

The reconstruction of Christian civilisation necessarily involves more religious and priestly vocations as well as many more profoundly Christian homes to counter the anti-Christian culture drawing so many to its fantasy ideology opposed to grace. Let us fight for the ideal of Christ's reign. Even if it is not universally accomplished in our life-time, we must allow it to succeed in our lives. Live faithfully that God be glorified in all and by all!

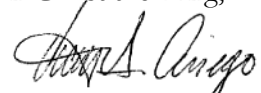
During the last days of September, while the Seminary buildings lazily slumbered during seminarians' absence for the final holiday of the term, the Brothers, on their Annual Retreat, contemplated the ideal of Christ's Life as the model of their fulfilment of their religious vows. Reality presented. Then the consequences: sound resolutions to practice what was prayerfully learned. Reality accepted. Finally, the humble effort to depend upon God's grace. Reality practiced. Very simple. The only addition might be the question "Why?" The answer: Because God is *really* Good.

We too may live this simple ideal of reality rooted in the truth of Christ, whereby we overcome the obstacles to grace, our share in the Divine Life, for which we were made.

Dear Friends and Benefactors, thank you for your generous support of the Seminary's Crusade for Vocations and thank you for the material support of Holy Cross Seminary. I must now make a special appeal for help to address a serious problem at the Seminary. Our sewage system has been for quite a long time in very bad repair. We were expected to have received the necessary help to remedy this health issue, but as of yet, have not received the financial means to begin this very costly project – over \$100,000! I call upon your generosity and assure you of our prayers and sacrifices in gratitude. Please help us.

Finally, some very good news for our little Seminary. Bishop Fellay has authorised the recommencement of the Theological studies at Holy Cross in 2013. May God grant us many more holy vocations! Your prayers, good works and the offering of a daily sacrifice for the intention of the Crusade for Vocations will certainly merit many holy vocations. Have faith and be generous. A prayer, which received Ecclesiastical approval in Australia many years ago, is offered below with the hopes that you will be reminded and encouraged to ask Our Lord and Our Lady for many holy vocations. May God bless you and Our Lady Immaculate watch over you.

In Christ the King,



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

#### PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

*O God, Whose desire it is that all men should be saved and should come to the knowledge of the truth, send forth, we beseech Thee, labourers into the harvest; inspire many with the generous desire of devoting their lives to Thy service; grant that there may be a great increase in the number and sanctity of vocations to the Priesthood and to the Religious Life, so that Thy Holy Name may be glorified and many souls may be brought to know and serve Thee, the One True God, and Him Whom Thou hast sent, Jesus Christ Thy Son, Our Lord.*

*O Jesus, eternal High Priest, may all the love of Thy Sacred Heart be with Thy Priests and Religious in their life and work. Amen.*

#### Announcements:

- Ignatian Retreats in 2013 begin at 2:00 pm and end at 11:30 am. Please visit the Seminary website for retreat information, registration forms and to verify your registration. You may email [retreats@holycrossseminary.com](mailto:retreats@holycrossseminary.com) or directly contact Fr. Christoph Pfluger at the Seminary. The retreat dates are as follows:
  - Men's Retreat: January 28 to February 2, 2013
  - Ladies' Retreat: January 7-12, 2013
- Fr. Sayed Elias, from Domus Dei Priory in Rockdale will be offering a non-Ignatian retreat for men at Holy Cross, February 18–23, 2013. Men interested should contact him at (02) 95 67 70 88 for retreat information and registration.



# Southern Sentinel

REGNAVIT A LIGNO DEUS

## HOLY CROSS SEMINARY

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Dear Friends and Benefactors,

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The Seminary's campaign to promote prayer and acts of virtue and penance seeks to draw down many graces on souls, so as to lead them to dedicate their lives to the service of God. For such graces to be effective, however, it is necessary that all obstacles to them be removed. Any obstruction on the road to a vocation can impede it and even derail it for life. Let us consider one such major deterrent today for the fulfilment of God's plans for one's life: modern entertainment.

First of all, this entertainment presents a substitute world to live in. The distraction of fantasy is not new, but the contemporary mode and ubiquitous means of its proliferation are powerful and captivating traps for our attention. The fantasy life conjured up by the spirit of the world and promises of a happier or more exciting life in the clouds of imagination easily become a dominant factor in the manner, vocabulary and goals of the adherent's life. They urge men to neglect reality and be dissatisfied with real life. Their substitute goal coupled with one's day-dreaming becoming the driving force of one's existence, rather than the desire of Christ-like fulfilment of one's duties of state.

How does this new mindset take over? Clearly, the world-wide-web of videos, television, movies, pop-culture music, and so forth, are successful means of indoctrination and subjugation to the dictates of non-Christian ideologies – fantasy ably extinguishing reality. Catholics, who should know they were made for God, easily fall sway to worldly fantasy... *even* Traditional Catholics, who pride themselves for "seeing what is wrong in the world and the Church," drink frequently from this materialistic fount.

Christ, Who is the Author of reality, calls us to embrace the cross and thereby secure eternal and true happiness. Yet the world promises repose from the labour and difficulty of reality with a "happily ever after" ending. The cross of reality is easily put down before the unrealistic, but appealing promise that all our ills may be overcome by the distraction of a fantasy story, which thrills us with a distraction from what *really* lies before us.

Do we ignore the reality of this danger in which we live? Lest we forget the fragility of our wounded nature and the dangerous circumstances in which we live, we do well to consider the cautious admonition of Fr. Adolphe Tanqueray, S.S., in his work *The Spiritual Life* from the 1920's on what appears to be the "lesser" dangers of useless reading or study:

*"Curiosity is a disease of the mind, which is the cause of religious ignorance, for it leads us to seek too eagerly the knowledge of things that delight us rather than of things that are profitable to us, and thus to lose precious time. ...Hence, books that feed the imagination rather than the mind should be read sparingly; such are, for the most part, novels, newspapers and reviews of a worldly character."*

But how different were the people he addressed than those of this century! Then, the movie industry was but in its infancy and accessible to very few. Today, few *seriously* read. Instead, they “click”, and in an instant, millions upon millions of people have access to the world-wide-web, which literally flaunts *everything* for public consumption. Eyes, ears and imaginations are filled with sights, sounds and ideas in the privacy of the home. Our senses are bedazzled and our minds are vibrantly contorted by useless, dangerous or evil images that entrap the will. The mind has never had such easy and overwhelming entertainment to draw it away from reality and from the pursuit of supernatural good.

Instead of achieving their purpose as useful tools of propagating truth and good, modern technologies corrupt man’s imagination and recreation. Rather than exclusively promoting what is true and good, they publicise every foul seduction, carnal desire, materialistic avarice, and religious heresy, nullifying the few wholesome elements that are permitted to slip into the arena of entertainment. Broadly speaking, modern media has become a putrid pool of worldly flattery of man’s concupiscence. In this cesspool, Liberalism reigns by equalising truth and error, virtue and vice, by making all things freely accessible, by proliferating error and immorality without any check.

We must weigh carefully, as Catholics, the consequences of patronising the entertainment establishment. By doing so, we approve an industry that propagates immorality. We risk familiarisation with a movie world that teaches us to seek escape from reality and so miss the purpose of our lives. Willy-nilly, our judgement is inured to its own destruction. This compromised disposition allows for greater indulgence whereby one easily succumbs (if only “accidentally”?) to more grave and evil influences. Deliberately exposing ourselves to such dangers necessarily deprives us of actual graces, the same actual graces that are necessary to be virtuous and to avoid sin and its occasions.

How quickly our Catholic ideals can be set aside when they face off, by our own choice, against the spirit of the world incarnate in today’s entertainment. Standards of honour, notions of good, and practices of morality are degraded. Virtue and morals are obscured and confused. Decency and propriety are forgotten. People watching movies necessarily identify with both the actors and the characters portrayed. They naturally assimilate their manners, vocabulary, ideas, goals, and so forth, which can hardly be praised for being Christ-like. For example, one might be shocked at the vulgar language in a first movie, but later after many movies, vulgarity is hardly noticed, unless, of course, it was a “really big, bad word”.

What are we to say, then, of time wasted in vain fantasy, at least tacit approval of an anti-Christian industry, and regular exposure to immoral influences? Such behaviour deserves condemnation. It is foolishness. Who willingly exposes himself to the ideologies, images, language and culture of the world while having his best interests in mind? Who is said to wisely seek the fulfilment of his life’s goal by regularly stifling his mind and glutting his imagination with ideas and images that are contradictory to the life of Christ?

It is important to keep in mind why we were created. Perhaps our very purpose best serves to stir the conscience and awaken it to the perilous danger of patronising the entertainment industries’ fare. Consider what Monsignor Robert Hugh Benson, in his novel *The Lord of the World*, considered as necessary to achieve our end back in 1907. In the novel set in the End Times, the imaginary Pope Angelicus gained the “*temporal lordship of Rome, and... set himself to make it a city of saints... [He] cared... nothing for the world’s opinion; his policy... consisted in a very simple thing... The object of the Church was to do glory to God by producing supernatural virtues in man, and that nothing at all was of any significance or importance except so far as it effected this object*” (Chapter II).

“Papa Angelicus” rules in light of the real-life objective of the Church and bans various discoveries of the modern age deemed incongruous with the wounded nature of man: “...*the whole latter-day discoveries of man tended to distract immortal souls from a contemplation of eternal verities – not that these discoveries could be anything but good in themselves, since after all, they gave insight into*

*the wonderful laws of God – but that at present they were too exciting to the imagination*” (*ibid.*). These lines are theologically sound and applicable to real life – unbridled and over indulged excitement is disastrous to man’s pursuit of his ultimate end.

What has caused a medium that is not intrinsically evil to become so corrupt today? Pope Pius XII asked this question in 1954, in his “Allocution to Representatives of the Cinema”: *In truth, how could an instrument, in itself most noble, but so apt to uplift or degrade men, and so quick to produce good or spread evil, be left completely alone, or made dependent on purely economic interests?*

The fact is that the entertainment industry, like much of modern life, *is* directed to capital gain. As such, vendors compete for the attention of consumers. Given man’s fallen nature in this era of no restraint, we have our contemporary vulgar and immoral attention-getting tactics to make a sale. Sometimes subtly, other times blatantly, godlessness and immorality are flaunted to get attention. Dare we subject ourselves to such a base and materialistic appeal? It can only dull our desire for the sacred and spiritual and risk extinguishing the life of grace.

It is true that we are constantly bombarded by attempts to draw us to coexist with the images, fantasies and lifestyles of this irreligious industry. How easy it is to compromise. Even with the weekly movie, the daily or occasional surfing of the web for interesting videos, the little girl’s *Tinker Bell* birthday party, the boy’s *Pirates of the Caribbean* or *Pro-Sport* themed youth group activity... we expose ourselves to a culture that, in failing to promote truth and pure good, breeds religious indifference, sentimental devotion and the conviction of materialistic joy.

We must face this question squarely: do we allow ourselves or our children to become devotees of the world? Real formation in the spiritual life, a solid grasp of the fundamental truths of the faith and genuine manly devotion will not persevere when mingled with the worldly contagion described. This is sadly manifest by the number of youth who abandon the faith within years of their independent adulthood, if not already in their homes during their teenage years. The obstacle of modern entertainment can serve not only to prevent a vocation, but also the attainment of salvation itself.

Certainly, God can raise up priests, religious and truly Catholic homes – this He does by grace merited by Our Lord’s Passion and Death. And while we can build obstacles to omnipotent grace, by God’s help, we can also remove them. It may be that we have mistakenly mingled truth and error, which blurs reality and fantasy; but now, we must resolve to purify our lives of all that hinders God’s grace.

We must be convinced that such a purification is not only possible, but is in our very best interests. In *The Soul of the Apostolate*, Dom Chautard cites the experiences of the renowned Canon Timon-David in his work to form the youth:

*“Bands, theatricals, lantern-lectures, movies – I do not condemn all that. When I started out, I too thought no one could do without them. And yet, they are nothing but crutches, to be used when there is no alternative left. However, the further I advance, the more my end and my means become supernatural because I see more and more clearly that every work built upon a merely human foundation is bound to collapse, and that only the work that aims at bringing men closer to God by the interior life is blessed by Providence.”*

Although the Canon does not condemn the various “crutches”, which were integrally upright, he did in fact abandon them, seeing that they were not worthy of the supernatural goal to which he strove and desired to guide others. If we truly desire Divine Providence to assist us in the pursuit of union with God, then we must call upon His grace and live accordingly – that is, according to the reality of the faith and Christ’s example.

Consider forsaking the world’s fantasy media entertainments, whose removal might prove to be the occasion of a daily (or hourly) act of self-denial, meriting abundant graces, greater virtue and a more recollected prayer life. By such an effort we grow in greater union with God and tear down those barriers that render His grace ineffective in our lives. Thus we pray more efficaciously that the *Good Master send more labourers into the harvest* – the objective of the present Vocations Crusade.