-patronesses of France, that Kingdom reflected the mystical Kingdom of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Catholic France. It was the light coming from this Kingdom that so attracted me as I turned away from my love for the world and toward the Kingdom of God. This light was unmistakably the light of the combined spirituality of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, clearly Carmelite, definitely active in Hope, and decidedly traditional and French in character. I called this light of the combined spirituality of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, "the most beautiful color in the Heavens."

My heart, mind, and soul became transformed in Hope through this mystical light, something I call the March of Hope with St. Joan of Arc and reflected in my poem on the same:

The March of Hope, Part 1

The Freedom Dance continues merrily on...
Imagine my astonishment
When the Queen announced
Through my saintly sister Thérèse
That Joan of Arc was to the fore...

The Dance of Freedom was to continue on
The trail of the Dogmatic Creed
Stretched further...
Faith had not yet animated me

Joan of Arc was the chosen guide
On the path of the Dogmatic Creed next
No one can see the Kingdom
Without Hope that forms our desire

“Joan of Arc will lead you”
Spoke my saintly sister Thérèse
“To a new world view”
“Your actions belie your words of faith!”

“Joan of Arc acts
According to her faith”
“She is no practical non-believer!”
Saintly Thérèse smiled with eyes dancing

“Unlike her, brother,
You honor God only with lips!”

“You hope in yourself” Thérèse continued
“While whispering faith in God”
“You cannot see the Kingdom
With your old point of view”

“Joan of Arc will show you
The glorious new world view
That will animate you with love
And create the appropriate desire in you”

We climbed a mountain with Joan of Arc
She pointed to a panorama below
I heard the thunder of God clapping
Bringing rhythm and reason to creation

Joan of Arc, to whom we are so devoted
Smiled at us, while singing
“God created heaven and earth
Clapping one day, two days, three and more”

“While God was clapping, music was heard!”
Cried our Maid, whom Thérèse and I so enjoy

“One day, two days, three and more
Logical beauty, reason, and rhythm!”

“God created both Reason and Rhythm!”
She cried, “It all has a purpose!”
“The order of nature is reason and beauty”
“The mystery of rhythm is the artwork of God!”

My heart was leaping!
A lesson in Hope!
That God’s first words convey the wisdom
Of purpose and unity both!

Hushing noisy philosophers aside
With Joan of Arc as my guide
I watched the beauty unfold
I let God explain his point of view

I have always wished
That beauty had meaning
I had always missed the point
Of the creation story

Joan of Arc!
With my saintly sister Thérèse
Had brought me to my first juncture in Hope
The meaning of creation – my world view is changing!

My world view was certainly changing as the result of my March of Hope with St. Joan of Arc and in the sisterly care of St. Thérèse. I turned from the world only to be captivated by the Kingdom of God that I perceived spiritually through the “most beautiful color in the Heavens” as the Mystical Kingdom of the Blessed Virgin Mary’s Catholic France. This Kingdom is the new

substance of my heart, a heart created anew through Mary's intercession and that of St. Joan and St. Thérèse.

“Whatever the spirit has elaborated through this or the other manner of operating will be its permanent possession. This knowledge and love have become a very part of the spirit's being, somewhat resembling the relationship to a person with whom one has lived a long time and whom one trusts intimately.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – Divine Union through Faith

In the combined spirituality of St. Joan and St. Thérèse, “the most beautiful color in the Heavens,” as I mentioned earlier that I like to call it, I received many graces from Our Lord and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, many graces that appear (for I cannot presume) to have kept me within the safe confines of the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed. There are many Dark Forests on either side of the Trail as we venture forth toward the Kingdom. These Dark Forests are filled with the lethal smoke of false doctrines and ideologies that will cause us to be lost on our way and ultimately kill our souls. St. Joan and St. Thérèse, as part of the communion of saints, combine and share their treasures to keep us safe. One of the first dangers through which they help us is that of the imperfection of our souls combined with the light of God’s grace through visions, revelations, locutions, and spiritual feelings, as St. John of the Cross categorizes them.

The core of St. John’s message, and a protection against the evils of the Dark Forest around us is, as St. Teresa Benedicta explains:

“Here one feels the heartbeat of our Holy Father. He speaks of the great truth that he has recognized; it is his mission to proclaim it: our goal is union with God, our way that of the crucified Christ, are becoming one with him takes place when we are crucified. The only proportionate means to arrive at this union is faith.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

St. Joan and St. Thérèse, by the divine will, show us the majesty and beauty of the Kingdom toward which we are moving in order to inflame our souls with Hope and heavenly desire as we turn

from the world; yet, they keep us safe through Carmelite wisdom which warns us of making idols of these revelations, locutions, and spiritual feelings. Without celestial aid, we are likely to venture off the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed and fall into a crevice. This is due to the weakness and imperfection of our souls. We are warned not to make anything of these gifts in and of themselves. God uses them for his purpose of saving our souls, i.e., in making sure we reach the end of the Trail where sits the Kingdom. However, as St. John of the Cross reminds us, these are not God himself. We chase after these revelations and feelings like children chasing after butterflies who then suddenly stop to look around and see that they are lost. Our union with God comes through faith alone and not through our sensible feelings and discursive intellectual revelations, while at the same time these sensible feelings and discursive meditations are gifts from God to strengthen us on our journey.

“Therefore, in order to attain to God, one must “rather strive... not to understand as to understand... rather to be blind and transport oneself into darkness... than to open the eyes.”

The darkness that leads to God is, as we already know, faith.

“The greater one’s faith the closer is one’s union with God.”

What it gives us – contemplation – is a dark and general knowledge.

(The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

While being inspired by Our Lord in the company of our saintly sisters, we must at the same time reject “the apprehensions of the interior senses – imagination and phantasy...” This is striving not understand while God brings us to greater understanding. St.

Joan and St. Thérèse are proximate means of this supernatural grace, all, of course, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

On our own, we become less in the presence of these graces rather than more. Due to our imperfections, we become prideful. We might imagine that we are making great progress and that God is very pleased with us. Surely these feelings and revelations mean we are almost at divine union which is the substance of the Kingdom! Alas, when we think in this manner, we are chasing butterflies into the Dark Forest. How fortunate for us that we have the aid of Heaven and our saintly sisters.

We must remove these prideful imperfections in order to open our souls to the true Light of Christ:

“This light is never lacking to the soul, but because of creature forms and veils that weigh on her and cover her, the light is never infused. If the soul would eliminate these impediments and veils and live in pure nakedness and poverty of spirit in her simplicity and purity she would then be immediately transformed into simple and pure Wisdom, the Son of God.”

(The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

The way St. Joan and St. Thérèse help us to lift the veil that weighs on our souls is to obtain for us from God, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the grace of obedience to the Church and all of her dogmas and doctrines. This is how we reach the Kingdom, not through chasing butterflies in dangerous forests.

“One should not believe anything coming in a supernatural way, but believe only the teaching of Christ who is human, and of his ministers who were human... All else is good for nothing, and

one that may only accept it in faith when it corresponds to the teaching of Christ.

God has a very special predilection that direction of humans be through other humans and that a person be governed by natural reason.”

(The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

As if to put an exclamation point on the necessity of faith for union with God over the gifts which are not God, John tells us:

For “it greatly behooves the soul not to want to understand the truths of faith so clearly, that she may thereby conserve the merit of faith pure and entire; only in this manner will she pass through this night of the intellect to the divine light of union.”

(The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Faith in the teachings of Christ through his Holy Catholic Church is the sure means of our salvation. We are led in faith, inspired through hope, and inflamed in love on our journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse precisely because it is the “Trail of the Dogmatic Creed.”

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – Purgation through Hope

We now cross an important threshold on our journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse through their combined spirituality and viewed through the lens of Carmelite spirituality. We have passed through inspiring meadows, crossed quaint bridges over rushing streams, admired the beautiful majestic mountains in the distance, and kept the beauty of the entire landscape, complete with its divine order, clearly in perspective. Crossing from the meadows where the work of our intellect in Faith took form, and now through the pristine fields of our memory in Hope, our saintly sisters have carefully guided us in safety on our way and pursued us when we go astray, as we are sometimes captivated by the illusions inside the Dark Forest due to our soul's imperfections and predilection to pride.

Having been instructed to “not know” what “is known,” since we are brought to union with God through Faith and not through the discursive discourses held in our finite intellects (for though these might come from God, they are not God as St. John of the Cross reminds us), we now find that in order to reach our destination, which is the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Christ reigns in all of his glory, we must purge our memory of all imaginative props as well. Just as St. John warns us not to desire to know everything through our intellect as we might then lose the merit of faith, we are likewise warned not to idolize our imaginative apprehensions, no matter how inspiring:

“Because one can only hope for what one does not possess, hope will be the more perfect the less one possesses.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Our saintly sisters Joan and Thérèse gently remind us of the simplicity that characterizes the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed toward the center of Mary's Immaculate Heart. God unites himself to us through our purification in Faith, Hope, and Love, the three theological virtues, not through images and sublime thoughts. The images and sublime thoughts are merely aids for those of us who are weak and imperfect enough to need them. We must not turn back to the fleshpots of Egypt, so to speak, and we should remind ourselves that God gives us many graces particularly because we are so inclined to do so. Let us be humbled by that knowledge.

To move forward on the Trail with Sts. Joan and Thérèse is to develop a profound sense of simplicity, humility, and complete satisfaction only in what Our Lord Jesus Christ has commanded for us through his Church on earth. Being human in our substance, which is to be both body and soul, we of course still rely on our natural senses in the course of our daily existence. However, at this segment on the Journey, we are now perceptive to the purpose behind what our memory holds for us in terms of apprehensions. Their purpose is simply for drawing us closer to God through Love. We guard against allowing these apprehensions to attract us in and of themselves once again, where we will end up chasing them like butterflies into the Dark Forest due to our pride and imperfections.

“She may only fix her eye on and preserve the feelings of love of God that are caused within her. Only for this one purpose may one recall a certain image or apprehension that called forth love: in order to move the spirit to love anew.” (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

We must learn to be tranquil on our Journey:

“It is best ‘to learn to silence and quiet the faculties of the soul so that God may speak to her.’ Then ‘a river of peace will descend on her... and... in this peace, God will remove all the misgivings, suspicions, disturbances, and darkneses which awakened in her the fear that she is already lost or is near to being lost.’

All confusion and disturbance in the soul is caused by the contents of the memory.”

(The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Perhaps the best way for me to communicate this part of the Journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse is through a two-part poem I wrote years ago:

The fields of Christendom (Part 1)

Thérèse came up the hill
To join me as I mused
While looking out and beyond
To the land of Christendom
Over the bridge I had spotted below

My saintly sister sat next to me
In the grass while shading her eyes
“It’s beautiful over there,” I softly spoke
Remaining still so as to not disturb my view
“What is the magic, the mystery, of that land?”

“Order,” whispered Thérèse with authority
While looking out herself, “Divine Order “
“The minerals serve the plants
The plants serve the animals
The animals serve mankind”

“God,” she continued, “is served by mankind”

“Do you remember, when we first met?”
She surprised me. How could I forget?
That day I stumbled out of the Dark Forest
The day she called my name

“I found you lost in a land of dis-order!” she smiled
“But there, over there, where you gaze
The pathways, the villages, and flowing rivers
Make one wonderful, unified landscape
For the Almighty Divine Pleasure!”

I could see that waters ran fresh and deep
Everything was far richer in being
Than any place else I had seen
Certainly far richer than the dark and smoke-filled
Forest of confused order from where I had come

But, something yet amazed me
And that something was this
Many a time I’d heard someone proclaim
An order for things, a way to create
But none looked as rich as this...

Oh, some looked much better
Than the land where I had then stood
But others were awful and made everyone feel bad
Those who proclaimed that kind always seemed angry
And would make everyone pretend that things were pretty...

Thérèse interrupted my wandering thoughts
“How can the many particulars create
One view of such delight?” she queried
Yes, that is what mystified me
That is, just how this mixture was so right

“Many can only be ordered by One”
She answered her own question
“A higher unity must arrange the many particulars
To create such beauty and harmony
It is for this that we freely follow the will of the One”

“The order of God is that the lower
Should be enriched by the superior
The will of God being that those inferior
are helped by those above them
Thus Lord Christ’s merits glorify Him”

We sat for a while as I continued to look
At the beauty of creation when in the right hands
I glanced at Thérèse and thought of Joan of Arc too
My saintly and sisterly guides always seemed full of life
I looked down at myself, so different from that...

I wanted to ask more
But she motioned, time to go
The trail of the Dogmatic Creed
Awaited us, as we gathered our things
And headed down to cross that bridge I had found

The fields of Christendom (Part 2)

After crossing many fields
Covered with flowers and grazing animals
We carefully crossed a rapid creek
Where on the far side, we sat to dry our feet
Thérèse spoke, looking back over the flowing water

“Pay heed, dear brother, to Joan of Arc
She’s sent to guide you over the highest of mountain tops
To the very heart of the Mother of God
By the very command of the King of Kings
But this gift from Jesus to you – requires suffering!”

I myself stared into the swirling pools
Not even cognizant of that at which I looked
I did not care to ponder much on Thérèse’s words
Though I knew them to be true
But perhaps in my case there would be an exception...

“What is a sacrifice?” she turned to look directly in my eyes
“But to offer what is of value
And the greater the value, the greater the offering
Do not our scriptures say that there is no love greater
Than to give one’s life for another?”

Now this was making me quite uncomfortable
All this talk of suffering and death
But it was quite interestingly different from the talk
I heard in the Dark Forest of despair
That is, that we must not die, we must evolve to gods

“To give one’s life for Jesus
When He gave His for us
Is our true act of love

To serve for no reward
Save loving Christ the King!"

I looked at Joan of Arc, as we stood to move along
The mystery of her life no longer locked away
Her soul and that of Thérèse, both given to God in love
By sacrificing all for Him
Asking, neither one, for anything save union with Jesus

We started forward again, in peaceful silence
My feet were dry, and I felt well rested
I had never spoken a word, and this was good
For looking up ahead I could see majestic mountains
With snow and treacherous passes

My spirit's desire, the Heart of Mary
For the glory of Christ the Savior
Lay beyond those heavenly peaks
And so, it was good not to speak
For I would need to be silent while guided over there

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – Freedom through Carmelite spirituality

Now let us bring together the various Carmelite and de Montfortian influences that comprise this particular mystical Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse. This Trail and the surrounding Kingdom through which we journey are imbued with “the most beautiful color in the Heavens,” that is, the combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux emanating from the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ is enthroned in all of His glory.

Our heavenly sisters are mystically French, both being the secondary co-patronesses of France. Our Trail and this Kingdom are decidedly Marian, Jehannian, and Thérésian in spirituality. This Kingdom is intrinsically good, being the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France, on earth as it is in Heaven. The primary substance of this Kingdom is Jesus Christ, He through Whom all things were made and Who defines Himself the very nature of our mystical relationships. Our love for Mary, the angels, and the saints is nothing less than the love of God uniting us. The Sacred Heart of Jesus, His Mercy, His Love, and His Justice, are the spiritual air we breathe here and his Heart inflamed in the Holy Spirit is the burning sun that gives us life. We are happy and free in our relationships with Our Lady and our saintly sisters because of this life-giving Holy Spirit Who fills us intellectually, affectively, and in our will through these heavenly desires.

The castle on our mystical mountain top is the interior castle of St. Teresa of Avila. This is where Jesus lives in our souls. In our metaphor of walking the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse, we know this castle also to be at the center of the

Immaculate Heart of Mary. It is the Kingdom of God in our hearts as it is in Heaven. Our Trail, as mentioned previously, represents the dogmas and the doctrines of the Holy Catholic Church. Staying safely “on the Trail” means being obedient to these dogmas and doctrines, as they are the path our Fathers in the faith have left as guide posts on our way. The Journey itself to this interior castle is St. John of the Cross’ Ascent of Mount Carmel through the Dark Night of the Soul. Being in the care of St. Joan and St. Thérèse as they lead us to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the de Montfortian spirit of True Devotion to Mary, all through the spiritual pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism.

The entire mystical panorama represents freedom. This is truly the freedom we are promised and the freedom we desire. It is the freedom to do the divine will.

The soul has the right to make decisions that concern itself. It is the great mystery of personal freedom, before which God himself comes to a halt. He wants his sovereign authority over created spirits only as a free gift of their love... he does not want to take possession of her without her wanting it herself... to do this {she} must take up a position deep within herself: so deep, that the crossover resembles a formal transformation of the human being. And this may not even be possible in a natural way, but only on the basis of an extraordinary awakening. ~ (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

My “extraordinary awakening” came through the intercession of St. Thérèse on her Feast Day in 1984. Having first “met” St. Joan of Arc at Mont Saint-Michel years earlier, my Freedom Dance on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed began with Thérèse through the obedience of faith, True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and

Carmelite spirituality, all of which I expressed many years later in the following poetic prose:

The Dance of Freedom – “C’est pour cela que je fus nais”

One day
I was walking
Through a forest

In an open field I saw
An unusual scene
There, a group of bright,
Smiling people were dancing

I should say
They were travelling
For they were dancing
And moving toward
A destination I could not see

They were happy
And danced with freedom
You could sense the grace
In their movements
I had never seen such beauty

A young girl noticed me
She danced to me and took my hand
She was not afraid that I was filthy
I balked but she insisted “Come join us.”

“Are you free?” she queried
“Of course,” I walked along
“I have lived the way I wanted”
“I have travelled where I wish”

“But are you free?” she
Danced with happiness

I stared “But I am free”
“Freedom is doing what you wish
Following no creed but
The creed of self” I insisted
She merely danced with me some more

I could not help but
To follow with wonder
Foolish and awkward-like, I
Moved to the group’s rhythm
I kind of liked it

I ran to catch up
With the young woman
And her friends

“But how are you so free?”
I cried over her shoulder
She turned, her eyes were filled with grace
“Obedience” she smiled

“To God” she continued
She swirled and danced
“Impossible! God is not one
Path-but many!” I cried back

“We follow this single path – called
The dogmatic creed” she was firm
“This way we travel together with
Certain knowledge
Of the path of our Fathers – who
Have arrived to our destination”

“Through light and darkness”

She went on

“In safety and in danger

In joy and in heartache – we

Stay on the dogmatic path”

“You are a slave to your path!”

I was in disbelief

“That is not freedom”

“It is not rational to follow a

Dogmatic path – I make my own path”

“Are you not free to consent to believe?”

She pulled me along the path

“Are you not free to choose obedience?”

“Is your freedom only freedom to rebel?”

“You are free to choose” she continued

“And only you can do that”

“For your will is yours, and it is free”

The group continued dancing

Joyfully through the day

And into the evening

As they journeyed through the land

Confused, I could not help

But follow along, for truth be told

I had been lost when I stumbled

Across these saints

I stood alone in a broad field

I looked back into the dark forest

Like from where I had come

I remembered how it was I was lost
Individualism, rebellion, relativism
Believing everything can be believed
Therefore, believing nothing

I cried as I had to make a decision
Yes, I was free
Free to make a choice

As I struggled and watched my new
Friends dance on
Another young woman, a warrior
Approached me
"C'est pour cela que je fus nais"
She whispered to me

Yes! "C'est pour cela que je fus nais!"
I turned toward my friends
I ran fast, stumbling through the grass
To join them on their path

I made my decision
In total freedom
And now I dance with them –
Seeing now the destination

Those at the front
Who are getting close
Break their rhythm – and run
Toward it with joy

My Journey with St. Joan and St. Thérèse – Our Journey as a relationship with God and the Saints

Our discussion of the Journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux requires an added dimension. Thus far, we have emphasized the Kingdom in the distance toward which we are traveling with our saintly sisters. This Kingdom is the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ is enthroned in all of His glory. The Trail itself is our sure guide and represents the doctrines, dogmas, and creeds of the Catholic Church, that is, the entire magisterial teaching of the Church through Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Without this guidance we would no doubt soon be lost in the Dark Forest of man-made philosophies, ideologies, and the whole quagmire that is our fallen nature.

As we walk we sense a powerful human bond with our celestial sisters, St. Joan and St. Thérèse, along with Our Lady and the whole Heavenly Host. We are clearly in a relationship as we walk the Trail. We develop a union of spirit and soul with the Heavenly Host just as we do with family and friends in the natural world. Our love is both individual and communal, as people who share the same inheritance and belong to the same Kingdom. We are unified in spirit yet wildly diverse in our individual beings. Like a beautiful landscape is one in Form yet comprised of various flowers, trees, rivers, and creeks, we are unified as one Kingdom while being colorfully rich in our diversity.

Yet, something much more significant is developing here. We sense, and know, that it is the Trinitarian God Who is the source and substance of our relationships. The familial love we have for each other is God's love unifying us and bonding our souls. God is

not simply another friend, God is the substance of friendship and love. When we love each other through God, we are loving God at the same time. God is mystically present and forms our relationships, and through those relationships on our Journey, we share in the merits and spiritual goods of our saintly sisters and our Heavenly Mother, the Virgin Mary. This is the essence of the Communion of Saints, that is, union of heart, mind, and soul in God and the charitable sharing of God's goods.

Yet, there is more. God not only is the very substance of our relationships, He is Himself outside of us and One Whom we come to know directly and intimately in Himself and as He allows through an indwelling of sanctifying grace. God calls us by opening His own heart to us in the very depths of our interior, our heart, and our soul.

“But all of this is granted – again in an ascent by steps – to the human being by God in the third mode of indwelling, that of the mystical election. God grants him a personal encounter through a touch in his inmost region. He opens to him his own inner being through particular enlightenment about his nature and his secret decrees. He gives him his heart – at first in a momentary transport by a personal meeting (in the prayer of union), then as a permanent possession (in mystical betrothal and marriage).” ~ (The Science of the Cross by Edith Stein – St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Thus, as the mist rises in the fields and meadows where we walk, and we see the majestic mountains, lakes, rivers, and streams across the distant panorama representing this Kingdom, we know that God Himself is sharing the secrets of His heart with us. Our love and friendship with the saints is substantively founded in God's love; yet, the very illumination of the Kingdom before our eyes is God's love and friendship given to us directly through grace.

The Journey on the trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse is truly about relationships, that is, love. The doctrines, dogmas, and creeds of the Holy Catholic Church ensure our safe passage through these fields and meadows, while the rising mist across the panorama represents God's own unveiling of His Heart.

Across the cresting hills this dawn

Across the cresting hills this dawn
Finds dreamy landscapes veiled by mist
Our Lady points through fields beyond
Amidst their haze a shadow sits

As sunlight breaks the shades turn true
The figure, clear, on horseback, too
Our Lady smiles, it's Joan of Arc!
A saint to guide me to her heart

In Mary's heart, Christ's Kingdom's found
The Maid knows well the pathway stark
By fire in glory she was crowned
That Kingdom loves God's Joan of Arc!

This saintly Maid inspires my soul!
I follow Joan through fire or cold
Toward Christ's Kingdom in Mary's heart
Toward Christ's Kingdom in Mary's heart

Goodwill

Walking the trail to Le Royaume with St. Thérèse

Walking with Thérèse - The Opening Paragraphs of The Story of a Soul

The opening paragraphs to St. Thérèse's manuscript A of "The Story of a Soul," represent the most profound influence on my Catholic spirituality. The "Story of a Soul," later so named by a good friend of the Lisieux Carmel after Thérèse's death, was written under obedience to Thérèse's sister Pauline who was at that time the Prioress of the monastery.

At times I find it difficult to come to terms with just whose influence on me is greatest: Ste. Jehanne d'Arc or Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus. When I feel that way, I know that I am not framing the situation correctly. The truth, the real truth in that matter, is that they have a mysterious and powerful combined impact on me. It was St. Thérèse Who introduced me to St. Joan of Arc, and it was St. Thérèse who brought about my deep devotion to St. Joan. St. Thérèse is my heavenly sister and "little mother" as I like to call her. I carry her spiritual DNA. Therefore, it must be no surprise that I would be nurtured in her own gifts, including foremost, her unyielding devotion to St. Joan. Thérèse "...felt illuminated, filled with enthusiasm; the discovery of Joan affected her deeply: 'a grace which I have always looked upon as one of the greatest in my life,' she would recall in 1895." (The Plays of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, 2008, p. 62). I feel exactly the same way, and that is no coincidence.

The opening paragraphs to manuscript A are a concise summary of my own writings which are themselves no more than my interpretations of Thérèse and Joan's influence on me. These paragraphs are the pool, the reservoir, of spirituality from which I constantly draw the waters of grace in my own life. They are astonishingly profound in that they are essentially metaphorical interpretations of the sophisticated, scholastic writings of St.

Thomas Aquinas, though I am not at all sure that St. Thérèse had Thomas in mind when she wrote them. She was writing about what Jesus had taught her. Nevertheless, I find them to be magnificent interpretations of Thomas' more difficult writings.

Thérèse begins, however, by revealing first and foremost her deep Marian devotion:

“Before taking my pen in hand, I knelt before the statue of Mary (the one that gave us so many proofs of the Queen of Heaven's motherly partiality for our family), and I begged her to guide my hand so that I might not write a single line that would not be pleasing to her.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, pp. 1-2)

In these words, we see her deeply rooted devotion to Mary, a devotion with which Thérèse gifted me when I was converted on her Feast Day in 1984. There, in my first yearnings of Marian devotion, Thérèse was beginning her influence on my soul. Rather, we should say the Holy Spirit was working through Thérèse's motherly and sisterly patronage.

We also see in those opening lines a reference to a key concept on which her following thoughts will turn in a most profound way: heavenly ordained “partiality” in the midst of “equal love for all souls.” Our little sister goes on to write:

“Then, opening the Gospels, my eyes fell on these words: ‘Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to Him those He wanted, and they came to Him’ (Mark 3:13). Now this is the mystery of my calling, of my Whole life, and above all the mystery of Jesus' privileges over my soul. He doesn't call those who are worthy, but those He wants, or, as St. Paul puts it; ‘I will have mercy on Whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have

compassion.’ It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy (Romans 9:15 – 16).” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 2)

Here, I can see God’s grace in my own life. The gift of a “calling” through Faith is a great grace and one that is not merited by being “good enough.” This was, and is still, very applicable to me. Thérèse understood this through reading scripture. Through loftier medieval scholasticism, St. Thomas points us to the same general idea:

“I answer that, the gift of grace may be considered in two ways: first in the nature of a gratuitous gift, and thus it is manifest that all merit is repugnant to grace, since as the Apostle says (Romans 11:6), ‘if by grace, it is not now by works.’ Secondly, it may be considered as regards the nature of the thing given, and thus, also, it cannot come under the merit of Him Who has not grace, both because it exceeds the proportion of nature, and because previous to grace a man in the state of sin has an obstacle to His meriting grace, viz. sin. But when anyone has grace, the grace already possessed cannot come under merit, since reward is the term of the work, but grace is the principle of all our good works, as stated above (109). But if anyone merits a further gratuitous gift by virtue of the preceding grace, it would not be the first grace. Hence it is manifest that no one can merit for Himself the first grace.” (Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First Part of the Second Part, Question 114, Article 5)

We begin to understand now how Thérèse’s “Little Way” of simplicity and trust is anything but shallow spirituality! It is as if God were pouring the same insight into Thérèse as He did in Thomas Aquinas, though reflected uniquely in each person. This theme of a single principle revealed through a variety of unique particulars will develop before us as we continue our study of these

lines in Thérèse's story and as we get to the hinge-point dealing with "heavenly ordained partiality amidst equal love for all souls." Thérèse's way of "simplicity" is more a process of distilling the essence of our great Catholic truths than it is emotionalism or mere sentimentality. We cannot misinterpret her ability to get to the essence of things as shallowness. Thérèse had a powerful intellect and a deeply mature spirituality.

Next, Thérèse demonstrates an unusually powerful capability for insight and an admirable, courageous demand for intellectual honesty. While accepting that Jesus calls "those He wants," she pondered the most logical next question that is so sublimely hidden in the Mark 3:13 scripture passage. Most of us would walk right past without even noticing it. That question is: Why? Why does God, Who loves everyone, show partiality? Is there not a contradiction between love and partiality?

"For a long time, I wondered why God showed partiality, why all souls don't receive the same amount of graces. I was astounded to see Him lavish extraordinary favors on the Saints Who had offended Him, such as St. Paul and St. Augustine, and Whom He so to speak forced to receive His graces. Or when I read the life of saints Whom our Lord was pleased to embrace from the cradle to the grave, without leaving in their path any obstacles that might hinder them from rising toward Him, and granting these souls such favors that they were unable to tarnish the immaculate brightness of their baptismal robes, I wondered why poor primitive people, for example, were dying in great numbers without even having heard the name of God pronounced..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 2)

The teaching that Thérèse gives us in response is, without exaggeration, the seed from which my entire spiritual vision of Le

Royaume developed. This vision of devotion to the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France as an expression of my True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary prescribed by St. Louis de Montfort took root in Thérèse's own mystical insights. She, as my "little mother," proffered this gift of grace she received from Jesus to me in such a way as to found my own spirituality on the premise of "To Jesus through Mary in the friendship and sisterly care of Sts. Joan and Thérèse!"

"Jesus consented to teach me this mystery. He placed before my eyes the book of nature; I understood that all the flowers that He created are beautiful. The brilliance of the rose and the whiteness of the lily don't take away the perfume of the lowly violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy... I understood that if all the little flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose its springtime adornment, and the fields would no longer be sprinkled with little flowers...

So it is in the world of souls, which is Jesus's garden. He wanted to create great Saints Who could be compared to lilies and roses. But He also created little ones, and these ought to be content to be daisies or violets destined to gladden God's eyes when He glances down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, and being what He wants us to be..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, pp. 2-3)

How often have I written in my own spiritual journals of this metaphorical landscape where everything and everyone retains its own magnificent uniqueness while at the same time all coming together in the Divine Order toward one Principle End, Who is God, to create a masterpiece of life giving beauty. The landscape is perfectly oriented through the beauty and majesty of the particular flowers, trees, meadows, and distant mountains. Everything is as it should be, and, in being so, creates perfection in the Divine Order.

The Holy Spirit, through Thérèse, brought all of this to my spiritual senses that I might begin to discover it for myself.

Thérèse's profound insights on the desire of God to create with distinction and inequality, that is, with "partiality," fit precisely into the explanation given by St. Thomas:

"Therefore it must be said that as the wisdom of God is the cause of the distinction of things, so the same wisdom is the cause of their inequality." (Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, First Part, Question 47, Article 2)

Not yet finished with her sublime contemplative outpouring, Thérèse refuses to yield until she has fully connected the metaphor to her developing "Little Way" of simplicity, trust, and love:

"I understood that our Lord's love is revealed as well in the simplest soul who doesn't resist His grace in anything, as in the most sublime of souls. In fact, since the essence of love is to bring oneself low, if every soul were like the souls of the holy Doctors Who have shed light on the Church through the clarity of their doctrine, it seems that God wouldn't come down low enough by coming only as far as their great hearts. But He created the child Who doesn't know anything and only cries weakly, He created poor primitive persons Who only have natural law as a guide – and it is to their hearts that He consents to come down: Here are wildflowers Whose simplicity delights Him..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 3)

What insight from our heavenly sister and little mother! Note that she does not imply that those who are weak should excuse their weakness as might an unrepentant sinner. No, we must all become what we are intended to be, whether that be a small daisy or a beautiful rose. We cannot play our part in completing the landscape

without becoming who we are. To remain unrepentant is to remain incomplete.

Her point is, though, that those Who are weakest in their sincere desire for the Kingdom where this landscape subsists, can look to the goodness and love of our Lord Jesus Christ to draw them with His own strength to be Who they are in that landscape. One need not be discouraged by the large, beautiful roses (those who appear to have mighty graces working wonderful deeds for God) when one feels like nothing more than a dried up daisy. Our Lord shows even more magnificently His love and power when He raises the little dried up daisy to its proper substance in the Kingdom of God.

Yet, finally, does God, Who shows partiality in His distribution of graces in order that the landscape might be created just right, therefore love each flower in that landscape differently? Does He, then, love the roses more than the daisies? Here, Thérèse closes the loop on her beautiful imagery which exposes the error in the false dichotomy of the “partiality in graces versus loving all creatures equally” paradigm and does so with more Aquinas-type sublimity:

“By bringing Himself low in this way, God shows His infinite greatness. Just as the sun shines at the same time on the tall cedars and on each little flower as if it were the only one on earth, in the same way our Lord is concerned particularly for every soul as if there were no other like it. And just as in nature all the seasons are arranged in such a way as to cause the humblest Daisy to open on the appointed day, in the same way all things correspond to the good of each soul.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, pp. 3-4)

St. Thomas says something similar:

“I answer that, since to love a thing is to will it good, in a twofold way anything may be loved more, or less. In one way on

the part of the act of the will itself, which is more or less intense. In this way God does not love some things more than others, because He loves all things by an act of the will that is one, simple, and always the same. In another way on the part of the good itself that a person wills for the beloved. In this way we are said to love that one more than another, for whom we will a greater good, though our will is not more intense. In this way we must needs say that God loves some things more than others. For since God's love is the cause of goodness in things, as has been said (2), no one thing would be better than another, if God did not will greater good for one than for another." (Aquinas, Summa Theologica, First part, Question 20, Article 3)

St. Thérèse understood all of the above with astonishing clarity, even though her sister Carmelites considered her to be merely a simple girl Who became a good nun. (The Story of a Soul, 2006) All of this she places before us to contemplate, and she has not even begun her actual task at hand, which is to tell us the "story of her soul"!

We have many miles yet to travel with this young saint! Let us walk continually, faithfully, and devotedly with St. Thérèse on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed as we read her manuscripts. She has much, much more to tell us as we journey toward that beautiful landscape in the Kingdom of God. We might even meet Joan of Arc along the way...

Walking with Thérèse - Not knowing, but knowing everything

We have not traveled far with St. Thérèse before she slows us again to offer more of her graceful contemplative insights. It's as if preparation were everything. She wants us to travel the trail with her in such a way that we will be most edified. This is something we must get used to with Thérèse. We must prepare ourselves to be led by her at different tempos and along beautiful, narrow winding pathways rather than in a dead rush along a straight and wide highway.

Of course, we want to travel quickly to the Kingdom! However, Thérèse will teach us by her own example how that wide highway is a detraction on our journey. Actually, we will not arrive to the Kingdom that way. Spiritual understanding and the strengthening of our will take time and preparation. In order for Our Lord to prepare us to be fit subjects of the Kingdom, we must make the journey itself as important as the final destination. We are formed along the journey. Walking the trail with St. Thérèse is not something we do to merely bide time. It is by walking the trail with her that we grow in understanding and strength. When we arrive to any exciting destination, we inevitably come to understand that our experiences along the way only add to the glory and triumph of our arrival. So it is on our journey with Thérèse. She will slow down or stop us to point, speak, instruct, and guide. We will walk one way to look out over canyons and another way to admire distant meadows. She warns us about this characteristic very early on in her manuscript:

“Doubtless, dear Mother, you were wondering with surprise where I'm going with all this, because until now I haven't said anything that looks like the story of my life. Yet you've asked me to

write without holding back anything that might come to my thoughts. But it isn't about my life, properly speaking, that I'm going to write, it's about my thoughts concerning the graces that God has consented to grant me... so I'm going to talk without restraint, without worrying about the style or the many digressions that I'm going to make." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 4)

Already our young saint raises her hand to stop us. She is peering out over a beautiful panorama of meadows, lakes, rivers, and distant mountains. We look to see what she sees and are deeply moved. She has not told us her story; yet, by simply showing us the surrounding landscape on the trail, we sense she has, quite conversely, told us almost everything. She has said nothing. However, she has said everything. The story of her life has not begun, but the story of her life has unfolded before us. This is the adventure that is Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse.

"I find myself at a point in my life when I can take a look back at the past. My soul has matured in the crucible of outward and inward trials. Now, like a flower strengthened by the storm, I lift my head, and I see that the words of the 23rd Psalm are coming true in me. ('The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, He leads me beside quiet waters, He refreshes my soul... Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.')

" (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 4)

Our sister Thérèse shows us here why our walk with her must be slow, purposeful, and meditative. We must take our time winding through the valleys and over the hills. We must stop from time to time with her to ponder as we look out over the horizon. By doing this we are able to "look back at the past" to see and

appreciate what Our Lord has done for us. We are able to put the pieces together to see who it is that we are becoming. We even understand how it is that God is doing such marvelous work in our lives in the midst of darkness and evil, for He is truly our “Good Shepherd” who leads us to green pastures and still waters no matter what evil threatens us.

In other words, we must contemplate. We must devote ourselves to contemplating the goodness of the Lord in the whole of our lives. Where did we come from? Who have we become? Where are we going? This is one of the first lessons Thérèse teaches us through her saintly example.

Thérèse also continues to teach us the absolute necessity of humility, which we might define through her example as, “being that which God wills,” no more and no less. Again, she shows us the way by describing herself with a metaphoric descriptor that will echo through the ages as a delightful nickname reserved for and inseparable from her:

“So, Mother, it is with happiness that I come to sing near you of the mercies of the Lord... It is for you alone that I’m going to write the story of the little flower picked by Jesus.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 4)

Thérèse knows who she is becoming. She is not only content with being a little flower, she delights in it and recognizes that this is precisely what pleases Jesus about her.

She presses on by pointing out toward the horizon again. We are contemplating. We are not moving, as she has yet to begin her story! But we are, in fact, moving through eternity, or so it seems. Not moving, but walking into eternity. Not knowing, but knowing everything. That is Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse!

What does she see out there? We look. The sun has been rising and now the shadows are removed from the meadows below. We see what she sees. We understand. It is Joy. It is Thanksgiving. We are no more than Our Lord has made us, but we are also no less! Thérèse is free to be enraptured with joy and a sense of thanksgiving. She is free because she understands. We have no need to hold back our own beautiful petals. We are free to open up to the sunlight such that our essence shouts the greatness of our being as we are in Jesus, not with words, but through our very substance – who we truly are in Christ. We are not afraid to show the world what the Lord has done for us, the beautiful colors He has painted across our souls, the beautiful flowers that He has created us to be.

Why? Because they are His gifts; they do not derive from ourselves. If we create something grand ourselves, we often try not to show it off for fear of appearing immodest or conceited. However, if a very important person gives us a gift, we delight in showing it to others. The gift points to the grandeur of the giver not the receiver; therefore, we are not hesitant to show it. Thérèse understood that her graces and spiritual gifts were from Our Lord and that showing the world the “little flower” of her soul would serve only to bring Him glory.

“It seems to me that if a little flower could talk, it would tell simply what God has done for it, without trying to hide its blessings. Under the pretext of a false humility it wouldn’t say that it is unsightly and lacking in perfume, that the sun has taken away its beauty and its stem has been broken, while it recognizes just the opposite in itself... The flower that is going to tell its story rejoices in having to publish abroad the completely undeserved kindness of Jesus. It recognizes that nothing in itself was capable of attracting

His divine glance, and that His mercy alone has made everything that there is of good in it..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 5)

Ah, "the flower that is going to tell its story"! We are reminded that she still has not begun! Well, Thérèse IS going to tell us her story. But has she not already told it? She has not begun, but she has told us everything. We do not know her story, but we DO, in fact, know her!

Prepare to be amazed everyone. You are not simply walking a trail. You are Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse!

Walking with Thérèse - Thérèse shares the gifts of family with us

Thérèse is now walking us through the gardens, meadows, and pristine hills of her youth. I do not exaggerate. The story of her youngest days is filled, quite literally, with gardens, meadows, and pristine hills. She had a very happy childhood, and, by her own admission, came across no real spiritual storms before her mother died when Thérèse was only four and a half years old.

“All my life it pleased the Good Lord to surround me with love. My earliest memories are imprinted with smiles and the most tender of embraces!” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 7)

I find am fascinated by Thérèse’s cheerful youth. The specific aspect that fascinates me is how much she depended on, and looked up to, her older sisters and what that meant for her spiritually. Thérèse’s older sisters: Pauline (who is Mother Agnes of Jesus in the Carmelite convent and the one who ordered Thérèse to write these memoirs), Léonie, Marie, and Céline all played significant roles in her life but in different ways.

“I loved my dear godmother (my oldest sister, Marie) very much. Without looking like it, I paid a lot of attention to everything that was being done and said around me. It seems to me that I had as much judgment about things as I do now. I used to listen attentively to what Marie was teaching Céline so I could do as she did... I was quite proud of my two big sisters (Marie and Pauline), but the one who was my ideal as a child was Pauline... When I started to talk and Mama asked me, “What are you thinking about?” The answer was an invariable, “Pauline!...” Another time, I was tracing my little finger over the floor tiles, and I said, “I’m writing ‘Pauline’!...” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 10)

Thérèse was also close to her sister Léonie:

“Dear little Léonie (my middle sister, nine years older than I) also held a big place in my heart. She loved me a lot. In the evening she was the one who watched me when the whole family used to go for a walk...” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 11)

However, of all her sisters, Thérèse seemed particularly close to Céline who was closer to her own age:

“Now it remains to me to talk about my dear Céline, my little childhood friend, but I have such an abundance of memories that I don’t know which ones to choose.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 11)

Thérèse sums up her feelings of affection and gratitude to her sisters as follows:

“I am pleased to see in Mama’s letters that as I grew up I gave her more consolation. Since all I had around me were good examples, I naturally wanted to follow them.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 16)

Thérèse quotes in detail several of her mother’s letters that describe how deeply devoted Thérèse was to her sisters. Each sister was a particular shining light in Thérèse’s life. She was surrounded by loving sisters with whom she could trust to lead her in the ways that would please her parents whom she also loved with all her might. Her sisters guided Thérèse, watched over her, corrected her, played with her, and loved her. Each one was a point of special inspiration.

Not only did Thérèse’s parents appreciate this, they found it a great comfort to know that their youngest was well cared for. Her mother wrote:

“The two little ones don’t worry me, they both get along so well. They are chosen natures; certainly they will be good. Marie and you will be perfectly able to raise them. Céline never commits the slightest voluntary fault. The little one will be good, too. She would never lie for all the gold in the world. She has a mind and a spirit like I’ve never seen in the rest of you.” (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 21)

What does all this mean? I know in my own life of devotion to St. Thérèse, I find her sharing this great gift of family love with me. Thérèse is in Heaven where now she can be our “big sister” who guides, watches over, corrects, and loves us. As Our Lord blessed His future Carmelite spouse with an abundance of family love, she now shares that with us.

Thérèse has long been a sister in Heaven for me. I often refer to her as my “little mother” in the same way that she saw her older sister Pauline as her “mother” after her natural mother passed away. Thérèse gifts us through her care and intercession in Heaven with family, that is, brothers and sisters. She certainly has with me. It was St. Thérèse who introduced me to St. Joan of Arc and who inflamed my soul with love and devotion for St. Joan. Thérèse gave me a part of herself by giving me a part of her own devotion to St. Joan and in doing so gave me a family as well.

I have two very good examples in Heaven to follow, just as Thérèse had very good examples on earth. Thérèse, like all the saints, shares her gifts of grace from the Lord with us. The Lord and Our Lady are happy to see us in such good care! They are happy in the same way Thérèse’s parents were happy to see her in such good care. Being part of a large family of faith is a spiritually rich gift of grace!

“Jesus answering, said: Amen I say to you, there is no man who hath left house or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, who shall not receive an hundred times as much, now in this time; houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions: and in the world to come life everlasting.” (Mark 10: 29-30; Douay Rheims)

Now, that is something to rejoice over, that we shall have a hundred times as much love and family and community and life everlasting in Heaven!

Our own sister and “little mother” is leading us on our way to the Kingdom and already is sharing these heavenly gifts of family and community with us.

Walking with Thérèse - Thérèse shows us how to discover the flower bed of beauty in our own lives

While still meditating and reminiscing over her childhood years, those before her mother passed away, years of charm, warmth, and being surrounded by love, Thérèse makes a startling connection to the Kingdom of God. This connection is a realization of how Our Lord used a natural gift He had bestowed on her to magnify it and transform it into a powerful grace.

This is how it works in the Kingdom. It is often heard in relationship to Thomas Aquinas' teachings that: "grace does not destroy but builds upon nature" (Fr. John A. Hardon). Once again, Thérèse, with no formal theological training, puts forth the same concept in a simple, clear, charming manner. Once again, we see that she has a spiritual mind like that of the great medieval scholastic but explains herself in common, simple terms that we all can understand and with which we can identify. She uses a humorous childhood incident to make one of the most profound points in her entire manuscript.

First, she gives us the anecdote:

"One day Léonie, thinking she was now too big to play with dolls, came and found us both with a basket full of dresses and pretty little pieces of cloth intended to make others; on top was sitting her doll. 'Here, little sisters,' she said, 'you choose, I am giving you all this.' Céline stuck out her hand and took a little ball of yarn that she liked. After thinking about it for a moment, I in turn stuck out my hand and said, 'I choose all!' And I took the basket without further ceremony. Those who were watching the scene thought it was quite fair – Céline herself didn't think to complain." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 19)

This all sounds quite humorous and cute. How are we to derive a stupendous Thomist-type scholastic insight from this? Thérèse does, though. She does derive a deep insight into what this all means for her. It is her life, her story, and her natural demeanor. And since it is so, Our Lord's enlightenment for Thérèse is not only deeply spiritual but deeply personal. The Lord draws her close to Him through the use of her memory and her own very personal experience. He does so by "building on her nature" as opposed to destroying it:

"This childhood trait sums up my whole life. Later, when perfection made its appearance to me, I understood that in order to become a saint you have to suffer a lot, always be in search of what is the most perfect, and forget yourself. I understood that there are many degrees of perfection, and that each soul is free to respond to Our Lord's advances, to do little or much for him – in a word, to choose among the sacrifices that he requires. Then, just as in the days of my childhood, I cried out, "Dear God, I choose all. I don't want to be a halfway saint. It doesn't scare me to suffer for You; I'm afraid of only one thing, and that is to hold onto my will. Take it, because 'I choose all,' all that You want!..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, pp. 19-20)

It is stunning to see her move so suddenly and with such ease to maturity. She has been telling us about herself up to the age of four! Somehow, in the middle of all that, she manages the insight above, which is most sublime.

We see through Thérèse how intimately Our Lord Jesus Christ works in our souls. Our lives are filled with meaning! Everything we do has meaning in the eyes of God. Our most mundane acts might be just the seed of enlightenment we need somewhere down the road. Our Lord knows when that seed is ready to die and break

forth into new life. At the right moment, He too will draw us close to Him in an embrace of love and in a way most personal and intimate.

For Thérèse, a simple childhood story “summed up her whole life.” How did she sense that? God enlightened her intellect through the use of her memory in a way that was intimately hers and hers alone. Understanding her life through a seemingly unimportant childhood memory became an embrace from Her Spouse by way of enlightenment.

Our Lord embraces us and creates a flower bed of beauty and delight in His Kingdom out of our lives. However, we need the spiritual insights from Faith, Hope, and Love while using our intellect and memory in deep contemplation. The flower bed of beauty is before us, the flower bed arrayed in the colors of our very own lives as created by Our Lord, who is He through Whom all things are created. He created the natural world. He also created the Heavens. He has created us for Heaven, by building on our nature rather than destroying it.

We are learning already to discover for ourselves just how He does this as we Walk the Trail with St. Thérèse.

Walking with Thérèse - Thérèse shares her supernatural experience with nature

Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse requires a deep sensitivity to God's divine imprint in nature. Who has not experienced the wonders of nature or felt deeply moved through the beauty and grandeur of God's creation? Who has not felt, while looking out over a grand panorama, that Someone is speaking to the depths of their soul?

Thérèse certainly felt this way:

"I remember with happiness the days when Papa took us to the cottage; the slightest details are engraved on my heart... I especially remember the Sunday walks when Mama always went with us... I can still feel the deep and poetic impressions that were born in my soul at the site of the wheat field spangled with cornflowers and wildflowers. Already I loved faraway places... These spaces and the giant pine trees with branches touching the ground left in my heart an impression like the one I still feel today at the site of nature..."
(The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 22)

You might recall from Part 1 in this series how Jesus leveraged that impression in Thérèse's heart to inspire her with one of her most profound insights:

"Jesus consented to teach me this mystery. He placed before my eyes the book of nature; I understood that all the flowers that He created are beautiful. The brilliance of the rose and the whiteness of the lily don't take away the perfume of the lowly violet or the delightful simplicity of the daisy... I understood that if all the little flowers wanted to be roses, nature would lose its springtime adornment, and the fields would no longer be sprinkled with little flowers..."

So it is in the world of souls, which is Jesus's garden. He wanted to create great Saints Who could be compared to lilies and roses. But He also created little ones, and these ought to be content to be daisies or violets destined to gladden God's eyes when He glances down at His feet. Perfection consists in doing His will, and being what He wants us to be..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, pp. 2-3)

As we walk with Thérèse, we often will experience this interplay between the natural and supernatural. In fact, the Trail we walk with her is a pedagogy in the faith, one that uses her own life story as the central lesson plan. Her older sister, Pauline (Sister Agnes of Jesus), set about to have Thérèse write her natural life story. However, what we receive is Thérèse's understanding of the supernatural character of that very natural story.

That is Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse. She teaches us to be very sensitive to all of the impressions in our natural lives. She teaches us to see God's hand in all the activities of our everyday, ordinary life.

Thérèse teaches us that we all are part of that grand, majestic landscape with its rivers, meadows, forests, and mountains both in the natural world and in the supernatural. We are part of God's creation on earth, but we also are part of God's creation in the new earth and the new Heaven's to come. Thérèse teaches us to pay attention to detail, no matter how ordinary or mundane, so we do not miss the Holy Spirit's enlightenment of knowing who we really are in that order of creation.

This very personal Divine enlightenment stemming from the interplay of the natural and supernatural order is another mystery of grace we receive by Walking the Trail with St. Thérèse!

Walking with Thérèse - Thérèse's profound metaphor of the paintbrush

In Part 5 I discussed Thérèse's profound experience with nature and quoted her metaphor of nature that has played the most central role in my own spirituality. The image of the "book of nature" from which Our Lord taught her is in many respects the foundation of my work and of what I ultimately would describe as "Le Royaume," or "The Kingdom." I refer to it often in order to engage our imagination in understanding the Divine Order of things, that is, the "Vérité, Beauté, Bonté" ("Truth, Beauty, Goodness") of that Order and how we should delight, as Thérèse instructs us, in fulfilling our role in it, no matter how small and insignificant we feel. Thérèse herself felt "little" but delighted in the understanding that Jesus loves the small violets that are at his feet as much as he loves the majestic roses arrayed in a field. Each has its place in pleasing him.

Thérèse's metaphor of nature is powerfully inspiring!

Still, there is another metaphor she uses which is equally enrapturing. It is the metaphor of the paint brush. Thérèse uses it to teach us how Jesus uses others in our lives to help bring about our spiritual growth according to his will. Jesus delights in giving us his gifts of grace through others.

"Since when does the Lord no longer have the right to use one of His creatures to distribute, to the souls that He loves, the food that is necessary to them? ... He has always used His creatures as instruments for doing His work in souls.

If the canvas on which an artist paints could think and speak, certainly it wouldn't complain about being constantly touched and

retouched by a brush, and neither would it envy the role of that instrument, because it would know that it's not to the brush but to the artist who directs it that it owes the beauty that it bears. As for the brush, it couldn't take glory in the masterpiece that it has made. It knows that artists aren't inconvenienced: They make child's play of difficulties, taking pleasure in sometimes choosing instruments that are weak and defective..." (The Story of a Soul, 2006, p. 264)

I find this metaphor to be stunning and worthy of much contemplation. It is one of the most beautiful I have ever experienced concerning the communion of the saints. Through Thérèse's wisdom we see how Jesus uses our brothers and sisters both in Heaven and here on earth as "paint brushes" to bring beauty to our own souls. By using a particular person, he is sharing their own beauty so as to bestow that beauty on us and creating, in the process, our own amalgam of colors.

This is why I have said for many years in my writings, referring to St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse, "St. Joan and St. Thérèse, together they are the most beautiful colors in the Heavens!" Thérèse's metaphor is the foundation for that expression.

When I see the shades and tones Jesus paints on souls with those two brushes – St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux – I cannot help but proclaim them to be "the most beautiful colors in the Heavens."

I love that metaphor – and I love the colors of St. Joan and St. Thérèse. May Our Lord Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of His Mother Mary, imbue our souls in those colors!

Directing our intellectual ideation and conceptual framework

The Kingdom Blessed of St. Joan and St. Thérèse

The Kingdom blessed of St. Joan and St. Thérèse

Le Royaume is my initiative to inspire souls in God's love to seek the subjective application of the fruits of Christ's Redemption through the beauty and majesty of Traditional French Catholicism. Le Royaume is a contemplative based personal devotion that seeks from God preparation for, perseverance in, and continual growth in sanctifying grace through the Traditional French Catholic experience and the Renaissance in our hearts of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Catholic France. Le Royaume is under the co-patronage of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux and guided by their beautiful, combined spirituality.

Le Royaume is the spiritual inheritance of St. Mary Magdalene, whom we honor and with whom we unite ourselves in contemplative prayer through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With her brother Lazarus, she first brought the contemplative spirit of the apostolic age to what would become France. We honor her as foundress and her through whose prayers and sacrifices the Lord and Our Lady surely blessed what was later to become the Virgin Mary's Catholic France.

Le Royaume is about seeking first the Kingdom of God and His saving justice (Matthew 6:33) through the Truth, Beauty, and Goodness of the Traditional French Catholic experience. Through Traditional French Catholicism, we testify to LOVE, for God is LOVE (1 John 4:8). Through Traditional French Catholicism, we come to understand that true love is self-sacrifice in union with Jesus Christ for the glory of God (Mark 8: 34-38). Separated from GOD, we are separated from LOVE. Sin means to be separated from God and results in a spiritual condition where "we know not what we do" (Luke 23:34). We must repent (Matthew 4:17), meaning, we must change our course, in order that we therefore might "know

what we do" in LOVING God. Through repentance we seek to change our ways to God's ways (true LOVE and the opening of our hearts to the fruits of the Redemption), rather than to demand that God change His ways to our ways (self-love and the continued slavery to sin). We are able to go from "not knowing what we do" to "knowing what we do" through the infinite merits of Jesus Christ, Who is the WAY (Beauté – as our King, Judge, and Law Giver), the TRUTH (Verité – as the supreme Teacher of all mankind), and the LIFE (Bonté – as our eternal High Priest and the sole Mediator between God and man) (John 14:6). We must seek, prepare for, persevere in, and grow in sanctifying grace, which intrinsically justifies us and makes us pleasing to God. To seek the Kingdom of God is to seek sanctifying grace.

The objective of Le Royaume is to inspire souls to seek, prepare for, persevere in, and grow in sanctifying grace by a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic Faith through the beautiful pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism. St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, under the Queenship of the Virgin Mary, are prepared to help you.

Le Royaume does not assume Traditional French Catholicism to be normative for the Church as a whole nor superior to any other focused interest. On the contrary, our interest in French Catholic spirituality leads us to appreciate the richness of cultural expression throughout the universal Church. The more we love Le Royaume de France, the more we come to appreciate the unique roles other cultures play in the Church and what the Church does in uniting us all as a family in the Faith.

Using the historically, traditionally established mystical relationship between the Kingdom of France and the Immaculate

Heart of Mary as its model and foundation, Le Royaume seeks to restore the preeminence of the Roman Catholic Church in the hearts of men and women and through the renewal of hearts, to further that preeminence in government, culture, and society at large.

Le Royaume Béni des Ste. Jehanne et Ste. Thérèse is "The Kingdom Blessed of St. Joan and St. Thérèse" shown to me by these two magnificent saints like gates opening on an astonishingly beautiful Castle shining from the peak of a panoramic mountain. Le Royaume reflects my joy in living out the traditional French School of Catholic Spirituality under the friendship, sisterly care, and co-patronage of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Le Royaume is about seeking, loving, and defending the Kingdom of God as reflected in the mystical union between Heaven and the Kingdom of France. This (t)radition of France as the "Eldest Daughter of the Church," glorified in St. Joan of Arc's divinely appointed mission, points nobly to the resplendent beauty of French Catholic spirituality and in general to the dogmatic (T)raditions of the Church, such as True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin (hyper-dulia) and devotion to the saints (dulia). Le Royaume celebrates the medieval faith and culture of France; yet, it is, at the same time, not bound by a particular point in history. It is eternal as a Form in the Immaculate Heart of Mary who holds the fleur-de-lys close to her heart.

This Kingdom of Sts. Joan and Thérèse is "La France Mystique," the mystical Kingdom of France, which Kingdom, through the consecration of France to the Virgin Mary in 1638 by King Louis XIII and by the later decrees of Popes Pius XI (for St. Joan of Arc) and Pius XII (for St. Thérèse), belongs to the Virgin Mary with our saintly sisters as secondary co-patronesses. It uniquely emanates with what I describe as "the most beautiful color in the heavens," that is, the combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of

Lisieux as they guide us in their saintly and sisterly care on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed to the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ is enthroned in all of His glory.

Le Royaume's problem focus:

"Confusion about the Catholic Church stemming out of the contemporary apostasy from true Christian belief and practice is resulting in a turning away from God's love in Jesus Christ and is creating a metaphorical veil covering over the sensible and timeless mystical beauty of the Catholic Church. In addition, this confusion is obscuring, purposefully and deceptively, the objective truth that there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church, the only institution on the face of the earth divinely founded by Christ Himself, Who is true God and true man, and the only Savior of the human race. Therefore, many souls whose salvation is in jeopardy do not see the intrinsic, Divine beauty of the Church nor hear the Divine Truth; therefore, they do not understand the necessity of making a dogmatic confession of Catholic faith and repenting in sorrow for their sins in order to prepare themselves for sanctifying grace required to gain eternal life for themselves and others. Furthermore, this spiritual disorientation in modern society leads many who have made such a repentant confession of faith to grow weak and confused in their Goodness, thus threatening their perseverance in sanctifying grace and therefore their eternal salvation. Many souls are lost for the Church due to this obfuscation of her essential Truth and immortal, heavenly beauty. The extended result of this loss of souls for the Church is that our culture, country, and civilization, which are made up of those individual souls, are lost to her as well.

Thus, as there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church and no hope for a civilization lost to the Church, it is essential that souls be inspired to make a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith that will open their hearts to the application of the subjective redemption in sanctifying grace and then to pursue a spiritual Vision that will aid them in growing and persevering in that sanctifying grace. By freely living a life of sanctifying grace, souls will develop a Catholic worldview that will positively impact society, culture, and political life and that will facilitate the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth as it is in Heaven."

Le Royaume's purpose:

"Le Royaume's purpose is to inspire souls through Truth, Beauty, and Goodness to seek the subjective application of the objective fruits of Christ's Redemption in sanctifying grace by a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith and to develop a spiritual Vision that will open their hearts to efficacious actual graces that will aid them in growing and persevering in that sanctifying grace and in developing a Catholic worldview in social, cultural, and political affairs."

Le Royaume's methods:

"Le Royaume primarily fulfills her purpose by inspiring souls to engage in a contemplative Eucharistic journey in total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary and through the holy, beautiful combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Through the influence of the primary means, Le Royaume fulfills her purpose secondarily by evangelically advocating God's love through the beautiful spiritual pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism and devotion to the Renaissance of Catholic France. "

Le Royaume's resulting Mission Statement:

"Le Royaume's mission is to inspire souls through Truth, Beauty, and Goodness to seek the subjective application of the objective fruits of Christ's Redemption in sanctifying grace by a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith and to develop a spiritual Vision that will open their hearts to efficacious actual graces that will aid them in growing and persevering in that sanctifying grace and in developing a Catholic worldview in social, cultural, and political affairs.

Le Royaume primarily fulfills her mission by inspiring souls to engage in a contemplative Eucharistic journey in total consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary and through the holy, beautiful combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. Through the influence of the primary means, Le Royaume fulfills her mission secondarily by evangelically advocating God's love through the beautiful spiritual pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism and devotion to the Renaissance of Catholic France."

In short, "To Jesus through Mary in the friendship and sisterly care of Sts. Joan and Thérèse!"

Le Royaume's over-arching Vision established by Jesus Christ for the universal Church:

"Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and on God's saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well." (Mt 6:33) "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." (Mt 6:9-10).

Le Royaume's particular Vision Statement born of the traditional mystical relationship between the Blessed Virgin

Mary, St. Joan of Arc, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and the Kingdom of France:

"The sovereign establishment on earth as it is in Heaven of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Kingdom of France bathed in the mystically beautiful light of the combined spirituality of Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux."

Le Royaume's Motto:

"Seek the Kingdom, Love the Kingdom, Defend the Kingdom!"

Le Royaume's Treasures:

"Faith, Hope, and Love"

Le Royaume's Programs:

Seek the Kingdom: True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin with Eucharistic Adoration as the most efficacious means for the renewal of our hearts in sanctifying grace and for acquiring the grace of repentant, dogmatic faith in Jesus Christ and His Holy Catholic Church.

Love the Kingdom: The Dove and Rose devotion to the secondary co-patronesses of France, Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux, as a means of most efficaciously affecting True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin in our hearts, growing in sanctifying grace, and journeying joyfully and faithfully toward the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France in Eucharistic Adoration.

Defend the Kingdom: The Royal Hearts as a means of most efficaciously affecting the contemplative, counterrevolutionary spirit of the Kingdom of Catholic France in our hearts, which will aid us in persevering in sanctifying grace.

Le Royaume's Goals:

Seek the Kingdom: Bring True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin by St. Louis de Montfort to as many hearts as possible. To increase devotion to Eucharistic adoration through Mary in all of these hearts.

Love the Kingdom: Bring The Dove and Rose devotion to Sts. Joan and Thérèse to as many hearts as possible as a means to most fully and deeply fulfill our True Devotion to Mary. To raise awareness of and to increase joyful devotion to Sts. Joan and Thérèse in all of these hearts.

Defend the Kingdom: Bring the spirit of The Royal Hearts to as many hearts as possible. To increase the counterrevolutionary spirit of Traditional French Catholicism in all of these hearts.

Le Royaume's guiding principles:

1. Obedience to our Holy Father, the Pope and the Magisterium of the Church
2. Devotion to the eternal mystical union between Our Lady's Immaculate Heart and the Kingdom of France whose temporal expression is found in the Kings and Queens of the Ancien Régime, dating back to the institution of the Capetian dynasty and beyond that through the Carolingian dynasty, and to the baptism of Clovis as the first Catholic King of the Franks.
3. A Counterrevolutionary spirit of Christendom in the West which gives preeminence to the rights of the Kingdom of God on earth, which is the Holy Roman Catholic Church, to influence the minds, hearts, laws, and culture of the land

(the end of the Revolutionary manipulation of society through "Separation of Church of State").

4. Support for Counterrevolutionary activities that would bring about the establishment of Catholic Kings and Queens in the West, including the United States, as the optimal means to re-establish a Church-State alliance for the building up of the Kingdom of God "on earth as it is in Heaven," to destroy Protestant, Masonic, and New Age heresies, and to end the atheistic secular democratic republican state.
5. Exultation in the Holy Catholic Church as the only institution, faith, and spirituality which contains the fullness of God's revelation to man in Jesus Christ as Son of God and the only Savior of the human race and being instituted by Jesus Christ for this purpose. We reject as heretical religious relativism which attempts to claim that all religions, or so-called "Christian denominations" (i.e., Protestant and Independent Evangelical), or spiritual belief systems in general are equally good, true, and essentially lead to the same relationship with God. God established only one Church for His Kingdom on earth, the Holy Roman Catholic Church. We specifically reject as heretical and antithetical to the teachings of Jesus Christ and to His purpose in instituting His Catholic Church, the modern notion of "spiritual but not religious." We likewise oppose the modern militant, secular, atheistic anti-faith that goes further into darkness by admitting not even to an "equally good" relativism but to its own supremacy. Lord be our protector and our victory.

6. Outreach to those outside the Catholic Church through a Counterrevolutionary focus on the fullness of Truth, even if that Truth divides us, rather than by focusing only on that which unites us (the "kum-bah-yah" approach). In this way are able to present to the world the glories of the Catholic faith rather than to hide these treasures away. To proclaim with the Protestant that "all that matters is that we both worship Christ as our personal savior" simply makes all of us Protestants. To proclaim with the non-Christian religious that "all that matters is that we both worship God" simply makes all of us non-Christian religious. To proclaim with the non-believing atheist that "all that matters is that we both believe in being good" simply makes all of us non-believing atheists. Simple agreement to the lowest common denominator with those outside the Church will yield little to no help for the salvation of souls, for that method ignores the fullness of Truth. We are here to proclaim the fullness of God's revelation through His Holy Catholic Church without compromise or trepidation; for, there is no salvation outside the Catholic Church.
7. Focus on the abundant beauty and efficacious friendship and patronage of the saints, particularly Sts. Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux, and most importantly on the necessity of hyperdulia honor to our Holy Mother the Virgin Mary, as representing the abundance of Christ's grace and charity to us through the Divine Order in His Kingdom which is His Catholic Church. Jesus Christ is King. The Holy Virgin is Queen. The saints are our glorious brothers and sisters in Christ, through the Divine motherhood of Mary. Here we

share with the world the treasures of the Kingdom as expressed by St. Thomas:

"It is God's will that inferior beings should be helped by all those that are above them, wherefore we ought to pray not only to the higher but also to the lower saints; else we should have to implore the mercy of God alone... for the Divine Order is such that lower beings receive an overflow of the excellence of the higher, even as the air receives the brightness of the sun...we pray to the saints, whether angels or men, not that God may through them know our petitions, but that our prayers may be effective through their prayers and merits." (St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, IIa, IIae, Question 83, Article 11)

The 10 Points of Le Royaume (Short Form)

(1) Le Royaume is traditionally-minded Catholicism in union with our Holy Father the Pope in Rome and the Magisterium of the Church.

(2) Le Royaume is intrinsically good, being the mystical Kingdom of France belonging to the Virgin Mary, St. Joan of Arc, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

(3) Le Royaume is Marian, Thérésian, and Jehannian in spirituality.

(4) Le Royaume is Mystically French.

(5) Le Royaume is Royalist.

(6) Le Royaume is aristocratic and anti-egalitarian.

(7) Le Royaume is favorable toward the prophecies by Catholic saints through the centuries of the coming of a Great French Monarch.

(8) Le Royaume is imperialistic for the Catholic cause.

(9) Le Royaume is Counterrevolutionary.

(10) Le Royaume is evangelical in converting heretics and schismatics.

The 10 Points of Le Royaume (Long Form)

Point 1: Le Royaume is traditionally-minded Catholicism in union with our Holy Father the Pope in Rome and the Magisterium of the Church.

This point is the foundation and wellspring for all the other points to follow. Just as the infinite merits of Jesus Christ are the wellspring from which all grace flows, and as the Holy Roman Catholic Church is His Body and His Bride, so it is that obedience to that Church secures for us the life-giving waters of grace flowing from His life, passion, death, and resurrection.

Without first being established in traditionally-minded Catholicism through both the intellect and the will, we, as “fils ou filles du Royaume,” that is, “sons or daughters of the Kingdom,” are unable to fully appreciate and integrate into the substance of our being the rest of the points. Without this point firmly embedded in our souls, we will continually run awry on our journey. It will be like having a bent, out of balance wheel on our spiritual carriage. The more out of balance is the wheel, the greater the difficulty in keeping the carriage on the designated path. As soon as the wheel is left to its own way, without an immediate, opposing, and correcting force, the entire carriage is wrecked. This journey to Le Royaume is on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux. This is the Trail through the great castle walls of Roman Catholicism that leads into the magnificent Kingdom of God which is spiritually the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ is enthroned in all of His glory. We hope to find our particular fiefdom, Le Royaume, in this Kingdom, and we cannot do so with a bent wheel, that is, through our own whims, opinions, feelings, and our constant demands for satisfying our prideful, disordered desires. We cannot do so without the saintly and sisterly

guidance of Joan and Thérèse who demand of us strict adherence to the Dogmas, Doctrines, Creeds, and Magisterial teachings of the Holy Catholic Church. Our first point is critical, then, for beginning our journey.

It is only through this traditionally-minded Catholicism, that of strict adherence to the Dogmas, Doctrines, Creeds, and Magisterial teachings of the Holy Catholic Church in a hermeneutic of continuity, that we will find *Le Royaume*, for in order to reach our noble destination we must make authentic progress. Authentic progress is that which actually has an end of authentic value in mind and which then follows a true course that brings one safely to that authentically valuable end. A carriage speeding forward through both space and time is making material “progress” as narrowly measured by mere space and time; however, if that so-called “progress” (which based on the limiting values of space and time simply represents “movement forward” but to what end?) leads the carriage over a cliff, then that progress is not authentic. True progress, therefore, is not measured by mere chronology (e.g., the present is superior to the Middle Ages, simply because the Middle Ages were a long time ago), but is determined by having both an authentically valuable end point and a Trail leading true to that end point. It takes both an authentically valuable end-point and an authentic Trail to establish that our journey through space and time will result in true progress and not simply be a journey over a cliff.

Here is the crux of the matter and the deeper reason that we must be traditionally-minded Catholics in obedience to our Holy Father the Pope in Rome and the Magisterium of the Church. Jesus Christ alone, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords, is in Himself and in His substance, the true end. He alone represents authenticity. He

is the Alpha and the Omega. Therefore, strict adherence to His Body and Bride on earth, the Holy Catholic Church, is required to make any authentic progress, and certainly in relation to Le Royaume. The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed to Le Royaume with St. Joan and St. Thérèse is a metaphor for this faithful obedience to the Church with all of her Dogmas, Doctrines, and Creeds under the saintly patronage of our heavenly sisters

This point cannot be overemphasized. There is a fundamental divergence that influences all people on this earth. Originating with the Fall of Man and corrected through Jesus Christ, it is the most primordial and fundamental of all divergences and encompasses the entire of humanity. It is the divergence between those whose driving orientation is toward God and obedience to Him (through cooperation in sanctifying grace which comes from that correction by Jesus Christ), and those whose driving orientation is toward their own selves and their own hearts separate from God (through a rebellion against that sanctifying grace). The first seeks to do anything, even if incomprehensible, if only God commands it, for God is substantively Good in Himself and deserving of obedience simply for Who He Is ("I Am"), making this obedience necessarily unconditional:

"Thus saith the Lord to me: Go, and get thee a linen girdle, and thou shalt put it about thy loins, and shalt not put it into water. And I got a girdle according to the word of the Lord, and put it about my loins. And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying: Take the girdle which thou hast got, which is about thy loins, and arise, go to the Euphrates, and hide it there in a hole of the rock. And I went, and hid it by the Euphrates, as the Lord had commanded me. And it came to pass after many days, that the Lord said to me: Arise, go to the Euphrates, and take from thence the girdle, which I commanded thee to hide there. And I went to the

Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle out of the place where I had hid it..." (Jer 13: 1-6) (Douay Rheims)

The second diverging orientation seeks to do its own will, to satisfy its own heart and its own inward desires, even in defiance of God:

"Well do you make void the commandment of God that you may keep your own tradition. For Moses said: Honor thy father and thy mother; and He that shall curse father or mother; dying let him die. But you say: If a man shall say to his father or mother, Corban (which is a gift,) whatsoever is from me shall profit thee. And further you suffer him not to do anything for his father or mother. Making void the word of God by your own tradition, which you have given forth. And many other such like things you do."

"Hear ye all and understand. There is nothing from without a man that entering into him, can defile him. But the things which come from a man, those are they that defile a man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear." (Mk 7: 9-13; 14b-16) (Douay Rheims)

"For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile a man. (Mk 7: 21-23) (Douay Rheims)

We call this latter orientation The Revolution and its adherents Revolutionaries. It reflects the primordial Revolution against God by Satan that began before the foundations of the world and which Revolution captured the hearts of Adam and Eve, leading to The Fall of mankind which was restored only by the life, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This Revolution is never absent

from the on-going drama of mankind's journey through time and space and will never be absent to its end in Jesus Christ at His Second Coming at which time He will judge the living and the dead. It is the on-going drama of the two, and only two, apocalyptic players in the Heavens and the earth, Christ and anti-Christ. This Revolution seeks only disorder and disobedience to God. This disordered disobedience can be found in every nook and cranny of mankind's activities including those of the Church. How many clergy, religious, and lay people sadly walk the path of the Revolution in the Church! How many of those who are closest to Christ through baptism betray Him through the revolutionary seeking of their own heart, their own orientation, their own views and opinions, wherein lies everything that can defile!

Conversely, we call the first, or former, orientation The Counterrevolution and its adherents Counterrevolutionaries. It is the noble reaction against the ignoble Revolution and can be found only in a man or woman through sanctifying grace. After The Fall, all were Revolutionaries; yet, after the Resurrection, mankind was given the grace to be restored to proper order, to proper obedience to God. Jesus Christ was the Ultimate Counterrevolutionary, and the Father of all Counterrevolutionaries who seek to return to God and to resist the evil Revolutionary actions in the world, even, and particularly, those defiling the Church.

It is because of this driving Counterrevolutionary orientation that we adhere to the Traditional Latin Mass (Extraordinary Form). We see more vividly in the liturgical rubrics of the Traditional Latin Mass that obedient orientation to God.

In all, the Kingdom of God, and Le Royaume which is that part of the Kingdom of God to which St. Joan and St. Thérèse are leading us, is far bigger than the Counterrevolution. The Church, though

being the single most formidable Counterrevolutionary force on earth, is far more than the Counterrevolution itself. Thus, we are seeking Le Royaume, which, as we will point out below, is good in itself. We are fundamentally for something as opposed to being fundamentally opposed to something. Yet, the Fils du Royaume, like any wise traveler, must always keep a material and spiritual eye and ear alert for signs of the deadly Revolution. The Fils is moving joyfully toward Le Royaume with St. Joan and St. Thérèse on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed, but at the same time, the Fils is alert to dangers lurking nearby in the Dark Forest of the Revolution with its spiritually intoxicating and carcinogenic philosophies, cultural norms, illicit syncretism, false ecumenisms, and overall intrinsically disordered orientations designed, ultimately, to destroy the Church. Le Royaume is about proper order, the Divine Order, and is intrinsically good. This intrinsic goodness will be the subject of our next essay.

Point 2: Le Royaume is intrinsically good, being the mystical Kingdom of France belonging to the Virgin Mary, St. Joan of Arc, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

“In the language of images Jeanne has thus (with her banner) depicted the Church in heaven as pure adoration of God, the Church on earth as the reception of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and sinful humanity, gathered in this Church around the cross along with the priests and soldiers, redeemed and repentant. Yet it is the same Church that is on earth and in heaven.”

- (The Spiritual Way of St. Jeanne d’Arc by George Tavard)

Question: Do you not believe that you owe submission to God’s Church on earth, that is to our lord the pope, to the cardinals, archbishops, bishops, and other prelates of the Church?

Joan: Yes, our Sire being first served.

Question: Have you commandment from your voices not to submit yourself to the Church militant which is on earth, nor to its judgment?

Joan: I shall not answer otherwise than I take into my head, but what I answer is by the commandment of my voices; they do not command that I obey not the Church, God first served.

- (Joan of Arc, By Herself and Her Witnesses, Pernoud)

This Kingdom of Sts. Joan and Thérèse is “La France Mystique,” the mystical Kingdom of France, which Kingdom, through the consecration of France to the Virgin Mary in 1638 by King Louis XIII and by the later decrees of Popes Pius XI (for St. Joan of Arc) and Pius XII (for St. Thérèse), belongs to the Virgin Mary with our saintly sisters as secondary co-patronesses. It uniquely emanates with what we can only describe as “the most

beautiful color in the heavens,” that is, the combined spirituality of St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux as they guide us in their saintly and sisterly care on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed to the center of the Immaculate Heart of Mary where Jesus Christ is enthroned in all of His glory. For these reasons, Le Royaume is intrinsically good.

Le Royaume’s intrinsic goodness means that we seek it for its own sake, being a manifestation of the Kingdom of God where there are many Kingdoms and where Jesus Christ is King of all Kings. As such, our love for Le Royaume, which is really our love for the Trinitarian God revealed through the doctrines and dogmas of the Catholic Church, is unconditional. We neither ask nor expect anything as a condition of our love or of our desire to be sons and daughters of this Kingdom. In fact, not only do we ask nothing, we offer everything, including our very lives. Our greatest desire is to lose all for the sake of the Kingdom as a testimony to the inherent and intrinsic goodness of Le Royaume. The greater the goodness, the more one is willing to sacrifice. In Le Royaume we see a manifestation of the Kingdom of God and desire that this Kingdom be glorified “on earth as it is in Heaven.”

Our unconditional love for Le Royaume means that while we dutifully seek God’s temporal blessings as is fitting to our state in life such as parent, priest, widow, single, or consecrated religious, we are satisfied and grateful for whatever conditions Our Lord and King of Kings so wills to bestow on us. Whereas it is fitting in our respective states in life to ask Our Lord and the intercession of the saints for healing, sufficient resources, and enough success that we might bring Him glory, we abhor the idea that these temporal goods and earthly measures are a necessary condition on our faith, our hope, or our love. Should Our Lord choose to let us suffer, even

to die, for God's glory as He did to His closest friends on earth, Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, we are eternally grateful to be counted in that company and for that grace to demonstrate our love. For, the Holy Trinity and the Kingdom of God, of which Le Royaume is a part, are intrinsically good and no condition can be placed on our love for them.

In imitation of our most glorious saintly sisters, Joan and Thérèse, and indeed of all the saints throughout history, we find that we are not even satisfied with a mere enduring of our sufferings. We eagerly seek to be crucified with Our Lord so as to love Him, relatively speaking to our lowliness and sinfulness, as unconditionally as He loves us. Like St. Thérèse and St. Joan, we desire to suffer all for Jesus Christ, as we are compelled in this manner by virtue of His intrinsic goodness and that of Le Royaume which we seek. Intrinsic goodness demands sacrifice. Divine Intrinsic Goodness demands the ultimate sacrifice of love. In essence we realize upon seeing and sensing Le Royaume through the most caring assistance of St. Joan and St. Thérèse in the Immaculate Heart of Mary, and only as like in that cloudy mirror to which St. Paul refers, that to attain it means to lose all, and to lose all means to gain everything.

To Be means goodness, as God found His creation to be good, while our sinfulness is anti-being. Being and anti-being cannot co-exist. Le Royaume means Being and Life, while our sinfulness means anti-being and death. With our sinfulness crucified in union with Jesus Christ and through His merits and sanctifying grace, we are left with glorified being in Heaven. Such is the land of Le Royaume and such are the saints who have gone before us. **We must never place a condition on our faith, our hope, or our love for God, His angels, His saints, or Le Royaume even if it means sickness, poverty, and death.**

We abhor the twisted notion that God must, or necessarily will, do what pleases us in order to justify a so-called love for Him, that He must heal us, provide us with wealth, good fortune, or any other earthly good lest we abandon Him for more comfortable and self-affirming spiritualities of idolatry which diabolically promise us “all the kingdoms of the earth” if we only worship the father of all lies and the murderer. We ask as is fitting, but we our most pleased, even joyful, to be denied all if that is for the greater glory of God, for in this manner we are blessed to be able to demonstrate our love.

“Set your hearts on his Kingdom first, and on God’s saving justice, and all these other things will be given you as well” (Mt. 6:33).

Point 3: Le Royaume is Marian, Thérésian, and Jehannian in spirituality

We joyfully allow St. Joan and St. Thérèse to lead us on our journey of faith and in the manner that best fulfills our consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary, all in order to be united to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as per the teachings of St. Louis de Montfort and St. Maximilian Kolbe.

Congruent with the first two points of Le Royaume, we are keenly aware of the mystical union between the Church militant, Church suffering, and Church Victorious. This mystical union, as described in point two, demonstrates well the mystery of our devotion which is specifically brought out in the writings on The Dove and Rose (St. Joan and St. Thérèse). There we find that we are both contemplative and active; we are at rest on Thérèse's Mount Carmel while actively engaged with Joan in the spiritual warfare of the Church militant on earth. Conversely, and somewhat paradoxically, we are as militant as Thérèse and as quietly contemplative as Joan. Heaven is on earth through the Church militant, and we therefore see the magnificent history of Christendom, and notably of the Kingdom of France as the Eldest Daughter of the Church, in light of this mystical union.

Here, we are deeply influenced by St. Joan of Arc whose military banner, along with her responses to her nefarious and ill-willed inquisitors, demonstrated a profoundly clear view of the Church in Heaven united to the Church on earth. To anoint a King in Rheims was to fulfill a Heavenly ordained mission. To fight for the Kingdom of France on earth was to fight for the Kingdom of God in Heaven as Joan pointed out so poignantly to Charles VII when she informed him that the Kingdom of France belonged to

Jesus Christ as King of Kings. Charles, as King of temporal France, was to be the steward of the Kingdom of France for Jesus Christ.

Our mission on earth is to transform the earth through this very mystical union. We pray always that "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." While this Kingdom is primarily in the hearts of men and is not "of this world," it is nevertheless through the hearts of men that the temporal social, cultural, and political order "in this world" is established. Thus, to affect change "not of this world" in the hearts of men is to congruently affect change "in the world" through the social, cultural, and political order.

This transformation must first happen in our own hearts if we are to participate in the mission of *Le Royaume*, the mystical Kingdom of France, through the spiritual influences of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Thérèse of Lisieux, and St. Joan of Arc. Here we see the importance of the Tradition of the Church through the writings and examples of the great saints and Doctors of the Church (of which St. Thérèse is one Doctor) who traveled The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed before us. We are attuned to them in order to find true spirituality and to detect and reject outright as deadly and diabolical the false spiritualities and philosophies of the modern world such as Protestantism, New Age, "Spiritual but not Religious," Secularism, and Scientific Atheism. We seek only The Cross through the doctrines, dogmas, and magisterial guidance of the Holy Catholic Church.

Repentance, contrition for sins (of which ours are too numerable to count and too horrible to contemplate), self-knowledge acquired through the guidance of the Holy Spirit flowing from the Immaculate Heart of Mary, a desire to re-order

our lives through sanctifying grace flowing from the infinite merits of Jesus Christ's life, passion, death, and resurrection, and a holy fear of God born of our unconditional love referenced in point two of Le Royaume, are all essential elements in our Marian, Thérésian, and Jehannian spirituality.

We reject as diabolical the New Age and modern psychotherapeutic nonsense that seeks to affirm every belief and lifestyle while denying sin, judgment, and the reality of Hell. We know that we are grave sinners, bringing ourselves low like mere toads and snails as St. Louis de Montfort refers. The goodness of our created being is blackened through our own fault and through the misuse of our free will.

In the light of Le Royaume, this pitiful darkness is transformed into magnificent light through Hope. Through the Divine Mercy of Jesus Christ alone, and with no help from the psychotherapeutic, New Age heresies of modern spiritualities, we are raised up through Hope to embrace the Mercy of Our Savior. By His Mercy we are able to love our home, Le Royaume, with the Holy Trinity, the angels, and the saints as God's intrinsic goodness drives us to do and as mentioned in point two.

Thus, gratitude is an essential spiritual characteristic of our union with the Holy Virgin Mary, St. Joan, and St. Thérèse. We must eliminate our complaints and grievances as these reflect nothing more than our vulgar, self-centered pre-occupations. They negatively transform our unconditional love into conditional dependency and spiritual immaturity.

Gratitude in all things, be they sickness, poverty, perceived injustices, or even imminent death, is foundational to the Kingdom. Ingratitude cannot enter Le Royaume. We are eternally grateful to God in all circumstances of life simply because He Is Who He Is.

Point 4: Le Royaume is Mystically French

This point is perhaps the most sublime, and it is here that we cross through the most elegant meadow on our journey along the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with Sts. Joan and Thérèse. From this mystical meadow we are ecstatic and filled with gratitude as we see the beautiful flowers, fresh lakes, deep running rivers, and majestic mountains on the horizon. We see the temporal Kingdom of France ("Le Royaume de France" or "Le Royaume des Francs"), now in exile under the Republic, as the New Covenant tribe of Judah divinely appointed by Jesus Christ, beginning with King Clovis in the late 5th century, for the protection and propagation of His Church ("The enemies of France are the enemies of Christ" - Gregory IX to King Saint Louis) and the Kingdom recognized by Holy Mother Church as belonging to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, St. Joan of Arc, and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the three most cherished saints of Le Royaume.

Here is the sublimity of this encounter in Le Royaume. While proclaiming the mystically French orientation of Le Royaume with its noticeably medieval mind-set, we are in no way establishing this orientation as normative for the Church. That would be an egregious offense, for the Church is her own norm, being the holy body and bride of Jesus Christ, guided without error in faith and morals by the Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ is not bound by a particular culture, a particular time, or to a single spiritual orientation.

This mystically French orientation is, though, a powerful buttress of Counterrevolutionary spiritual and temporal activity under the guidance of our two saintly sisters, Joan and Thérèse, the secondary co-patronesses of France. This mystically French orientation rises obtusely in the face of revolutionary modernists

who have ravaged the Church with liturgical abuses and deadly doctrinal errors that promote the influences of Protestantism, New Age, and "Spiritual but not Religious" nonsense that all seek only to destroy the Church.

That our life as a Counterrevolutionary in Le Royaume hinges dramatically on this point cannot be exaggerated. Neither can its beauty, majesty, and life-giving inspiration be adequately proclaimed in mere words. One must experience Le Royaume with Sts. Joan and Thérèse to even begin to understand it. Le Royaume's profundity is found in this mystical relationship between Heaven and earth. For it is in that relationship between Heaven and the Kingdom of France that we find the ultimate and astonishing meaning of our existence. Our day to day activities in the ordinary affairs of our lives take on eternal significance. Ordinary life becomes majestic and regal. Our work here is merely a reflection in a mirror, as St. Paul points out, of that which is in Heaven.

The mystically French orientation of Le Royaume, while not normative for the Church at large as noted above, is, for those called to her, the hinge point and bridge between Heaven and earth from whence we discover the royal and regal nature of our calling and from whence comes our gratitude being the unworthy and vile sinners that we are.

Point 5: Le Royaume is Royalist

We choose the Catholic Monarchy as the optimal form of government, the temporal reflection of the Divine Order in the Kingdom of God, and the form of social order that most facilitates Our Lord's request in the Our Father that "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

We acknowledge and accept Leo XIII's point that various forms of government can all be valid so long as they seek their end in the proper good; yet, we note Pius VI's classification of Monarchy as the best form of government and St. Pius X's censure of Le Sillon's thesis which erroneously claimed that only through democracy would mankind inaugurate perfect justice.

We make no more mention here, as this topic is covered in detail in the next section.

Point 6: Le Royaume is aristocratic and anti-egalitarian

We acknowledge that while all people in their human essence are created with equal human dignity accompanied by equal rights to life and freedom, God in His wisdom has willed essential inequalities (St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa 1 Q47 A2) throughout both the spiritual and temporal realms for the good and edification of the created order as a whole.

These inequalities acclaim God's glory and in humans reflect the wisdom of the Divine Order through factors such as aristocratic birthright, differing talents, degrees of skills, health...etc. Inequalities exist even among the Saints glorified in Heaven, all for the glory of God.

To use a metaphor for the Kingdom of God, a beautiful landscape is beautiful precisely because of the varying degrees of make, color, height, width, and depth of the flowers, trees, rivers, valleys, and mountains making up that panorama. Conversely, as inequality implies superiority, mankind's pride finds all superiority repugnant and therefore seeks to eliminate all inequality, including legitimate inequalities, leading ultimately to a blasphemous doctrine of equality with God Himself through either Eastern New Age Pantheism or through secular atheism which seeks the elimination of God altogether.

Le Royaume understands that legitimate superiority (such as in the sacred orders of the priesthood, the Monarchical aristocratic hierarchy of the Church, or in the angels and saints who care for us from their glorified home in Heaven) is to be honored, not eradicated. Latria (for God alone), hyper-dulia (for the Holy Mother of God), and dulia (for the angels, saints, and legitimate earthly royalty) are essential Catholic Orthodoxy and are celebrated in Le Royaume.

Point 7: Le Royaume is favorable toward the prophecies by Catholic saints through the centuries of the coming of a Great French Monarch

This Monarch will work with a Holy Pope to defeat the enemies of Christ and restore the primacy of the Catholic Church (though such prophecies are private revelations and therefore are not articles of faith to be professed by all Catholics).

Point 8: Le Royaume is imperialistic for the Catholic cause

We seek the primacy throughout the world of Catholic religion and Catholic culture over all other alternatives (as these alternatives are by their nature less authentic than those of Catholicism, re: point 6 above).

Here we revere as our models Clovis, the first Catholic King of the Franks, Charlemagne, and, perhaps the most astonishing and greatest evangelist the world has seen since St. Paul, the Servant of God Queen Isabel of Spain, the first sovereign of the New World who brought the entire hemisphere to the Catholic faith at the same point in history when millions on the European continent were falling into apostasy through the Protestant Revolution.

Point 9: Le Royaume is Counterrevolutionary

We defend the faith with its way of life and culture from those belonging to the on-going Satanic Revolutions (beginning with the Protestant Revolution, then to the American/Jeffersonian "Separation of Church and State," French, Bolshevik, Sixties "Hippie," and, recently, "spiritual but not religious" New Age revolutions) who have no other objective than the destruction of the Kingdom of God on earth, the Holy Catholic Church.

Here, we revere as our models the Frankish warrior, Charles Martel, the Holy Land Crusaders, the Spanish Crusaders of the Reconquest, and most dear to our hearts, the "Armée Catholique et Royale," the Catholic and Royal Army of the Vendée during the French Revolution.

Point 10: Le Royaume is evangelical in converting heretics and schismatics

We see as heretical and antithetical to Jesus Christ's purpose in founding His Church that we would abandon or desecrate His Dogma and His presence invested in the teaching authority of the Holy Father and the Magisterium of the Church through a superficial, feel-good "ecumenism" with those outside the Church. We will all be "one" when the lost sheep are brought back to the Chief Shepherd in the Catholic Church. In sum, true ecumenism means evangelization.

The Catholic Church, as that one divinely founded by Jesus Christ, is in her very substance superior to all other philosophies, religions, creeds, doctrines, and spiritualities. She has no equal on earth. Whatever truth is found in any particular Protestant or "Spiritual but not Religious" community is totally contingent and dependent on the Catholic Church by the mercy of Jesus Christ Himself. Protestant communities and "Spiritual but not Religious" philosophies represent tragic aberrations to the true faith where heresy and revolutionary apostasy run unchecked to the potential ruin of many souls.

We see the logical end of any authentic ecumenism as the defeat and eradication of Protestantism with its demonic New Age and "Spiritual but not Religious" derivatives, through charitable evangelical efforts to bring all baptized members of Christ's body into the loving arms of Holy Mother Church. Our ecumenical efforts can likewise be seen as efforts to rescue our baptized brethren from the satanic illusions and influences of Protestantism, New Age, and "Spiritual but not Religious" anti-Church tendencies.

Through French Eyes: The Counterrevolution

This section will lay out what we propose will be very effective tactics for aiding the restoration of the Catholic Church, which is the Kingdom of God on earth, and for doing our small part in saving her from the hellish forces of Protestantism, Eastern New Age Paganism, and the mother of all anti-Church Satanic influences, Freemasonry, the latter of which seeks a blasphemous one world religion where all churches are seen simply as a melting pot of spirituality energizing the building of a utopian, anti-God, secular humanist, earthly City of Man and which, collectively, adores Man himself through his "self-actualization," "self-awareness," and, essentially, his "divine-self." The tactics here are intended as specific antidotes to these anti-Church forces that spiritually poison the Church and are related to Le Royaume's three primary programs supporting our Mission and Vision, namely:

Seek the Kingdom through True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and habitual Eucharistic adoration.

Love the Kingdom through a journey on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed to "La France Mystique," that is, "Mystical France" with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux.

Defend the Kingdom through devotion to the Counterrevolutionary spirit of traditional French Catholicism and of the culture of Christendom that developed through the centuries around the Faith of the ages.

Three fundamental points must be understood by every faithful Catholic, whether or not they find specific affection in devotion to Traditional French Catholic Spirituality and the Renaissance of Catholic France, for Le Royaume, as stated in point four of her ten

points, does not consider herself as normative for the Church; she is simply designed as one Counterrevolutionary force supporting the universal Church and is for those who feel special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary's Mystical Kingdom of France. It is in the French mindset, however, that we gain a unique insight, for France is, and has been historically, the great battle ground between the Church and the anti-Church forces. It is through the evils of the French Revolution that we see Satan's strategy, which began in the Protestant Revolution, now officially codified in language. It is this same strategy that he is using to fan the flames of revolution inside the Church today. That strategy is: "Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité."

The cry of the French Revolutionaries that later so inspired Lenin and the Bolsheviks in Russia has become the cry of revolutionaries in the Church; though, the latter's language is predictably obscure and deceptive. Le Royaume aims here to call it out into the sunlight that we might defend ourselves from it and ultimately to destroy it.

The Problem

The attack on Christ's Holy Catholic Church through the post-Vatican II years has come along the very same three avenues whereby Satan so horrifically raged against the Church during the French Revolution. The "smoke of Satan" entering the Church after Vatican II (as described by Pope Paul VI) was the very smoke that burned in the Bolshevik Revolution and which was in turn inspired by the French Revolution of the "enlightenment," which was itself inspired by the American Revolution with its "Separation of Church and State," all of which ultimately spawned from the evils of the Protestant Revolution. These three points are critical to understanding the Freemasonry-inspired confusion in the Church which gives, temporarily and only by the mysterious will of God,

free reign for Satan to walk through the Kingdom of God on earth and to mock our Savior as he did on Calvary:

Liberté - religious freedom - the revolution in the Church to promote a Masonic freedom of religion whereby error is given the same rights as Truth and which tends to support democratic spirituality and the formation of Democratic, Constitutional Republics as the governmental "right arm" of Satan's secular humanism.

Vatican II's declaration on religious freedom is used by revolutionaries in the Church to destroy the preeminence in society and culture of Jesus Christ and His Body, the Church, all in the name of "freedom." Liberté is the revolutionary inversion, the turning away, or "un-repentance" from freedom through obedience to God and toward slavery through obedience to man.

Liberté "allows" people to "personally" believe something while never, ever feeling the right to "impose" that belief on others.

Liberté is the battle cry for revolutionaries in the Church who seek to destroy Catholic Christian culture by publicly supporting civil rights for evils such as abortion or same-sex "marriage" while claiming all the while that they do not "personally" believe that way! The revolutionaries inside the Church now preach that this is the "new" way of Catholicism, or, alternatively, they are forced to unmercifully twist and mangle their words to explain to us that this is "how the pre-conciliar Church really thought."

In the final analysis, these revolutionaries support a secular freedom that leads to the slavery of Adam over a religious obedience that leads to the freedom of Jesus Christ.

Egalité - ecumenism - the revolution in the Church to promote the equality of all "Christian" denominations in a false ecumenism which is no more than the frontal assault of the evils of Protestantism in the Church.

Revolutionaries are using the Church's teaching on ecumenism to mitigate, or even to destroy it seems at times, the Church's unique claim as the only Church of Jesus Christ and the only Church through which is given us the hope for salvation. We are reduced to the lowest common denominator of belief in order to appear more attractive to Protestants rather than to pronounce the fullness of our faith with vigor so as to convert Protestants to the fullness of Truth in the Catholic Church.

Egalité is the revolutionary inversion, the turning away, or "unrepentance" from the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church and toward a new democratic collegiality among baptized Christians, where the revolutionaries would have us seek understanding with and (heaven help us) even learning from heretics and schismatics.

Egalité works in union with liberté to break down the walls of the Church and to carry away her inhabitants as slaves to the new, Masonic, one world spirituality of tolerance and world peace. The Catholic is led to believe that his or her traditional interpretation of the Faith is "intolerant" and "divisive" which are contrary to the "true" teachings of Jesus Christ (apparently only recently discovered through the intellectual superiority of the modern mind!).

The Catholic therefore is led to believe that his or her new chains of slavery in Freemasonic thought are really the vestments of freedom.

Fraternité - tolerance for other religions - the revolution in the Church to promote the Masonic, one world utopian ideal of world peace through the eradication of religious differences.

Revolutionaries are using the Church's teachings on other religions with Vatican II's teaching on salvation outside the Catholic Church to mitigate her missionary and evangelical zeal for the conversion and salvation of souls. Fraternité is the revolutionary inversion, the turning away, or "un-repentance" from the Great Commission of Christ to baptize all nations that the Father's Kingdom might come "on earth as it is in Heaven" and toward a new Kingdom of Man representing Satan's Kingdom "on earth as it is in Hell."

We see here the blasphemous integration of Eastern New Age spiritualities into the Church and her liturgies. A supposed value is promoted regarding the spirituality of Buddhism, Hinduism, and other oriental pagan religions. Tolerance for Islam is promoted as a means of leading the way toward the utopian ideal. Pacifism is promoted (since nothing should ever be defended anyway - to defend means to believe in the superiority of one's belief - this true belief is despised by revolutionaries).

Catholicism is shamed for her past, and the faithful are told that Jesus really wants (and always did want) the "enlightened," "progressive," "modern" way! Original sin no longer exists (nor did it ever really, in the teachings of the revolutionaries), Christ's death was simply a tragedy of ignorant religious zeal (such as the Catholic Church has expressed through the centuries) and therefore unnecessary. His death on the cross "saves" us through the enlightenment we now receive by the modernist's intellectual superiority in interpreting the past. Jesus becomes "resurrected" and

"alive" in our hearts when we finally eschew all religion and embrace the utopian one world spirituality of man.

Fraternité closes the loop to the unholy trinity with liberté and égalité.

The Satanic secular virtues of liberté, égalité, and fraternité flew in spirit through the ages from their inception in the Protestant Revolution to the "Enlightenment," then to the American Revolution of "Separation of Church and State," then the French Revolution where it became codified, followed by the Bolshevik Revolution, the Sixties "Hippie" Revolution, and now to the modern Secular Humanist Revolution. There is one personified spirit behind all of these revolutions with one, and only one objective: the destruction of the Holy Catholic Church. Liberté, égalité, and fraternité are the inversion of the true virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love. This is the reason that so many Catholics are confused today. They hear words that mimic the Truth while being brow beaten with a supposed charity.

Le Royaume's Solution

In order to counter these heresies and false spiritualities, and in a spirit of true charity that desires not to see anyone condemned for eternity (which condemnation of souls is the deceptive and ultimate aim of the one world spirituality), Le Royaume has established her programs and objectives. We must be unyielding and indefatigable in our efforts to call out these three key operations of Satan and push back on his revolutionaries both inside and outside the Church through the following:

Seek the Kingdom - to call out and destroy the influence of liberté through True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and habitual Eucharistic adoration.

Through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and union with the Real and Substantial Presence of Jesus Christ in His Eucharist, souls will be led to understand that obedience to the dogmas, doctrines, and magisterial teachings of the Church is the narrow but true road leading to the magnificent Kingdom of God. The Virgin Mary with her Son, Who is truly man and truly God and the only Savior of the human race, will never, and can never, deceive.

By obediently "seeking first the Kingdom" in their care, the soul abounds in hopeful joy of finding true freedom in the Kingdom of God.

Love the Kingdom - to call out and destroy the influence of égalité through devotion and consecration to the magnificent saints, Joan of Arc and Thérèse of Lisieux, both secondary co-patronesses of France.

Together with the Virgin Mary, who is truly Queen of France by virtue of King Louis XIII's consecration of France to her, these two daughters of God will faithfully lead the soul toward a mystical Kingdom, the mystical Kingdom of France, which far outshines any earthly Kingdom.

The soul will come to understand that the Kingdom of God (which, like a mansion with many rooms, encompasses many Kingdoms) has no equal!

The soul will come to understand the beauty of authentic inequality as expressed in the hierarchies of angelic spirits and saintly souls making up the Kingdom as like the various hierarchies of trees, flowers, rivers, meadows, and mountains making up one, indivisible, unified panorama!

Now, there, through the dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Church, we will find true unity and peace, all in magnificent splendor! It is precisely this true unity and peace in love that the revolutionaries would seek to deny us for the ruin of our souls! It is this true unity and peace in love that we defend and offer to the world!

Defend the Kingdom - to call out and destroy the influence of fraternité through inculcating in our souls a Counterrevolutionary spirit as historically demonstrated by the Catholic and Royal Army of the Vendée during the French Revolution (and which has its counter-part in the Cristeros of Mexico in the early 20th century).

Defense of the Kingdom of God is expressed in a spirit of total love and charity for both God and mankind. We refuse to bow before the false modern spiritualities.

We refuse to offer incense to the false idols of secular humanism as expressed through such totalitarian campaigns as abortion rights, gay rights, and same sex "marriage." We refuse, and we defend our faith, out of love, for the pagan non-believer, the murderer, the lustful, the unrepentant and active homosexual, the drunk, the blasphemer, or any unrepentant sinner cannot enter the Kingdom of God.

To inspire souls to repent and seek the true Kingdom of God is truly to inspire them with charity, fraternal love, peace, and unity.

Closing Summary on Methodology

Through Le Royaume's programs, objectives, and methods, we seek to leverage the wisdom of the French Catholic experience in order to help restore the Church in the spirit of, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

Le Royaume's Vision and Mission in light of the Causes of Grace

In order to present the Vision and Mission of Le Royaume in as clear a light as possible, we demonstrate here where we place her (as designated by parentheses) in subjugation to the general hierarchy of Causes of Grace as outlined in Dr. Ludwig Ott's *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Section on The Doctrine of Grace, Part 1: 2.3.

It is clearly stated in the writings on Le Royaume that:

“Le Royaume does not assume Traditional French Catholicism to be normative for the Church as a whole nor superior to any other focused interest. On the contrary, our interest in French Catholic spirituality leads us to appreciate the richness of cultural expression throughout the universal Church. The more we love Le Royaume de France, the more we come to appreciate the unique roles other cultures play in the Church and what the Church does in uniting us all as a family in the Faith.”

The purpose of communicating Le Royaume in the light of the hierarchy of Causes is to demonstrate the above point such that we understand her contribution in general to the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, the Body and Bride of Christ, and further to demonstrate that Le Royaume does not see herself as normative for the Church at large. Le Royaume does not aim to create something novel; she seeks only to inspire others to be open to the possibility of actual, assisting graces from God which excite the soul to salutary works and prepare the soul for, preserve it in, and increase in it habitual, sanctifying grace.

The Principle Efficient Cause, we believe and hope in charity for God and our neighbor, is the grace of God Who is the most Holy Trinity as revealed to us through Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterial teachings of the Holy Catholic Church.

The Principle Efficient Instrumental Cause is Christ's humanity and the sacraments of the Church He founded and alone through which He established our means of salvation.

The Secondary Efficient Instrumental Cause (Le Royaume), stemming from Christ's humanity as the God-man, is the divine motherhood of Mary, ever Virgin, Immaculate in Conception, Queen of Heaven, and the Mediatrix of all Grace.

The Third Efficient Instrumental Cause (Le Royaume) is devotion to, and the intercession of, Saints Jehanne d'Arc and Thérèse de Lisieux as the secondary Co-Patronesses of France.

The Fourth Efficient Instrumental Cause (Le Royaume) is the mystical relationship between the temporal Kingdom of France and the Immaculate Heart of Mary as witnessed by King Louis XIII and Queen Anne's consecration of France to the Virgin Mary in 1638, as well as France's role as the Eldest Daughter of the Church beginning with King Clovis' baptism at Rheims in 496 AD, extending through the Carolingian dynasty of Charlemagne, and through the Capetian dynasty of Hugh Capet, the latter now manifested in the House of Bourbon.

(Note how Le Royaume's Mission Statement includes all of the efficient causes of grace.)

The Meritorious Cause is the God-man Jesus Christ through the Redemption.

The Principle Final Cause is the glory of God.

The Secondary Final Cause is the eternal salvation of man.

The Third Final Cause (Le Royaume) is the Reign of the Immaculate Heart of Mary in the hearts of all men.

The Fourth Final Cause (Le Royaume) is an increase of devotion in hearts so inclined to Saints Jehanne d'Arc and Thérèse de Lisieux.

The Fifth Final Cause (Le Royaume) is, using the ancient and mystical Kingdom of France as a type, devotion to the Social Kingship of Christ in the collective hearts of men as they look to form peaceful earthly societies, worthy governing bodies, and just laws that would be in harmony with the will of God as expressed through His Holy Roman Catholic Church and the Natural Law.

Thus, as seen above, Le Royaume sees herself only in the context of the graces God bestows on us through His only means of salvation: The Holy Catholic Church. Le Royaume sees herself completely subordinated to the Church as a personal devotion, and only as a third, fourth, or fifth cause down the Dogmatic hierarchy of the Church's teachings on grace. She is completely obedient to the Church and that Dogma.

How Le Royaume operates in light of the Classifications of Grace

Having described Le Royaume already in light of the hierarchy of Causes of Grace, we now seek to understand the operation of grace in her. For our purpose we will use the Classifications of Grace as outlined in Dr. Ludwig Ott's *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, Section on the Doctrine of Grace, Part 1:3.

We will begin with the lower divisions and work upward to the First, that is, to Uncreated Grace Who is God the Creator, and Created Grace which is a supernatural gift distinct from God. By doing this we share the traveler's inductive, experiential journey in the intellect and will as he engages Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de Lisieux in the Freedom Dance along the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed.

All of the Faithful can process the Journey's Catholic Dogmas deductively through study accompanied by grace; however, it is the inductive learning process accompanied by grace through the Holy Spirit and under the guidance and co-patronage of our heavenly sisters, Jeanne and Thérèse, which creates in us a regenerated person in Christ through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The inductive, day-by-day, experiential process is a journey down the mystical path of the Dogmatic Creed. It is the process whereby we are repeatedly awe-struck by that which is beyond our nature, that is, by the supernatural. The inductive process is that by which we see vaguely our royal destiny in the distance before us, yet whereby we see also that Our Lord, true to the words of Scripture, graciously moves us, for our own good, no further and no more quickly on our way than we can handle at any point in space and time. By understanding the journey, even if very imperfectly and only

“dimly as in a mirror” and not “face to face,” we nevertheless see how all things work to the good for those who love God.

Given these characteristics of our journey through Le Royaume with Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed, we call it “The March of Hope.” Faith opens our intellect and Hope excites our will. Love is our principle end, and God is love. Love is the Kingdom we see so dimly before us now due to our sinfulness and concupiscence. Without grace, we will never reach the Kingdom and our situation is hopeless. With grace, all is possible. This is why we seek to understand the operation of grace in Le Royaume.

We begin with the sixth division: the sub-divisions of Actual Grace.

The intellect is enlightened and the will is strengthened, driven by our union with, and adoration of, Jesus Christ in His real and substantial presence in the Eucharist and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary as handed down to us through St. Louis de Montfort’s formula of consecration to the Blessed Virgin Mary and through his teachings on the Cross as the ultimate expression of Wisdom. The Holy Spirit through the Immaculate Heart of Mary will inflame our souls and animate us on our journey under the noble patronage of our heavenly sisters, Jeanne and Thérèse.

With this action of the Holy Spirit we also experience:

- Antecedent and consequent grace which precedes (antecedent) and accompanies (consequent) our deliberate efforts to follow Jeanne and Thérèse on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed.

- Sufficient and Efficacious grace, which gives us the power (sufficient) to perform this salutary act and secures (efficacious) that it is accomplished.

Now fully engaged on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed, like children on a walk in the meadows, we enter into the fifth division: Habitual and Actual grace.

Habitual grace, or sanctifying grace, sanctifies us intrinsically and makes us pleasing to God. We are prepared for, maintained in, and increased in sanctifying grace as the result of the support given to us through the Actual graces delineated above in the sixth division.

The Actual graces are temporary supports that excite our souls to the salutary act of submitting to the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the patronage of our holy sisters and the loving, motherly care of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. These temporary graces serve to prepare us for, maintain us in, and increase in us, a habitual state of justification, which is the prerequisite condition of the soul for journeying on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed.

The Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse leads us through Sanctifying Grace and with the help of Actual Graces to the fourth division: Charismatic Grace and Sanctifying Grace.

Le Royaume makes no claim to extraordinary charisms, such as prophecy, speaking in tongues, interpreting tongues, or the gift of miracles. However, we recognize, as per the dogmatic teachings of the Church, that if these gifts become present in us on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse, they are for the building up of the Church and the faithful and not for our own indulgence. They are not of themselves signs of personal holiness,

and are less valuable than sanctifying grace which is, in fact, essential for justification and therefore for eternal salvation.

The third division now presents itself on our journey with our heavenly sisters, Jeanne and Thérèse: External and Internal grace.

The internal support received on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed through Actual, Sanctifying, and perhaps even Charismatic grace gains further strength through external grace. Here we begin to understand how those activities and influences outside of us affect us morally and either enable or impede our journey as reflected through internal grace.

It is here that we become more discerning in our understanding of liturgy. We come to understand how liturgy is an external grace that is, in its proper form as given to us by God in His Holy Catholic Church, a means of obtaining congruency and integrity between our outward expressions of religious faith and our inward spirituality. For example, Piety, a gift of the Holy Spirit, is incongruous with, and cannot be nurtured by, impious liturgical abuses.

It is for this reason that we are sensitive to liturgical rubrics. It is not that we are legalists or semi-pelagians. We are sensitive because liturgy, as an external grace, is in the third division. The divisions of grace that follow in the fourth through the sixth, and by which we have travelled thus far so joyfully with Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse, are dependent on the third division. This is why Our Lord has so carefully and organically developed our liturgy through His Body and Bride, over which He is the Head, the Holy Catholic Church. The external grace of liturgy is fundamental to the rest. If the external graces are abused, our internal graces will suffer. Our

justification and eternal salvation will be in jeopardy. This is dictated by the order of grace.

It is for these reasons that Le Royaume finds herself being traditionally-minded and preferring the Traditional Latin Mass. The rampant abuses in the Novus Ordo are serious issues indeed in light of the order of grace.

The Freedom Dance on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse continues from the enlightenment of the intellect and the strengthening of the will through the internal and external graces of the third division to the second: Grace of God the Creator and Grace of Christ the Redeemer.

It is through the love and mercy of our Creator and through the redeeming merits of Jesus Christ's incarnation, life, passion, death, and resurrection that all of the subsequent graces are bestowed. God loves us, and Christ, as the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, became man in order to redeem us.

By these merciful graces, we are elevated to a supernatural order and the wounds inflicted on us through sin are healed.

In thankfulness to God for His mercy and love as given to us freely through the redemptive power of Jesus Christ, we submit ourselves completely in the first division of grace: to God, Who is Himself grace and through His supernatural gift of grace which is distinct from Him.

Through the river-like, cascading waters of grace as outlined through the divisions above, our destination will be reached when we are finally able to enter into Heaven as redeemed children of God, worshipping Him forever and shouting:

"Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb. Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and

honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever.
Amen!" (Rev 7: 10-12)

This is our destiny. This is our Kingdom. This is Le Royaume. It is toward this Kingdom that we journey joyfully as pilgrims in this life in the sisterly care of Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus with the most Holy and Blessed Virgin Mary in the Freedom Dance on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed.

The French Catholic Diaspora

Le Royaume as our spiritual inheritance from St. Mary
Magdalene

We are the spiritual diaspora of the Kingdom of Catholic France.

We are the spiritual diaspora of the Kingdom of Catholic France.

That declaration is the natural extension of our devotion to Traditional French Catholicism and the Renaissance of Catholic France. It is such a natural extension based on the model for the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France given to us by Ste. Jehanne d'Arc.

“In the language of images Jeanne has thus (with her banner) depicted the Church in heaven as pure adoration of God, the Church on earth as the reception of God in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and sinful humanity, gathered in this Church around the cross along with the priests and soldiers, redeemed and repentant. Yet it is the same Church that is on earth and in heaven.”

– (The Spiritual Way of St. Jeanne d’Arc by George Tavard)

Ste. Jehanne saw the Kingdom of France through this very lens which revealed a mystical relationship between heaven and earth.

"Gentle dauphin, I am Joan the Maid, and the King of Heaven commands that through me you be anointed and crowned in the city of Reims as a lieutenant of the King of Heaven, who is King of France."

- (Joan of Arc, Her Story by Régine Pernoud)

Clearly, Jehanne's spiritual vision of France was bound to her mystical understanding of the Church as one Body existing both in heaven and earth. She saw France in the same light. Jesus Christ is King of France. Charles VII was to be his lieutenant and the steward of the Kingdom.

France, according to Jehanne d'Arc, is one body existing both in Heaven and on earth.

In the future, and from her place in Heaven, Jehanne would see France, the modern-day version of which she herself created through the power of the Holy Spirit and the authority of Jesus Christ, officially recognize the Virgin Mary as her Queen through the consecration of the Kingdom to Mary by King Louis XIII and Queen Anne in 1638. This was another act that demonstrated dramatically the mystical relationship between France and Heaven. The Fleur-de-Lys remains close to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. To love Mary is to love the Kingdom of Catholic France and to love the Kingdom of Catholic France is to love Mary.

This is what we mean when we say that we see the Kingdom of Heaven bathed in the beautiful, mystical light of the combined spirituality of Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus. We see a particular Kingdom in Heaven where there are many Kingdoms, or, "rooms in the Father's house." We see the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France through the eyes, heart, mind, and soul of Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse. By this we are saying that it is through Immaculate Mary, who holds the Fleur-de Lys close to her heart, and from her through the hearts of Jehanne and Thérèse that Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit pours His graces into our hearts, creating Himself in us and espousing our own souls as part of His mystical Body, the Church. He does this through these beautiful saints and through their beautiful spiritual light that reflects the Kingdom of Catholic France. This is what we mean when we also say:

"To Jesus through Mary in the friendship and sisterly care of Sts. Joan and Thérèse!"

We are not necessarily part of the temporal Kingdom of France. We are from all corners of the earth. However, we form a spiritual community from around the world that is, in fact, part of the mystical Kingdom of France in Heaven. In the "real" world, which is that world eternal in Heaven, as opposed to this passing, transitory world, we are the children of this Kingdom where we joyfully make up our part of the beautiful landscape in the total Kingdom of Heaven. Let us begin our journey toward that Kingdom while we are on earth.

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

The Royal Line of France through St. Mary Magdalene

“Jesus Christ bequeathed his Mother to Jerusalem, St. Peter to Rome, St. John to Asia — to whom will he have bequeathed Mary Magdalene?”

We know already, it is France who received from the hands of God this part of the Testament of His Son... Tradition, history, the monuments tell it to us clearly, and Providence has taken care to give to their testimony an invincible clarity. One cannot bring one's feet down on the soil of Provence without encountering at each step the memory of St. Mary Magdalene.

It is there that St. Mary Magdalene ended her pilgrimage; it is there that St. Maximin buried her in an alabaster sepulchre, in memory of that other alabaster where the saint had twice enclosed the ointment with which she anointed the Savior; it is there that St. Maximin himself wanted his mortal remains to be deposited, beside those other remains so dear to his heart, to Jesus Christ, to the angels, and to mankind and where they came in quest of it — a veneration that will soon be twenty centuries old.

Bethany is no more, but Jesus Christ has given to Magdalene the house she lost, and the one and the other, the Master and the Disciple, the God who was loved and the woman who loved, live together at St. Maximin, as in other times they lived on the sides of the Mount of Olives. Marseilles is the Jerusalem of this new Bethany, and France is the greater and more faithful Judea.

I say France; because it was she that inherited Provence, and with her St. Magdalene.

Here, perhaps, at the close of our work, one asks oneself why the divine Master of Souls has chosen as the one to love Him more

than anyone else a poor sinner, and bequeathed her to us as the most moving example of holiness. The reason is not difficult to discover: innocence is a drop of water in the world, repentance is the ocean that envelops it and saves it. “

~ Life of Mary Magdalene by Henri Dominique Lacordaire, OP

“Le Royaume is the spiritual inheritance of St. Mary Magdalene, whom we honor and with whom we unite ourselves in contemplative prayer through the Immaculate Heart of Mary. With her brother Lazarus, she first brought the contemplative spirit of the apostolic age to what would become France. Therefore, St. Mary Magdalene is the prototype of Le Royaume’s contemplative spirit. We honor her as foundress and her through whose prayers and sacrifices the Lord and Our Lady surely blessed what was later to become the Virgin Mary’s Catholic France.”

A subtle but profound relationship exists between the spiritual diaspora of the Kingdom of Catholic France and St. Mary Magdalene. As so eloquently described by Lacordaire above, Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ bequeathed France’s future to her. It was she who brought the contemplative apostolic spirit as the seed to what would become France. France is a royal Kingdom that exists both in Heaven and on earth. Mary Magdalene, now as the spouse and bride of the King of Kings in Heaven (just as Ste. Thérèse and Ste. Jehanne d’Arc with all the Heavenly saints are spouses of Christ) blessed France with a royal inheritance.

We are that royal inheritance as the spiritual children of Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse’s Catholic France. As the spiritual diaspora of the Kingdom of Catholic France, we are, like Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse, of the royal line of St. Mary Magdalene, whose royalty was bestowed on her in grace through her repentant, dogmatic faith in Jesus Christ.

A repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the sisterly care of Ste. Jehanne and Ste. Thérèse, imbued in the noble pedagogy of Traditional French Catholicism, is the foundation of Le Royaume. St. Mary Magdalene is our royal inheritance and our foundress in this matter through the spiritual consequences of her repentant, dogmatic love for Jesus Christ and her historical role in founding Catholic France.

The mystical Kingdom of Catholic France

The reason I am Catholic is simple. Only Catholicism will give me what I love and desire. Only Catholicism will fulfill my heart's longing. Only Catholicism is capable of making me into the person that I know I am in the mind of God.

My work is nothing less than a journey with Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus along the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed of the Catholic Church. This Trail runs through the fields and meadows, over the hills and snow-capped mountains, and across the streams and rivers in the Immaculate Heart of Mary to the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France in the Heavenly Kingdom of God. I journey toward that Kingdom by striving to embody the prayer of the Our Father to bring His Will and Kingdom "on earth as it is in Heaven."

This is a pilgrim's journey, and one that I do not mind walking alone; though, I enjoy the company of those who likewise are called to this Kingdom. I simply make my way and welcome those who wish to join. I work by a "gather or disperse" philosophy. Join me if you wish. Disperse if you wish. I am here to inform, not debate.

My Catholic spirituality is grounded in the sacraments, Eucharistic adoration, and True Devotion to Mary. I am influenced more specifically by the combined spirituality of Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus. I interpret Jehanne d'Arc through the spirituality of Thérèse, notably as represented through her plays and poetry about Jehanne.

My ardent devotion to Ste. Jehanne d'Arc inspires me to seek her worldview for my own. In order to do that I desire an authentic interpretation of the enigmatic saint. I believe Ste. Thérèse to be the most authentic interpreter of Ste. Jehanne's soul.

My mission is to facilitate the coming of the Father's Kingdom "on earth as it is in Heaven" by inspiring others to "seek first the Kingdom" through a repentant, dogmatic confession of Catholic faith and through exemplary Catholic ideals.

Ste. Jehanne d'Arc and Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jésus are representative, in my humble view, of some of the highest and noblest of those ideals.

The gift of St. Mary Magdalene's self-abandonment to Divine Providence

An outstanding trait among the French Catholic Diaspora is that of self-abandonment to Divine Providence. This trait is a spiritual gift of grace that comes to us through the royal line of St. Mary Magdalene, foundress of Le Royaume and she to whom Jesus Christ committed and entrusted all of Catholic France by leading her and her companions to the shores of what later would become the Blessed Virgin Mary's Catholic France.

Just as blessed Mary Magdalene retired from preaching the gospel on the southern shores of modern day France to her cave at La Sainte-Baume for the last thirty years of her life, we to whom Our Lord and Our Lady have bequeathed the inheritance of this lineage and who are the diaspora for the Blessed Virgin Mary's Kingdom of Catholic France, obtain through St. Mary Magdalene's intercession the grace of self-abandonment. Though we are not necessarily, nor even likely to be, called to a life of physical, material hermitage in a cave, we nevertheless carry this most precious ointment of grace in our souls. This ointment of self-abandonment is a sweet odor to God the Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, as it is the total giving of ourselves in love to God through the merits of St. Mary Magdalene and through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Mother of God.

Our abandonment to the Father through the Son in the love and confidence of the Holy Spirit excites our soul with a holy fire. As the benefactors of the overflow of St. Mary Magdalene's abundance of graces received during her thirty years of solitude, we find ourselves walking gracefully with St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux on the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed through a breathtaking mountain pass leading to the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France.

This edification is none other than the realization that our mother and the Mother of God, Mary most Holy, watches over us the way she cared for the couple at the wedding feast in Cana. Without even needing to ask, the couple found themselves under the empathetic and loving watch of Our Lady, who anticipated their needs and even brought Our Lord to yield His time (for it was not yet His time) to help them.

How blessed we are to receive this life-giving grace of abandonment to Our Lord through the Immaculate Heart of Mary which is metaphorically the narrow, beautiful mountain pass leading us to freedom along the Trail of the Dogmatic Creed with St. Joan and St. Thérèse to the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France.

Purity and Humility as the gateway to and guardian of the Mystical Kingdom of Catholic France

Abandonment to Divine Providence in a dogmatic confession of Catholic faith through the Immaculate Heart of Mary is the hallmark of the French Catholic Diaspora. We entrust ourselves completely in mind, body, and soul through Mary to the authentic teachings and authority of the Holy Catholic Church, the mystical body and bride of Christ. We accept nothing less than the Cross of suffering in union with Jesus Christ as the only path leading us to Le Royaume, the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France that exists as a form in the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Le Royaume is our Heavenly homeland. This mystical Kingdom is our heritage through the royal line of St. Mary Magdalene to whom our Lord bequeathed the land which would become the Kingdom of France on earth and which is the dim mirror (I Corinthians 13:12) through which we perceive the Heavenly France toward which we journey in destiny with our heavenly sisters and patronesses, St. Joan of Arc and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, as royal heirs of St. Mary Magdalene.

This inheritance is of a substance we grasp only slowly and as like that dark mirror to which St. Paul refers. We know it only darkly and dimly now as this inheritance is purity, a purity that shines brilliantly and reveals in us our own vulgarity and sinful filth. This sinful filth is a barrier which will lead us to no other end than eternal damnation. We understand that in order to reach this Kingdom with St. Joan and St. Thérèse, we must be transformed and purified through the Cross of Christ's suffering, for we have no way to obtain this purity on our own given our vile nature outside of Christ's grace. To obtain this purity is to obtain the mystical Kingdom of Catholic France. This purity, this Kingdom of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the center of her Immaculate Heart, is only

from God and cannot be known to us save through sanctifying grace, a grace we receive in its fullness only through our dogmatic confession of Catholic faith. Through this sanctifying grace resulting from our dogmatic confession and surrender of ourselves heart, mind, soul, and body through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, we seek to bring our inheritance in the Kingdom of God, the Kingdom of mystical France, "on earth as it is in Heaven" for the glory of Jesus Christ our only Savior and for the reign of the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

To pass through Le Royaume's gateway which is our own Calvary of suffering and death on the Cross with Christ, our saintly sisters Joan and Thérèse lead us to our own Sainte-Baume with the Magdalene where we lose all and become completely detached from the things of this earth. Though we live practically and dutifully with our feet solidly on the ground in our daily vocations, we are dead to this world with its Prince of Darkness, and our soul soars to mystical France, our homeland in the Kingdom of God.

We must, with the prayerful intercession and support of St. Mary Magdalene, die on the Cross in our own Sainte-Baume to all things belonging to the darkness of this world as we await the new Heavens and the new earth.

Purity and humility form the gateway to, and are the guardians of, Le Royaume by leading us to death on the Cross with Jesus Christ through the Immaculate Heart of Mary and in the sisterly care of St. Joan and St. Thérèse.

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