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On Traditionalists

I had already read Robin Anderson's biography of Pope Pius VII, but if a book review or anything else has Thomas Fleming's name on it, I read it. Alas, no more than nine lines into his review ("The Church Militant," *Reviews*, August), I was startled by the first of several attacks on Catholic traditionalists that contributed absolutely nothing to the review. As a staunch Fleming aficionado, I attribute the antitraditionalist spasms in the review either to temporary indigestion or to something more serious: Dr. Fleming has been seduced by "Catholic conservatives," kissing cousins to the neocons he elsewhere despises. Like the Catholic conservative periodical the *Wanderer*, Dr. Fleming knows the citadel has been overrun. But he won't bring himself to identify the moles who opened the gates or the guards still snoring at their posts, and he criticizes those who will.

Dr. Fleming couldn't just call us "traditionalists." No, we are "self-described" traditionalists. I take that to mean that we aren't what we think we are. Though we cling to traditional ways of worshiping, praying, thinking, and reacting to false religions, Dr. Fleming denies us the title because we won't follow postconciliar popes down paths condemned by their predecessors.

He has us gloating over the present scandals as if they please us. When we sounded the first alarms about the infiltration of seminaries by the homosexual mafia, we were ridiculed then, too. Talk about shooting the messenger!

Dr. Fleming's use of the modifier "some" will not prevent the unwary reader from believing that "all" traditionalists deny that John Paul II is the Pope.

More typical is my chapel, which prays for the Pope at every Mass, a claim many local parishes cannot make. Yes, there are traditionalists who get carried away. When the shepherd turns out to be a wolf, the sheep scatter. When popes began uprooting everything Catholics learned in their preconciliar catechism classes, the result was confusion. The more prudent Catholic will cling to what the Church has always taught and reject the innovation. Those well instructed know that if it's an innovation, it's false. It

not only can be, but must be, resisted. As in every revolution, the majority caves quickly and quietly, freeing the revolutionaries to wipe out the few heroic holdouts. In most revolutions, they shoot them. In this one, they try to ridicule them into submission.

Dr. Fleming refers to the "schismatics in the St. Pius X society." A point of fact: In the hierarchy of virtues, faith ranks higher than obedience. Since, for example, a person's faith is reflected in the way he prays (*lex orandi, lex credendi*), a new "Mass" that is Protestantized (a debate I'd gladly enter) is something the Catholic must shun if he wants to safeguard his faith. And the *Novus Ordo* Mass is only the tip of the iceberg. Everything Catholic has been turned upside down, forcing the traditionalist to choose between faith and obedience. He has chosen to disobey where he thinks he must in order to survive. Disobedience is not a schismatic act. We obey John Paul II when he upholds the 2,000-year ordinary magisterium of the Church. We resist when he clearly violates it. You don't have to be a theologian to know the difference or to understand the law of contradiction. If Dr. Fleming thinks that proves, or leads to, a schismatic mentality, he hasn't a clue what it means to be a Catholic.

Dr. Fleming attributes to traditionalists a "shortsighted perspective" and a "crippling ignorance of history." Is he defending us against the contrary and more common charge that we cling too stubbornly to history? Is it so unlikely that those so attached to the old ways would also immerse themselves in Catholic history? Does he really think traditionalists see Catholic history as one prolonged *Bells of St. Mary's* before Vatican II? Does he think we are unaware of Leo X's obsessive preoccupation with promoting the arts and neglect of needed reforms, Julius II's military adventurism, and Alexander VI's shocking moral excesses? That scandalous trio at least left Catholic faith and practice intact. Which is worse, a pope who meets his primary obligation of defending the Catholic Faith but is personally corrupt, or a pope who, while apparently blameless in his personal life, dedicates his pontificate to uprooting the teaching of his predecessors and replacing it with his personal views?

"Many" (again, Dr. Fleming supplies

a hedging modifier) traditionalists show a “Calvinistic and holier-than-thou hyper-moralism.” I’m not sure what hyper-moralism is, but I know how recklessly Catholic conservatives and liberals slap the Jansenist label on anyone unyielding in his Catholic faith. “Holier-than-thou?” It’s in traditional chapels that Dr. Fleming will find long lines at the confessional and in conventional *Novus Ordo* parishes where he’ll find great numbers going to Communion without having gone to confession in years. The typical traditionalist knows he must work out his salvation with fear and trembling, something difficult to do in the “I’m OK, you’re OK” parish down the street.

I hope Dr. Fleming will accept the following advice in the same spirit in which I offer it. I urge him to read Pius XI’s *Mortalium animos* thoroughly. He’ll recognize that the encyclical’s teaching is firmly rooted in the Church’s ordinary magisterium and, therefore, cannot change. Then let him try to reconcile *Mortalium animos* with “the spirit of Assisi” and the panreligious outrages that John Paul II so tirelessly promotes. Or with *Ut unum sint*. It cannot be done. I urge him to read the encyclical *Mirari vos* of Gregory XVI, who echoed his predecessors when he called religious liberty a “delirium.” Let him reconcile that teaching, also firmly rooted in the magisterium, with the 180-degree turn in postconciliar teaching. Impossible. I urge him to read the *Syllabus of Modern Errors* of Pius IX. He will notice the similarity between condemned proposition 80 and the post-conciliar pontificates. Indeed, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger himself called the conciliar time bomb *Gaudium et spes*, which has so inspired John Paul II, a virtual “counter-*Syllabus*.” I urge him to take the traditional Mass, which is virtually unchanged since the time of Gregory the Great, and place it side by side with the *Novus Ordo* and Cranmer’s 16th-century Anglican Service of Morning Prayer. He will be obliged to notice the similarity between Cranmer’s “rite” and the *Novus Ordo*, quite consistent with the other similarities between the Anglican and Vatican II revolutionaries. I urge him to read what the Council of Trent said about the translation of “*pro multis*” in the consecration. I invite him to imagine Pius VII, or any pope up to Pius XII, kissing the Koran, inviting Moroccans to be good Muslims, praising the arch-heretic Martin Luther, boasting of praying with animists in Africa, or visiting a

synagogue and listening to rabbis refer loudly to the messiah to come. John Paul II has done similar things every year of his pontificate. (All the more reason for my chapel to pray for him.) I invite Dr. Fleming to compare Leo XIII’s definitive declaration on the invalidity of Anglican orders with John Paul II giving a joint blessing with the “archbishop” of Canterbury.

I urge him to consider how thoroughly Vatican II embraces the dangerous principles of the French Revolution. I’m surprised it didn’t occur to him when he read Anderson’s book. Liberty, equality, and fraternity equals religious liberty, ecumenism, and collegiality. Finally, I invite Dr. Fleming to list the good fruits of Vatican II that traditionalists should accept. Conversions? Vocations? Overflowing convents and monasteries? A vibrant liturgy? Mass attendance? Obedience to Church teachings on birth control? Belief in the Real Presence? Modern church architecture?

The issue, then, is not why traditionalists are the way we are, but why Dr. Fleming isn’t resisting with us. His blindness on this doesn’t match his clear vision on everything else.

—Daniel Amon
Alexandria, VA

Dr. Fleming Replies:

We have received a number of mostly incoherent and irrelevant attacks on my review of Robin Anderson’s *Pius VII*. Mr. Amon’s letter is not incoherent, but it is almost entirely irrelevant. Rather than replying directly to any of the letters, I shall confine myself to pointing out what I did say and why.

I did not say, and have never said, a single good thing about Vatican II or the *Novus Ordo* Mass. I attend a Tridentine Mass that is actively supported by our diocese. Our priest is from perhaps the most severely Tridentine group, the Institute of Christ the King, and I take this opportunity of saluting Fr. Brian Bovee, the priest at St. Mary’s of Rockford, Msgr. Gilles Wach, the head of the Institute, and Bishop Thomas Doran of Rockford, who recently elevated the status of St. Mary’s from that of a shrine to that of an oratory. The Institute (and other similar groups) and we in the parish are doing what we can to preserve and defend the traditions of the Church. Nothing I said in my review could possibly be construed

as a criticism of what people call “traditionalism,” though I dislike the term.

I do not call myself a “traditionalist” because, first, I do not revere tradition *qua* tradition—some religious traditions (such as cannibalism and incest) are bad—and, almost by definition, those who define themselves as conservatives (not just neoconservatives) and traditionalists are putting the cart before the horse; and, second, because being a Catholic Christian is good enough for me. I neither need nor want a prefix. Movements belong to the left, and some of the Young Turk traditionalists denouncing the Pope, Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *et al.*, betray all of the signs of mental instability exhibited by communists, libertarians, and other leftists.

I referred to the St. Pius X Society as schismatic because it is. Although its priests have the power to perform valid Sacraments, Catholics are not permitted to attend them. The quibbling engaged in by some of my traditionalist friends is a very disturbing sign.

I made a slighting reference to an article that *Latin Mass* published on Distributism. The author was partly correct in pointing out that Belloc and Chesterton were too willing to use taxation and other methods of state control (though few admirers of the Distributists will recognize the distorted picture presented in the article). But in trying to prove that capitalism is the authentic social teaching of the Church, he revealed an ignorance of both capitalism and moral theology that made manifest his unfitness to write on such matters. Is that what “traditionalism” means? Contradicting the fundamental social teachings of Christianity, particularly in its Catholic form, in order to defend a liberal theory of political economy that is only two centuries old?

I also referred to another unfortunate article in *Latin Mass* dealing with *Humanae vitae*. The merits (or, rather, the demerits) of that poorly argued article have been dealt with sufficiently by a series of articles and letters to the *Wanderer*. I have no wish to add to the difficulties of Father James McLucas, the editor of *Latin Mass*, who was not included at all in the criticism I have made of irresponsible traditionalists. I am not declaring war on *Latin Mass*, but I do think it is my duty as writer and editor to point out the dangerous temptation to extremism *for its own sake*, a temptation to which some traditionalists are succumbing.

I am in complete sympathy with the

traditionalist effort to preserve the Old Mass (the term “Tridentine” is narrow and misleading), but if I believed the *Novus Ordo* to be invalid (as some of the hotheads do), I could not remain in communion with those who celebrate or attend it. Since I am not prepared to elect myself pope, I shall have to get used to the idea that we live in an imperfect world, that even Catholics make mistakes, and that, from time to time, the Church is in need of major reform and restoration. This is an evil age of the world, and the Church is contaminated with the ideas of the age. When was it ever different?

The question is whether Catholics wish to work within the Church to make the changes that are needed, or whether they follow in the footsteps of Luther, many of whose criticisms made a valid point. Leo X was a far worse pope than could possibly be imagined today. The Church survived Leo and Luther, and She can survive such infinitely better popes as Paul VI and his successors. If She cannot, then, following the wisdom of Gamaliel, we must say it is because God is not with us. Starting our own traditional cult will not do anything except to encourage us in our smugness.

Americans are a childish and stunted race. If we cannot have everything we want right now, we are ready to go into rebellion. If I had to attend a *Novus Ordo* Mass on a steady basis, I should probably seek permission to attend an Orthodox liturgy. Our Eastern brethren have preserved many fine things that we have lost. The Orthodox have an unspoiled liturgy, virile priests, and holy monks. Nonetheless, as a man of the West, I shall stand by the West; and, as a Catholic, I shall stand by the Church. In no case will I join with the self-important rebels who cry if they cannot have it their way, who throw rocks through stained-glass windows and complain if obedient Catholics cry “hooligan,” who are following the road that took the antipopes and Old Catholics into the dustbin of history.

On the Intelligence Crisis

As the “legendary agent” mentioned so prominently in Dr. Philip Jenkins’ article (“The Next Intelligence Crisis,” *Vital Signs*, June), I would like to make a few points of my own.

I agree with much of what Dr. Jenkins says, particularly that “the United States needs a much stronger and more proactive intelligence apparatus.” I also subscribe to the point touched on throughout his piece, that intelligence agents (or “case officers,” as they are known in the CIA) move by necessity in a corruptive environment and need to be alert to its dangers. We were warned in training and repeatedly throughout our careers to avoid “being corrupted by the tools of the trade.” Some failed to heed the warning, and their names are mentioned in Dr. Jenkins’ article.

However, I am perplexed by Dr. Jenkins’ willingness to cite David Corn, an editor of the extreme-left *Nation*. As a contributor to the “paleoconservative” *Chronicles*, Dr. Jenkins demonstrates the kind of neutrality that an historian must always strive for. However, to rely so exclusively on the uncorroborated word of a partisan journalist reveals a painful absence of skepticism.

Some of what Corn had to say about me in his book is true. Some is not. I don’t believe, though, that even Corn said about me what Dr. Jenkins has written—that I “was at the center of every CIA horror story for half a century.” For one thing, the expression “half a century” puzzles me. It is a verifiable fact that I served the CIA for 28 years. How, then, does he account for the other 22 years? In a way, Dr. Jenkins has already accounted for them, because, in an earlier paragraph, he wrote, “nobody ever really leaves the CIA.” In a more scholarly publication, this assertion would have required at least a footnote, for it is not a true statement.

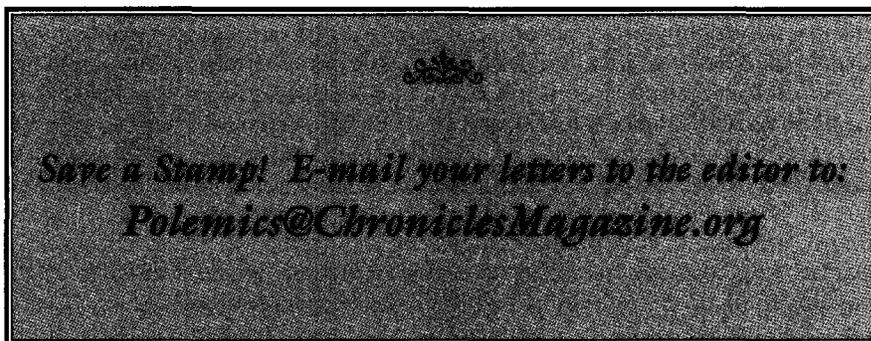
It is hard, too, for me to come to grips with the words “every CIA horror story,” for what horrifies Dr. Jenkins may not horrify me, and *vice versa*. I am horrified by the fact that a CIA officer once administered LSD to unwitting people, but I was not at the center of that horror story; I was not even in its periphery. I am horrified by the CIA’s maltreatment of a Soviet defector, but I had nothing to do with it. Perhaps Dr. Jenkins is referring to the Bay of Pigs. I am chagrined by the Bay of Pigs, but it does not horrify me; and, in any case, I was not involved. More likely, Dr. Jenkins has been affected by fallout from the notorious RICO trial in which I was among those accused of conspiring to murder the Sandinista defector Eden Pastora. The judge, however, dismissed the case as without merit, and he ordered the plaintiffs to pay my legal expenses. And, in the end, the true culprit was identified. Still, the mud lingers. A lie truly has a life of its own.

I neither ask for nor expect an apology. Apologies might better be rendered to the victims of the “Halloween Massacre,” whom Dr. Jenkins has tarnished as “dubious characters.” Far from being perpetrators of widespread criminality, as he calls them, these men and women were specialists in human intelligence—*i.e.*, officers who knew how to work with spies. And they were “purged,” as Dr. Jenkins puts it, because the then-director of the CIA, Admiral Stansfield Turner, preferred to put his trust in technical intelligence. The loss of these people, and of the successors whom they would have promoted and trained in HUMINT collection, is now being felt. As Dr. Jenkins quite correctly says, “the intelligence walls that should have been defending America” are sadly in need of repair.

—Theodore G. Shackley
Glen Echo, MD

Dr. Jenkins Replies:

I am very grateful for Mr. Shackley’s corrections, and I apologize for any inadvertent misrepresentations. As the months have gone by since September 11, I suspect that I have not been alone in undertaking a prolonged and sometimes painful revision of my previous beliefs about the role of the U.S. intelligence community in the 1960’s and 70’s. In light of that reevaluation, I am much more sympathetic to what he writes about the agency’s factional struggles of that era.



STEVEN HATFILL, if indeed he is responsible for the anthrax campaign in the United States last year, is a villainous criminal of the deepest dye, who deserves the harshest punishment the courts can impose. Yet even if his guilt should be established by some future trial, the way in which the case has been investigated—and especially the role of the media—should still be seen as a deeply sinister abuse of official power. If Hatfill, however, is innocent, then the official campaign of vilification against him over the past few months must be counted among the most horrendous legal scandals in modern American history. The only reason we are not speaking in terms of “McCarthyism” and “witch-hunt” is that the worst media culprits are located firmly on the liberal end of the spectrum, and, as we all know, only conservatives can be guilty of hysterical yellow journalism.

Following the anthrax attacks in the fall of 2001, suspicion immediately fell upon Middle Eastern enemies, above all Iraq, a linkage that made a U.S. attack upon that country almost certain. Soon, however, federal agencies began publicizing their belief that the anthrax originated within the United States, probably from a “lone wolf” scientist with ultraright views. Since this theory immediately took the heat off Iraq, it was wonderful news for administration doves, especially in the State Department.

Over the past year, federal law-enforcement agencies leaked a series of stories aimed directly at establishing the guilt of Steven Hatfill, who had the misfortune to head their list of suspects. Of course, any story that actually named Hatfill would have been libelous, so the *New York Times* used a pseudonym, “Mr. Z.” (Apparently, the name “Josef K” had already been taken.) On July 2, *Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof published what amounted to a brief for the prosecution. The story not only argued strongly for the guilt of “Z” in the 2001 attacks but implied his involvement in earlier acts that can only be termed “genocidal.” Kristof publicly asked the FBI, “Have you examined whether Mr. Z has connections to the biggest anthrax outbreak among humans ever recorded, the one that sickened more than 10,000 black farmers in Zimbabwe in 1978-80?” Of course, even if

Hatfill were arrested, such a claim would never surface in a trial; it would, however, float in the background of leftist conspiracy theory, polluting the minds of any conceivable jury, convincing them that they were dealing not just with a Hatfill but with a Mengele *redux*. Have you stopped exterminating your minorities?

By August, the federal law-enforcement/media complex was ready to strike, and the FBI undertook a massively publicized search of Hatfill’s apartment. Meanwhile, the news media—the Justice Department’s entertainment division—were full of stories more or less proclaiming that *we have our man*. Had he not even written an unpublished novel strikingly prophetic of the actual anthrax attacks? An arrest and trial must be imminent: The lone wolf was caged.

And then things started to fall apart. No worthwhile evidence against Hatfill came to light, and many of the associations of time and place that seemed to connect him to the crimes proved false or misleading. Even the much-vaunted novel that foretold the attacks proved to be irrelevant, except to the extent that, like a hundred other thrillers from the 1990’s, it dealt with the general theme of biological warfare against the United States. Hatfill repeatedly offered to take medical tests that would measure his exposure to anthrax, and he basically did everything he reasonably could do to prove he had nothing to do with the attacks. That’s right: Hatfill had to *prove his innocence*, to establish that he had not committed the crimes, actual and rumored, that were surfacing almost randomly in the media. In the process, any concept of “innocent until proven guilty” was ignored.

Perhaps the lowest point in the whole outrageous story occurred in Nicholas Kristof’s column immediately following the Justice Department’s open naming of Hatfill as a lead suspect. Recalling his earlier stories about “Mr. Z,” “the overwhelming focus of the investigation,” Kristof noted smugly that “I didn’t name him. But over the weekend, Mr. Z named himself: He is Steven J. Hatfill.” Note the suggestion that Hatfill’s name came to light not because of systematic leaks from the FBI or the Justice Department but because he decided—presumably on a whim—to place himself at the center of

this horrible story.

Seeing how slavishly media outlets like the *New York Times* reproduce official statements, I sometimes refer to that newspaper half-seriously by the name of *American Pravda*. Following this latest affair, I would like to apologize to *Pravda*.

—Philip Jenkins

JEAN CHRÉTIEN, the prime minister of Canada, is perhaps the best embodiment of Coolidge’s statement that, when it comes to success, persistence is better than talent, intelligence, connections, or money.

Chrétien was literally the man who wouldn’t leave. Since beginning his political career in 1964 as a Liberal MP from Quebec, he has been around Ottawa continuously, whether in the House of Commons or as a cabinet minister in the Pearson, Trudeau, and Turner governments. His ubiquity makes me wonder whether Canadian voters picked him and the Liberals to lead their country back in 1993 because they generally supported the Liberals or because they felt sorry for Chrétien, since he had been around for so long but never got to live on Sussex Drive.

At the end of summer, however, Canadians finally had enough. Actually, most Canadians had had enough of Chrétien before then, but it took the Grits a while to realize that the numerous scandals, gaffes, and the general cynicism of his government had lowered the prime minister’s poll numbers into dangerous territory. Finance Minister Paul Martin had spent the past few years undermining Chrétien’s control of the Liberal Party to such an extent that, by the time he met with his fellow party members in a caucus at Saugernay, the numbers were telling. Chrétien could not win the leadership review at the upcoming February party meeting. Canadians were finally tossing him out.

None of the movers and shakers on Bay Street (or in the rest of the country, for that matter) bought Chrétien’s claim that he had told his wife two years ago that he was going to step down. In fact, many have been surprised that the old gut-fighter didn’t duke it out with his bitter rival, despite being behind in the polls. That is what Chrétien has been