Editor's Note: This article was originally published in the July 2018 issue of *Catholic Family News* (subscribe **HERE**). It is based on a sermon delivered by the author on Pentecost Sunday (May 20, 2018) and characterized by him as "a sermon for our troubled times." We reprint it here as part of CFN's coverage of the Youth Synod in Rome. CFN Managing Editor Matt Gaspers made reference to this article in his latest video report, shot on location at the Basilica of Saint Mary and All the Martyrs.

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In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Demons, two Popes, two churches, Martyrs, Pentecost, the Pantheon, the Fatima Message, the visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich, and a rainfall of roses are all linked together throughout history.

Our Lady and All the Martyrs

The "rainfall of roses" from the top of the Pantheon in Rome is a tradition of the Church that we call to mind on Pentecost Sunday. The fall of crimson-red rose petals is said to date back to **May 13, 609**, the very day when Pope St. Boniface IV (r. 608-615) consecrated the Pantheon in Rome as a Catholic Basilica. At that time, and on Pentecost Sundays to follow, workers would climb to the top of the Pantheon's towering roof and, from the oculus of the building (a circular opening, 30 feet in diameter, at the center of the roof), release thousands upon thousands of red rose petals following the Pentecost Sunday Mass. The floor of the Basilica ends up carpeted in a cushion of red. This dramatic tradition is meant to recall the tongues of fire that descended upon the Apostles with the Blessed Virgin Mary on that first Pentecost Sunday (cf. Acts 1:14, 2:1-4).

The crimson-red rose petals also remind us of the blood of the Martyrs. The Pantheon, originally built in A.D. 113-125, was a place of false worship dedicated to all the pagan "gods" (in reality, demons) of ancient Rome. Many early Christians were martyred for their refusal to worship these false gods. When Pope St. Boniface IV consecrated the Pantheon as a Catholic Basilica, he renamed it "Saint Mary and All the Martyrs" (Latin: *Sancta Maria ad Martyres*) in place of "Pantheon," which was a reference to "all the gods."

The date of dedication, May 13, was the ancient Feast of Our Lady and All the Martyrs, the same date on which Our Lady would first appear at Fatima centuries later in 1917. This is quite significant in light of the third part of the Secret of Fatima (aka: the "Third Secret") – that is, the message entrusted by Our Lady to the three shepherd children as a secret during Her third apparition (July 13, 1917) – which includes a vision of Martyrs going up "a

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steep mountain" towards "a big Cross" just outside "a big city that was half in ruins".[1] Our Lady of Fatima was perhaps showing us a vision of our own times in which we must be prepared to suffer and die as Martyrs for "the dogma of the Faith," which She seemed to imply would be threatened.[2]

Visions of a Modern Mystic

Returning to the topic of the Pantheon, Anne Catherine Emmerich (1774-1824), a German Augustinian nun, stigmatist, and mystic, was able to see back in time to a day when Pope St. Boniface IV was petitioning the Emperor (Phocas) to convert the ancient pagan temple into a Catholic church. Describing the event, she said:

> "I saw a great round building like a cupola – it was a pagan temple filled with beautiful idols. It had no windows, but in the dome was an opening with a contrivance for keeping out the rain. It seemed as if all the idols that ever existed were gathered together there in every conceivable posture."[3]

The saintly Pontiff removed everything that was non-Christian, which he termed as "pagan filth."[4] He then entombed under the high altar of the Pantheon thirty or more cartloads of Martyrs' bones taken from the catacombs as he turned the huge pagan temple into a Catholic Basilica named not only after the Queen of Martyrs, but also after the many Christians killed for refusing to honor those filthy idols.

On **May 13, 1820**, Sister Emmerich had a vision of two Popes and two churches.[5] The second Pope and his church were from after her lifetime. The first Pope she saw was St. Boniface IV casting out the false gods of Rome from the Pantheon and bringing in sacred relics in a ceremony during which the holy Martyrs assisted with the Blessed Virgin Mary at their head.[6] She noted that there was an altar, not in the center of the building, but against the wall.[7]

This venerable high altar against the wall at the Basilica of Saint Mary and All the Martyrs (the Pantheon) was obscured from view after centuries of use for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on yet another **May 13** (2018), the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima and the ancient Feast of Our Lady and All the Martyrs. At that time, *in our time*, a *Novus Ordo* table was erected by Pope Francis at the Pantheon in front of the traditional high altar – the same altar that has been there since the time of Pope St. Boniface IV's consecration. Thus was that venerable high altar, laden with the relics of Martyrs, relegated to the status of a museum piece, making it difficult to offer the Traditional Latin Mass upon it as had been done for

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centuries.

Exorcising the Pantheon

Centuries earlier, in turning the Pantheon into a Catholic Basilica, the courageous Pope St. Boniface IV literally stood firmly against the gates of hell. The gates of hell would not prevail over this Pope or over the Dogma of the Faith. However, the demons of the false gods of Rome were not going to leave that pagan temple as easily as their many statues were removed.

A huge crowd watched and prayed as the Sovereign Pontiff, standing at the threshold of the great doors of the Pantheon, began to recite prayers of exorcism. Infernal screams from within the seemingly empty temple issued forth, intensifying as the exorcism prayers continued. It is said that great fear seized the onlookers and that no one was left standing on their feet in the face of the horrible spectacle, save the Vicar of Christ. All the demons were said to have fled in disorder as they exited the Pantheon through the roof's oculus or past the saintly Pope and out the great doorway.[8]

The demons would not, however, give up trying to enter the Church as they "roamed about the world seeking the ruin and damnation of souls" (Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel). Sister Emmerich also foresaw a counterfeit church filled with heretics:

> "I saw the fatal consequences of this counterfeit church. I saw it increase; I saw heretics of all kinds flocking into the city (of Rome). I saw the ever-increasing tepidity of the clergy …"[9]

She saw priests after her lifetime that were apparently ordered to do things that were against Church teaching, leading to a possible schism. On one side of the split, there was a hatred of the Rosary:

> "I have had another vision on the great tribulation everywhere reigning. It seemed as if something were exacted of the clergy, something that could not be granted. I saw many aged Priests, some of them Franciscans, and one, in particular, a very old man, weeping bitterly and mingling their tears with those of others younger than themselves. I saw others, tepid souls, willingly acceding to conditions hurtful to religion. The old faithful in their distress submitted to the interdict and closed their churches. Numbers of parishioners joined them; and so,

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> two parties were formed, a good and a bad one … the supporters of the 'new lights,' the Illuminati, especially hated the devotion of the Rosary."[10]

Counterfeit Church, Religious Indifferentism

In our time, along with hatred of the Rosary, came an aversion to Fatima's Our Lady of the Rosary. Her Fatima Message is abhorred by Modernists since it is a reaffirmation of the Gospel and a compendium of Catholic Church teaching. Of a Pope who would come after her lifetime, Anne Catherine Emmerich spoke of him fostering the heresy of religious indifferentism:

> "Then I saw the connection between the two Popes and the two temples. I am sorry that I have forgotten the numbers, but I was shown how weak the one had been in adherents and human support, but how strong in courage to overturn so many gods (I knew the number) and to unite so many different forms of worship into one; and, on the contrary, how strong in numbers and yet how irresolute in action was the other since, in authorizing the erection of false temples, he had allowed the only true God, the only true religion to be lost among so many false gods and false religions."[11]

Sister Emmerich also foresaw a Protestantized man-centered church, whereby man esteems himself as god. The pagan idols of ancient Rome would be replaced with a modern idolatry of self. This church was devoid of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass:

> "… I saw again the present Pope and the dark church of his time in Rome. It seemed to be a large old house like a town-hall with columns in front. I saw no altar in it, but only benches, and in the middle of it something like a pulpit. They had preaching and singing and nothing else, and only a few attended it. And lo, a most singular sight! – Each member of the congregation drew an idol from his breast, set it before him, and prayed to it … The most singular part of it was that the idols filled the place; the church, although the worshippers were so very few, was crowded with idols. When the service was over, every one's god re-entered into his breast [comment: could these "idols" be today's smart-phones?]. The whole church was draped in black, and all that took place in it was shrouded in gloom."[12]

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In the midst of darkness and great distress, with a possible allusion to Freemasonry, Sister Emmerich foresaw a scene which offered hope for the future – perhaps alluding to Our Lady's Brown Scapular mantle of protection:

> "And now the vision became more extended. I saw in all places Catholics oppressed, annoyed, restricted, and deprived of liberty, churches were closed, and great misery prevailed everywhere with war and bloodshed. I saw rude, ignorant people offering violent resistance, but this state of things lasted not long. Again, I saw in vision St. Peter's undermined according to a plan devised by the secret sect whilst, at the same time, it was damaged by storms; but it was delivered at the moment of greatest distress. Again, I saw the Blessed Virgin extending Her mantle over it."[13]

The visions of Anne Catherine Emmerich seem to show forth the rotten fruit of Modernism, which currently infests our One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church like a virulent cancer. Always remember my **Three R's of Modernism**: **R**ecognize it; **R**efute it; and **R**eturn to Tradition.

On this Pentecost Sunday, let us recall that God the Holy Ghost strengthens us to resist the powers of hell. Like Pope St. Boniface IV, may we stand tall in the face of demonic attacks.

On this Pentecost Sunday, let us recall that God the Holy Ghost strengthens us to suffer and to die as Martyrs. As the Apostles on that first Pentecost proclaimed the Catholic Faith with courage, to the point of martyrdom, so must we do likewise today.

On this Pentecost Sunday, following our Traditional Latin Mass, which dates back to the time of Pope St. Boniface IV and even to the time of the Apostles, let us recall that Tradition is the safeguard of Catholic truths.

On this Pentecost Sunday, may the crimson-red rainfall of rose petals from the choir loft after Mass remind us that through the seven Sacraments of the Church, by the power of the Holy Ghost, we are strengthened to promote and defend the dogmas of our One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Faith through all manner of sufferings – even to the point of death – in imitation of the Apostles and Martyrs. As Our Lady Queen of Martyrs was beside them, so too will She be close to our side.

Pope St. Boniface IV, *ora pro nobis!*

Our Lady and All the Martyrs, *ora pro nobis!*

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Our Lady of Fatima, *ora pro nobis!*

In Nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti. Amen.

Notes

[1] Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *The Message of Fatima* (June 26, 2000).

[2] In her Fourth Memoir (written in late 1941), Sister Lucia disclosed an additional sentence belonging to the Secret, located immediately after Our Lady's promise concerning the triumph of Her Immaculate Heart: **"In Portugal, the dogma of the Faith will always be preserved, etc...."** The obvious implication of Our Lady is that "the dogma of the Faith" will not be preserved elsewhere.

[3] Very Rev. K.E. Schmoger, C.SS.R, *The Life and Revelations of Anne Catherine Emmerich* Vol. II (Rockford: TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1976 – reprint of 1885), pp. 278-279.

[4] John the Deacon, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* (1848), July 8, 1920.

[5] Cf. Schmoger, pp. 277-282.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 279.

[7] *Ibid*.

[8] Based upon a description given in *"Il Settimanale di Padre Pio"* (the weekly magazine of Padre Pio), December 10, 2017, n. 48.

[9] Schmoger, *op. cit.*, p. 281.

[10] *Ibid*., p. 331.

[11] *Ibid*., p. 280.

[12] *Ibid*., pp. 279-280.

[13] *Ibid*., p. 281.

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