

MAY JESUS CHRIST BE PRAISED!

DECEMBER 15, 2019 / THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SPIRITUAL PONDERINGS: How Christianity Saved Civilization... Part III

In the movie *It's a Wonderful Life* starring James Stewart, George Bailey discovers what life would be like if he had never been born. Have you ever wondered what the world would be like without the birth of Christ? What if there was no Christianity? Mike Aquilina and James Papandrea's book: ***How Christianity Saved Civilization... and Must Do So Again*** can help us not only imagine what the world would be like without Christianity but can also help us grow in a deeper appreciation of how much the Catholic Church has changed the world for the better. Quotes from their book will be in bold and my commentary will be in normal font.

First Revolution: The Individual (Continued)

In Rome, a child did not achieve personhood until he was recognized by the head of the family, the father. When the mother had given birth, a midwife placed the child on the floor and summon the father into the room. He examined the child with his criteria of selection in mind.

Was the child his? If a man suspected his wife of adultery, he might reject the child without so much as a glance.

If the child was in "odious daughter," he would likely turn on his heel and leave the room.

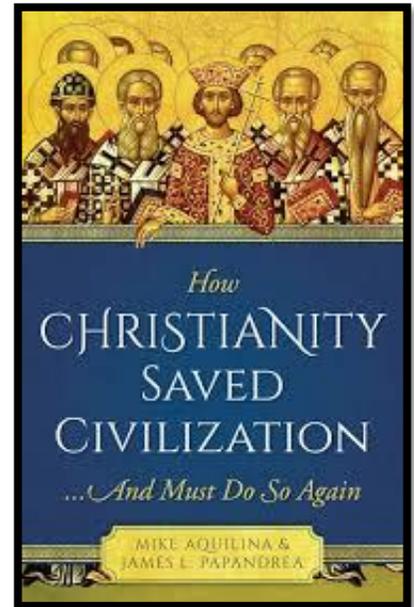
If the child was "defective" in any way, he would do the same. Remember Seneca's adage: "what is good must be a set apart from what is good for nothing."

Life or death? It all dependent on the well of a man human life began when the child was accepted into society a man did not "have a child." He "took a child." The father "raised up" the child by picking the child up off the floor.

The nonpersons who were left on the floor -- while their mothers watch from birthing chairs -- would be drowned immediately in a bucket of water were brought to the town dump to be exposed to wild dogs and vultures. And they survived for any considerable time, they might be rescued by pimps and raised his child prostitutes. With all legal and aboveboard. It was the right thing to do, as any reasonable and well-adjusted pagan philosopher would tell you.

When I read the above passage from the book the song lyric "and He will raise you up!" kept coming to mind and now has new meaning for meaning. I also began to think about how evil human beings can be when we judge others based on what their usefulness to us.

In Roman culture of the time of the early church, the father had absolute control over every member of his family -- including power over life and death. Under the Roman Republic. A paterfamilias -- the head of household -- could legally execute his son to be thought that the son deserved it. And the father alone determined whether the son deserved. Christian teaching held a human life is sacred. The fact that God had created each individual meant that the father's power was not absolute. "Honor your father and your mother, yes (and even those words "and your mother" were an assault on Roman family values), but "you shall not kill" above all.



I am so glad that my dad did not have a right to kill me when I was younger.

“You shall not kill” was an idea that had to be explained to educated Romans, who had no notion that human life was sacred just because it was human. Refuting (because the Romans knew they simply had to be up to something), St. Athenagoras explained that Christians could never be murderers because they refused even to kill an unborn child. They refuse to watch the gladiatorial games because they thought that enjoying watching gladiators being murdered was the same as participating in the murdering themselves.

The changes that Christians did to society happened through their example and not through their arguments and force. In much the same way today, we are called to change the world by having people see our example and want to follow it.

In a world that tolerated only the useful, Christians demanded protection for the most vulnerable and “useless” persons. The early Christians created the first truly tolerant, welcoming, and all-inclusive society – with a remarkable social welfare system, even from the very beginning.

We Catholic should be proud of the work that we do to make the world a better place. Catholic Charities for example is the greatest relief service program in the world.

December 15 2019 // Third Sunday of Advent // Lectionary: 7 // Gospel MT 11:2-11

When John the Baptist heard in prison of the works of the Christ, he sent his disciples to Jesus with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" Jesus said to them in reply, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind regain their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the good news proclaimed to them. And blessed is the one who takes no offense at me." As they were going off, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out to the desert to see? A reed swayed by the wind? Then what did you go out to see? Someone dressed in fine clothing? Those who wear fine clothing are in royal palaces. Then why did you go out? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: *Behold, I am sending my messenger ahead of you; he will prepare your way before you.*

Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Spiritual Reflection: Jesus, God, was active even though He was not causing a sensation yet. “Don't equate the presence of God with a good mood or a pleasant temperament. God is near whether you are happy or not.” - Max Lucado

Spiritual Questions;

1. How do I sense the Spirit of God active in my life?
2. How do I sense the Spirit of God active in my parish?
3. Who has been an instrument of God's intervention in your life?
4. When I come to Mass do I truly “lift up my heart” to the Lord?
5. What are my reasons for rejoicing?



Thought of the Day

Sunday: The completely new vision of Zion singing when “they will meet with joy and gladness sorrow and mourning will flee.”

Monday: For many good souls are hungry to do great things for God. They complain that they have no opportunities for heroic virtue, no chance at the apostolate. They would be martyrs; but when a meal is late, or a bus is crowded, when the theater is filled, or the dance postponed, or the bacon overdone, they are upset for a whole day. They miss their opportunities for loving God in the little things He asks for them.

Tuesday: Dear Lord, during this season of Advent preparation, help us to look inward instead of being distracted by the outward. Give each of us the opportunity to search our conscience



and seek your will-especially as you reveal it in the seemingly insignificant events of daily life. May our works dispel the darkness of our broken world until such time as Christ will come again.

Wednesday: The Greek origin of the word patience suggests two ideas one continuances, the other submission. Combined, they mean submissive waiting a frame of mind which is willing to wait because it knows it thus serves God and his holy purposes. A person who believes in nothing beyond this world is very impatient, because he has only a limited time in which to satisfy his wants. – Fulton Sheen

Thursday: Zechariah and Eli were supposed to be able to recognize God’s will but it was actually Hannah and Mary that did so

Friday: Opposite of Love – Objectification

Saturday: This title, which Elizabeth bestows upon Mary, is packed with great queenly significance. In the royal court language of the ancient Near East, the title “mother of my Lord” was used to address the queen mother of the reigning king. The king himself was addressed as “my Lord” (cf. 2 Sam. 24.21), and the queen mother would have been called “mother of my Lord.” In using this title, Elizabeth recognized the great dignity of Mary’s role as queen mother. - Scott Hahn

PRO-LIFE



December 2019

Heavenly Father, help us to stay awake and be ready to see the opportunities and chances to bring Your Son’s love to those around us especially those who have wandered away from the your Church and no longer believe. May we be like John the Baptist and call people back to you in an effective way. We ask this through Christ our Lord . Amen.

December 2019

Heavenly Father, please lift up the whole church, summoned again to wake from sleep, to throw off the works of darkness and to put on the armor of light that we may respond joyously to the call to be messengers of light and as we prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son, may we also proclaim the dignity of all life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen



St. Monica Society

Please join us in praying a special prayer each month for Catholics who have fallen away from their faith.

Catholic Prayers

If I decorate...

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I’m just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I’m just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir’s cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens.

Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way, but is thankful they are there to be in the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust, but giving the gift of love will endure



Humor

Q. How do Christmas angels greet each other? A. "Halo!"

Q. What's red and white and falls down chimneys? A. Santa Klutz!