



Southern Sentinel

REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS

HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

5 May 2015

On the 12th of April we clothed seven First Year seminarians with the cassock, the habit worn by the clergy of the Catholic Church. The cassock signifies the priest's role in the world as a representative of Christ and the seminarian, by donning the cassock, manifest his desire to serve God and his fellow man in the Priesthood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. It also implies the will to live entirely for Christ his King. Because that King is rejected by the world, His livery is a sign of contradiction to it and a reminder that we live, not for the joys of this world, but for God in heaven. This black robe

easily identifies the man who promotes the life of Christ and condemns the worldly life, drawing much scorn or animosity from worldly minded men; whereas followers of Christ reverence and respect the reminder that we are created for God, not for this world.



The newly clothed seminarians after the Solemn High Mass

The cassock contradicts the notion that a life of worldly joy is the greatest happiness for man, by its signification that the man who wears it, chooses to “die” to this world and to live for heaven, under the reign and love of Christ. Hence, the cassock represents a notion of society that is not merely of a temporal nature; rather, one that is unique, hierarchical and far beyond this world.

Men are instinctively fond of distinction, but quite often for merely vain motives. In order to be noticed,

relishing the praise of others, men easily adopt a disposition to eccentricities that are meant to manifest their “uniqueness”, which is further meant to draw the recognition and appreciation of others. Not uncommon, today, are hideous tattoos and body piercings, flamboyant hair colours, casual or simply sloppy attire, which are intended to shock for want of convention, but simply for attention. The cassock is certainly atypical and unconventional in the world today – it does not go unnoticed, as any young seminarian quickly discovers as he ventures out into the world newly clad in this distinctive habit. But the reason is not to draw attention to self, but to God. Hence, this distinction given to the bearer of the cassock is to recall men’s thoughts, words and deeds to their true purpose, for the glory of God. What a responsibility to be thus distinguished! May the cleric be distinguished not merely by his habit, but more essentially, by his manner of life, so as to lead others to likewise giving all glory to God and leading his fellow men holiness.

The black cassock, symbolic of death, does not suggest a morbid or hopeless death as the grunge-fashionist, who shuns the light and lurks in affected dissatisfaction with “conventional” society. On the contrary, there is appreciation for God’s creation, but there is an anticipation of a better world and a better life, obtained only after this life, which puts into light the right order and use of this world.

Worldly-minded men pursuing solely material comforts either rebel against convention because of the frustrating impossibility of having all that they desire, or simply embrace the lie that satisfaction can be had in this world through human industry, giving themselves vainly to this pursuit. Both deny God and His creation due respect and immerse themselves, either rebelliously or conventionally to the banal practicality of acquiring merely some natural or temporal happiness, neither being able to satisfy man’s profound yearning for perfect happiness.

The man clad in cassock, who renounces the joys of this life and even embraces the trials of this life stands in opposition to the notion that condones a naturalistic happiness, much to the exasperation of the masses, who now wallow in the quagmire of materialist pursuits. The Christian ideal of an ordered, prudent and sparing use of the goods of this world, urges men to temper or even at times to forsake the joys of this life for future joys known by faith (cf. I Corinthians 2:9). Hence, the distinctive significance of the cassock, deemed foolery or hypocrisy, is scorned as a reproach to men engaged in the pursuit of or enslaved by the insatiable desire for mere worldly pleasures.

However, it is not the man behind the cassock who is rejected, it is Christ, Our Lord and King, Whose authority is refused by the vanity and fancy of those who uphold the idea of the masses governing an idyllic society. Enslaved by their material independence, such men instinctively and adamantly recoil from any authoritative restriction of personal liberty. The refusal of the authority of men ordained to carry out the work of Christ, is the refusal to submit to the divine plan God designed to lead men to their true end and perfection. This refusal to believe and trust the Good God, is a rejection of the wise and just order conceived by God for His glory and the happiness of men.

The audacious preference for a personal agenda over Divine Providence is the sin of Liberalism. This sinful disposition inspires men’s selfish tendency to trust only their own judgement, which leads to an isolation of each man, a *church* of his own creation, or a philosophy needing no *church* or *god*, save his personal opinion.

The cassock gives testimony to hierarchy and submission and the man who wears it represents the Lord God, Christ and His Church, not himself. The cassock represents the Creed, not an individual belief of one’s own invention. As the Church and Her ministers receive their authority from Our Lord, to disregard Christ’s representatives is a slight against Him who sends his ministers, identifiable by their clerical garb: *He that beareth you, beareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me* (Luke 10:16).

Many appreciate uniformed representatives of authority, but little regard is given to the uniform of the highest authority. Whereas the black robed Civil Judge is esteemed for upholding justice and making laws (perhaps not objectively good as is not uncommon today), the black cassocked Celestial Judge is scorned and ridiculed for upholding objectively good (Divine and natural) laws and truths. As a leader and judge a priest is derided by those who would put up to vote morality, truth and goodness, without relation to God and the godly living of men.

Finally, because the cassock distinguishes the men beneath them as less interested in this life as that of the spiritual life, they are perceived as being *not of this world*. Indeed, this is quite true. The priest, religious and seminarian are men who prefer a life better than and beyond life in this world. The cassock is a reminder that men are meant not for this world, but the next and that this life is merely used to achieve this higher and more perfect life.

Perhaps the cassock seems to be social statement of “non-conformity” to the *status quo*, or an act of defiance, by the man putting off the attire of this world and donning the cassock, which publicly states that heaven is better. Indeed, heaven is perfect because there, we know and love God perfectly. This realisation urges a man to defy this world’s deceptive promises of joy and decries its false maxims by which men live without God: *Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die*. This ideology ignores the despairing reality that, precisely because *we die*, this world can never make man truly happy. However, as men begin living for and in this heavenly world, they possess a joy that only grows increasingly more intense, and this without end in heaven.

The worldly minded sees the man in cassock as an opponent to his self-seeking materialism, the opium to numb the reality of his despairing denial of God and man’s responsibility to serve Him. Indeed, the spiritual man appears odd in his otherworldly life to those steeped in the pursuit of earthly joys. Seemingly ignoring all here below for some mysterious and unknown happiness, the man dead to this world seems quite out of place and, perhaps, best left in the isolation of the church. There is a truth in this, in as much as it is in the church that we may be well disposed to converse with God.

Religious houses *are* places well suited for the cassock, because it is an earthly home of God and His children. But Christ did not intend to imprison the cassock in the church or the cloister; rather, He sends his ministers out into the highways and byways to search out the stray sheep and to bring them home to the heavenly kingdom prepared for their happiness, the eternal joy of the Wedding Feast between God and man. When Christ’s priests live this “otherworldly life”, they manifest the reality of life in holiness, self-sacrifice and a zealous supernatural charity.

But these virtues, too, seem out of place to the worldly minded, who, labouring for material prosperity at great expense of human industry and resources because of the lack of perceptible fruit. Consequently, the cassock is deemed the uniform of mere dreamers and idlers refusing their responsibility to contribute to the struggle of human misery. Hence, such spiritual men seem unsuited for life in civil society because of their apparent inability to practically contribute to temporal society. The dreamers of Christ, the worldly hold, should be hindered from influencing others in their renouncement of this life and world.

The cassock does not speak of a dream, but of a reality – man was created to praise, reverence and serve God – to give God glory in all things. The glory of God is everything and worthy of our effort, nay, is demanded of us. With what gratitude should all thank God for the blessing of young men who put on the cassock, which carries the responsibilities of manifesting Christ, His authority over all and that man is not created for this world, lest we forget and abandon the gift God died to give us.



Holy Mass on April 12th with our new Vestments
 for the Ordinations to the diaconate. Thank you for your continued support as we house and feed twenty-one seminarians in addition to the priests and brothers who staff at Holy Cross Seminary – thirty-one men in the community.

Lastly, I wish to inform you of an up-coming change at Holy Cross. I have received a new assignment in Ireland and will be taking my leave of Holy Cross after the Ordination ceremonies in August. It has been a great pleasure and privilege to have spent these seven years in the Seminary. I thank God for this grace and you for your generous support. Rev. Fr. Daniel Themann, is appointed the new Rector and will assume his duties on August 15th. Please keep us all in your prayers and do pray that God send us many more holy vocations. May Our Lady, the Queen of Apostles, rule over our lives and conform us to the perfect image of her Son as we especially honour her throughout the month of May with special devotion. May God bless you and may the Mother of God distinguish you as her true children of ever striving for heaven.

In Christ the King,

Rev. Fr. Vicente A. Griego
 Rector, Holy Cross Seminary

Announcements

1) **Ordinations at Holy Cross:**

- a) First Tonsure & Minor Orders - August 14th
- b) The Subdiaconate - August 15th

2) **Ignatian Retreats for the Faithful:**

- a) Men's Retreat – 4 to 9 January 2016
- b) Ladies' Retreat – 18 to 23 January 2016

• You may email the Seminary for retreat information at <retreats@holycrossseminary.com> to the attention of Fr. Pfluger.

- 3) With increasing costs in postage, we ask you to consider receiving the Seminary Newsletter via email. The Seminary can email a colour pdf file of the newsletter to your email address. Please notify us at <website@holycrossseminary.com>. Thank you for your consideration.



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