



# FAITH & REASON

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## EDITORIAL

*Timothy T. O'Donnell, S.T.D.*

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*The following excerpts are from an address given by Dr. Timothy O'Donnell on the occasion of his installation as the third president of Christendom College on October 11, 1992.*

You see the trouble we are in! Jerusalem is in ruins. Its gates have been burned down. Come, let us rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and suffer this indignity no longer. (2 Esdras 2:17)



O SPOKE NEHEMIAS AFTER THE BABYLONIAN CAPTIVITY. TODAY, IN MANY WAYS, SUCH is the state of the Church and the nation which we love. If the modern western world could be characterized by any single term, that term would have to be “secular.” Our society as a whole seems to have lost the supernatural Christian vision of life. We no longer know who we are, where we are going - with the result that we are confused. What is right? What is true? What is good? What do we mean by the beautiful?

It is the great tragedy of this secularization that we have dropped Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He has faded from public consciousness. Our contemporary age is, and let us be clear, an apostate age. Let us stop for a moment and realize that the central and most important event in the history of mankind - the birth of God Incarnate, who brought truth and salvation to all men calling them to the august dignity of becoming sons and daughters of God, receives virtually no acknowledgement in public life, nor in the private lives of millions of people in nominally Christian nations. Decisions of tremendous importance relating to the future of the life of man on this planet are frequently made without the slightest reference to Him who made us. Our society and its modern culture have created an atmosphere of secularity which all men must breathe whether secularist or not. Our Lord said in the gospels: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Our forefathers in ages past built magnificent cathedrals in the center of their cities whose spires soared into God’s Heaven and dedicated them “ad majorem dei gloriam” (to the greater honor and glory of God). Today, our society builds magnificent temples to the gods of business and finance. The design of our cities bears witness to the fact that religion no longer occupies a central position in modern culture or, what they call, “modern values.” We are told religion has become a private affair and it should never raise its head in the public arena. Even among believing and committed Christians, those who profess faith in Our Lord with St. Peter saying to Him: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God”... even they seldom refer to Him in public life. And, if they do, it is almost with an apology ... an apology for using His name. That sacred name which whenever spoken, scripture tells us: “Every knee should bend in the Heavens, on the earth, and under the earth.”

We in the West have chosen either to abandon or to ignore Jesus Christ, the central truth of our Faith and the most precious gift of our Father in Heaven, who so loved the world that He sent His own Son in order that the world

might be saved through Him. And so what happens to us? Easter, the glorious feast of Our Lord's resurrection and our victory over death, is replaced by Earth Day. Christmas with an insipid Seasons Greetings. Lust dresses itself up and becomes sexual liberation. Indifferentism is called a healthy pluralism. Sterilization is preferred to fertility. In our films, instead of a heroic film like "The Longest Day" we get the cynicism of a "Platoon" or "Born on the Fourth of July." Instead of "Ben Hur" we get the blasphemous "The Last Temptation of Christ." In art we have fallen from the Madonnas of Raphael and Botticelli to Serrano and Maplethorpe. We now have a generation who are unfamiliar with Virgil, Dante, Pope, Yeats and Frost, but know by heart the doggerel of Nirvana, Milli Vanilli and 2 Live Crew.

It is precisely because of this situation that Christendom College was founded. It is because of this realistic assessment of our present situation that this College must grow and thrive. It is important for all of us to read the signs of the times. There is a crisis in modernity which is characterized by sterile unions and planned non-families as we wage war against what we call the "unwanted products of conception." We are witnessing, I believe, the death of our civilization because we have turned our back on Him who came to give us life.

One would certainly have to feel a bond with the great Augustine who, gazing from his study window in the evening twilight just before his death, witnessed hordes of vandals who had swept through North Africa crossing the pillars of Hercules from a plundered Spain and now surrounded his city and New Carthage; those symbols of a once resurgent Rome now ready to fall to a group of savage, uncivilized barbarians who knew not the tradition of Roman men. It must have appeared to him as if the world was coming to an end in 430 A.D. He would have been right in a sense. But who could have foreseen that out of the ashes of burned villas, abandoned vineyards, and desolate cities would rise up a new civilization that would one day far surpass the glory of ancient Rome.

I believe we are in a similar situation today - dwelling in the twilight of a spent civilization. Malcolm Muggeridge, who I regard as a very insightful writer, wrote concerning education and the modern age as follows:

Education, the great mumbo jumbo and fraud of the age purports to equip us to live and is

prescribed as a universal remedy for everyone from juvenile delinquency to premature senility. For the most part, it serves only to enlarge stupidity, inflate conceit, enhance credulity, and put those subject to it at the mercy of brainwashers with printing presses, radio and television at their disposal.

The education offered at this College is not mumbo jumbo and that is why Mr. Muggeridge spoke on behalf of this institution.

St. Paul, in writing to the Romans, exhorts all of us: "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Through rigorous study of the liberal arts, we seek to immerse ourselves here in our Western Christian tradition; and thereby, free man from slavery to ignorance and error. In this effort, we gratefully acknowledge the central role played by the Roman Catholic Church as mediated through the Magisterium as the source which gives life, meaning and direction to all that men do. Following Her wisdom and guidance we seek to ground ourselves in truth, the object of the intellect. Truth, both natural and supernatural, which as the Church teaches us has been expounded most faithfully in our great patron, the Angelic and Common Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas. Here the great ideas and the permanent things which have always stirred the hearts of men - the true, the good and the beautiful - find hearth and home. This education has made our graduates specially qualified and gifted to meet the challenge and the crisis of modernity by consecrating their intelligence to Jesus Christ.

We must seek through this educational apostolate to "restore all things in Christ." This is our motto, this is our pledge. We long to make our unique contribution as a college to the renewal of the temporal and ecclesial order. Jesus Christ came not to make life easy but to make men great. As Pope John Paul II, the Vicar of Christ, recently told members of this College in a private audience in the Vatican, and I quote: "Christendom College is doing a great work for the Church!" The stakes are too high, the need in our Church and country too great for us not to be faithful to our mission. I appeal to you - students, faculty and friends of the College, and alumni in a special way, to all the friends of this College, to support this educational apostolate. Let us join together and renew our commitment in this great undertaking.

Christ Jesus has brought all of us here together at this College on this day. Let us renew again in our lives those forgotten virtues which the world mocks and ridicules. Let us again renew our loyalty to the Vicar of Christ, Our Holy Father. Let us pledge our fidelity to the living magisterium of the Church and to the education in that Truth which sets us free. Let us have the courage then to redouble our efforts in our own personal lives and in the lives of our families to respond to the invitation of Christ.

In this dark hour when many have gleefully predicted the end of the Church and the end of Catholic education, let us raise our God-given swords of the intellect to God's blue sky that they may flash in the light of His Son. Let us recall that we have inherited the collective wisdom of over two thousand years. The world has always awaited the death of the Church. But death could not hold Christ, Our Head. Nor can it hold His divinized members. For certainly if we apply the words of that

great soldier, St. Ignatius of Loyola, to us and "Pray as if everything depended upon God and act as if everything depended upon us" the Divine Mercy certainly will not be found wanting. With charity toward all, with joy, with humility, with gratitude, and with full confidence in Our Lady's maternal solicitude let us carry our share of the burden of this fight for Christ and His Church for we know that the ultimate victory will be ours! So come, I ask you, and "Let us together rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and let us suffer this indignity no longer."

*Deus lo vult!* God wills it.

Thank you.

- Timothy T O'Donnell, S. TD.







*“Many biblical questions remain open for future resolution, and that the meaning of only a few passages touching faith and morals has been authoritatively decided already by the Magisterium or by the consensus of the Fathers...exegetes should pay particular attention to the discernment of what literary genre is being employed by the inspired writer.”*









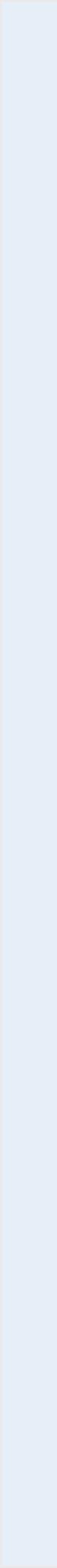






*“Just as the substantial Word  
of God became like men in  
every re-spect except sin, so too  
the words of God, expressed  
in human languages, became  
like human language in every  
respect except error”*

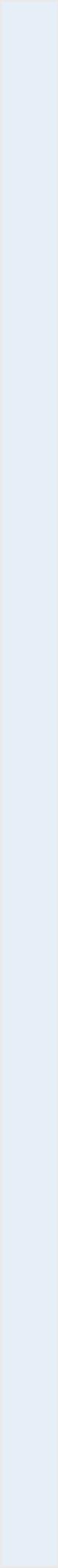




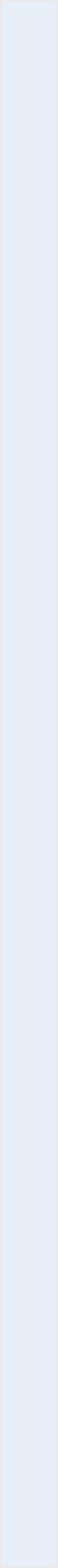


















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