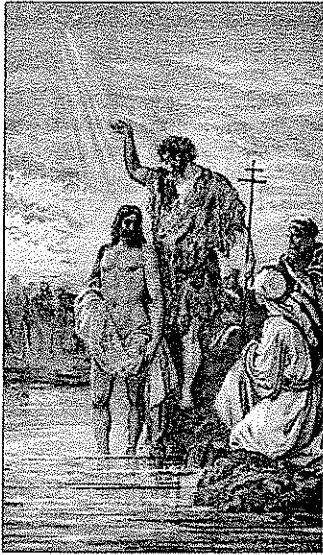


# THE QUIGLEY CATHOLIC BEACON

"A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Nor do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house."

Matthew 5:14-15



Gustave Doré, *Baptism of Jesus*. 1865

*The Catholic Church will celebrate the feast of the Baptism of Christ on January 8.*

## COME HOLY SPIRIT

Come, Holy Spirit,  
fill the hearts of Thy faithful  
and enkindle in them the  
fire of Thy love.  
V. Send forth Thy Spirit and  
they shall be created.  
R. And Thou shalt renew  
the face of the earth.  
Let us pray.  
O God, Who didst instruct  
the hearts of the faithful by  
the light of the Holy Spirit,  
grant us in the same Spirit  
to be truly wise, and ever to  
rejoice in His consolation.  
Through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## THE SACRAMENTAL PRINCIPLE IN NATURE & SCRIPTURE

By Eva Philips

THE SACRAMENTAL principle of the "invisible made visible" holds that invisible truths and realities can be represented by and symbolized in visible objects and actions. This principle is found in the sacraments, such as in Baptism, in which the physical pouring of water represents the spiritual cleansing that is occurring. It is also found in the Sacred Liturgy, in which objects such as candles and incense have a far deeper sacred meaning than their outward physical traits.

However, the sacraments are not the only examples of the sacramental principle. Nature provides many examples of the sacramental principle. C.S. Lewis captured the significance of this when he stated that visible parts of nature "are

focal points at which more reality becomes visible than we ordinarily see at once" (*God In the Dock*). One might dismiss natural objects and events as ordinary and unimportant, but such phenomena can actually reveal spiritual truths. While the changing of seasons, for example, may on the surface seem to be nothing more than the rise and fall of temperature and the shedding and regrowth of leaves, it conveys the deeper truth of Christ's death and Resurrection. Saint Paul writes, "Ever since the creation of the world, [God's] invisible attributes of eternal power and divinity have been able to be perceived and understood in what he has made" (Rom. 1:20). Through observation of the natural world, one can

come to more fully appreciate God's power and majesty, which are revealed through natural phenomena like the delicacy of a flower, the beauty of the sea, and the immensity of the universe.

The Gospels contain many references to people who, upon coming into contact with a seemingly innocuous object, are healed of afflictions. For example, the *Gospel of John* contains the account of Jesus healing a blind man by smearing clay on his eyelids (John 9:1-7). The clay itself did not cure the man's blindness. Rather, Jesus used the clay as a visible sign of His invisible healing grace. In the *Acts of the Apostles*, the sick are healed by touching handkerchiefs and aprons

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## CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM TODAY

By Louis Bosco

WE HAVE BEEN GIVEN A degree of individual freedom of self-expression here in the West that is all but unimaginable in many other parts of the world. In America, our rights to speak, worship, and assemble freely are safeguarded under the Constitution's First Amendment. Yet, while most of us are at least generally aware of these facts, our freedom tends to be something we take for granted. This being the case, it would do us considerable spiritual good to reflect on what we have been given, especially in light of the trials faced by many Christians today.

Given the oppression and atrocities inflicted on an alarming number of our Christian brothers and sisters in the Middle East and elsewhere, we have an obligation to concern ourselves with the circumstances of their situation. Once a thriving community, the Christian population in the Middle East—the birthplace of our faith—has dwindled to virtually nothing. Despite those voices in the West that touted 2010's Arab Spring as a major turning point in the region, in which brutal dictatorships would be replaced by

democratic governments, the intervening years have been marred by instability and escalations in violence, particularly against Christians and other minority groups. *The Week's* Michael Brendan Dougherty reports how in 2013 the Christian population of a Syrian village decimated by a series of attacks, dropped from 4,000 to only 10 ("The World's Most Ancient Christian Communities Are Being Destroyed—and No One Seems to Care," Jan. 23, 2014).

Furthermore, following the kidnapping of two Syrian

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## — QUIGLEY CATHOLIC MISSION STATEMENT —

Quigley Catholic High School is a Roman Catholic, college preparatory, co-educational secondary school. With gospel values as its foundation, Quigley Catholic strives to form faith-filled disciples of Christ, life-long learners who will contribute to the common good of the Church and the world. We do this through the collaborative efforts of all the members of the Quigley Catholic community.

## THE SACRAMENTAL FREEDOM AND RESPONSIBILITY By Louis Bosco

### PRINCIPLE from p. 1

touched to the body of Paul (19:11-12). Like the clay, these objects that seemed to cure disease upon contact were not "magic"; rather they were the visible signs of God's healing power.

The sacramental principle as revealed in Sacred Scripture and nature provide insight into a crucial part of the Catholic faith. By understanding the sacramental principle, one can more fully comprehend fundamental Church practices such as the sacraments and the liturgy. Most importantly, recognizing the sacramental principle can lead us to a closer, deeper relationship with God. *Eva Philips is a Junior at QCHS.*

THE IDEA OF "FREEDOM" is often discussed in public discourse today, and yet seldom spoken of in relation to *responsibility*. This is because freedom in the popular mindset means the absence of rules. Hence conservative pundits clamor for "freedom" from government regulations; while their liberal counterparts yearn for "freedom" from religious precepts. We find a growing number of people today, furthermore, who reject organized religion altogether and the rules that go with it.

Freedom, however, in the mind of the Church, means not the absence of rules, but rather the liberty to live fully

in accord with God's law and so in this way to be fully human. It is *sin*, the rejection of the law, that truly enslaves us. And since man is endowed with free will, *true* freedom cannot be divorced from responsibility: the call to choose and act for the good.

"Human freedom," says the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, "is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude" (par. 1731).

In Aristotelian terms, man is *homo sapiens*, "the wise man," or the *thinking animal*. Divine revelation

teaches that he alone is made in the image and likeness of God (cf. Gen. 1:26). He alone has been given the ability to choose his actions for himself, to act independently of instinct and other factors. Being a wholly free actor, man finds a universe of possibilities and probabilities open to him. And with this ability to choose freely comes the reality that his choices, good and bad, necessarily bear good and bad consequences. Thus, he is obligated to tend toward the good—and indeed toward the ultimate good which is God Himself. *Louis Bosco teaches Honors Religion at QCHS.*

## CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM TODAY cont. from page 1

bishops, large numbers of Christians fled in fear, causing the population of the city of Homs to fall from 1.75 million to 450,000. Between 2004 and 2011, the numbers of Chaldo-Assyrian Christians in Iraq plummeted from over a million to just 150,000.

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We tend to think of Christian martyrdom as a phenomenon of the past—something relegated to the early centuries of the Church era, when our forefathers struggled under the tyranny of the pagan Roman state. In actuality, Christian martyrdom is not only an ongoing reality in our time, but is occurring at an unprecedented level according to reports. A new study by Italian journalist Antonio Socci, in fact, has verified that approximately 70 million Christians suffered martyrdom for their faith in the past two millennia. Of that number, 45.5 million (65%) of those martyrdoms have occurred in the Twentieth century ("20<sup>th</sup> Century Saw 65% of Christian Martyrs, Says

Author," *Zenit*, May 9, 2002). Large numbers of these martyrdoms have taken place under various Communist and totalitarian regimes.

Dougherty writes of a case in which several Christian churches in Egypt were torched in reaction to the rumors of a Christian boy dating a Muslim girl. And he records the tragic case of Ayman Nabil Labib, a 17-year-old Coptic Christian boy, who was choked by his Muslim teacher at school and then beaten to death by classmates for refusing to cover a cross tattoo on his wrist and defiantly revealing a cross necklace.

Perhaps the only thing more scandalous than the ill treatment of Christians in the

Middle East is the virtual silence on the matter among their brethren in America and Europe. And yet what can we do to help this horrendous situation?

- 1) *Pray*. We should never underestimate the power we have in Christ to alter circumstances through prayer.
- 2) *Learn*. We can make an effort to learn the facts of the situation, and educate others.
- 3) *Take Action*. We can contact our representatives in Congress to let them know that we care about what is happening. And we can contact and support legitimate charities and organizations working to make a difference.

*Louis Bosco teaches Honors Religion at QCHS.*