

Today marks the fifth anniversary of [John Vennari](#)'s passing from this life (April 4, 2017), the man who led *Catholic Family News* as editor for over 20 years and impacted countless souls through his stalwart efforts. Anyone who knew John personally, even if only briefly, can testify to his deep love of Our Lord, Our Lady, and Holy Mother Church, as well as his dear family and friends. A faithful soldier of Jesus and Mary, John longed and worked tirelessly for the "complete restoration" promised by Our Lady at Quito (1600s) and Fatima (1917).

In honor of John, who died on the same date as little [Francisco Marto of Fatima](#) (to whom John was devoted), we offer readers the following excerpts from tributes written by current CFN editor-in-chief Brian McCall and managing editor Matt Gaspers (originally published in the May 2017 issue of CFN). McCall and Gaspers, together with everyone at CFN, are committed to keeping John's legacy alive and continuing his mission of upholding the Traditional Latin Mass, the Anti-Modernist measures of Pope St. Pius X, the Message of Our Lady of Fatima, the Social Kingship of Christ, and the richness, beauty and holiness of "the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3).

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine. Et lux perpetua luceat eis. Fidelium animae, per misericordiam Dei, requiescant in pace. Amen.

A Man for Our Season

By Brian M. McCall

The Catholic Church, the Traditionalist Movement, and our world have suffered a loss. The Church Triumphant's gain (either now or after a stay in Purgatory) is the Church Militant's loss. It is hard to find words to express the contribution John made to our Church and world. Those who knew him better than I can recount more accurately than I the details of his life. I was privileged to know him for about the last decade of his life, even though we discovered we both were Philly boys (separated by a generation) who had attended rival (formerly) Catholic high schools.

Certainly, he had a brilliant mind and was a voracious reader. I was always amazed by how well read he was on almost any subject. Yet, what made John so unique was his ability to explain the most complex and detailed points in such a simple and comprehensible manner. God, the most perfect of all beings, is perfectly simple. Our Lord urged us to have the faith of children because although God contains all knowledge and all being, He does not do so in a complex, complicated way. Usually only children can perceive the beautiful simplicity of God. John understood with the faith of a child this fundamental truth and it permeated his

writing and his lecturing. This was the reason he could see through the smoke and mirrors of Modernism and immediately gravitate to the simple Truth. He could explain doctrines of the Faith, complicated interwoven history, and even convoluted post-conciliar documents in a simple, straightforward way that anyone, no matter their educational level, could easily grasp. John was just as comfortable talking to a Ph.D. holder, a child, or an 80-year-old lady who never completed 8th Grade.

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Beyond this ability to see the essence of things, John's other endearing quality was his sense of humor. One could easily become downcast in a Church in perpetual civil war and civil society degenerating by the minute. John never gave into the temptation to become a white sepulcher of grief or to bitter zeal. He hated error and Modernism, but he loved the Faith, his family, and life in general. He loved a good joke or funny story. His conferences, even on the most serious of topics, always wove a thread of humor or satire throughout them to keep a smile on the lips of his audience. He loved music. My fondest memories of John are enjoying the sight and sounds of him playing an eclectic collection of music with his children at the end of a long day at a *Catholic Family News* conference. His face beamed with a vitality and a supernatural joy. It always brightened my day to receive an email from him busting his vest buttons to share a picture of his daughter performing in a prominent concert or simply reporting on one of the children's academic successes.

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As we live, so we shall die. This is an old adage that proved so true with John. I don't think I have known anyone who accepted the death God had prepared with such resignation and peace. The last telephone conversation I had with him and the last email correspondence all let me witness a man joyfully happy to fight the good fight until his very last breath and with vitality in his heart. His was an exemplary final year of life for all. I secretly wonder if his ability to endure suffering with joy is the cause of the medical profession's failure to diagnose his condition for so many months. ... John simply took all of it in stride, the uncertainty as to the diagnosis, the unlikelihood (naturally speaking) of a cure, and the final battle. He maintained a lively hope in a supernatural cure while he continued his work from his hospital bed until the end.

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Farewell, true and faithful friend. When you reach your eternal reward, cast your gaze sometime in the Beatific Vision on those of us who remain here below and intercede for our perseverance to follow you on the sure road. We mourn your loss and wonder how we will

carry on the fight without you, but we know you will bring a unique spark of life and a smile to the Blessed Virgin in whose service you labored so long, St. Philomena, St. Joseph, Father Gruner, and all the Blessed whom you have joined or will join soon. The light of your life which you placed on such a high hill will be our beacon until, God willing, we meet again.

Farewell, O Mighty Man of Valor

By Matt Gaspers

It was sometime between late 2003 and early 2004 that I was first introduced to *Catholic Family News*, as well as the Fatima Center, both of which have been profound instruments of God's grace and truth in my life. A close friend of mine and his father began sharing copies of CFN with me and helping me understand the state of the Church and the world in light of Our Lady's Fatima Message. You might say they made me "Fatima conscious," which as I discovered was inseparable from becoming "Tradition conscious." And one man whose writings were at the forefront of many of our lengthy discussions was, of course, John Vennari.

I still vividly remember reading and discussing John's account of what he witnessed at the "pan-religious conference" held in Fatima in October 2003. He described hearing with his own ears Fr. Jacques Dupuis, a notoriously Modernist-minded priest, publicly denounce the dogma "outside the Church there is no salvation," specifically, the Council of Florence's solemn definition of that divinely revealed truth. John's no-nonsense reporting of such blatant errors, coupled with his well-documented refutation of them, had a profound impact on me. I have since described my experience as feeling similar to the film *The Matrix*, when the main character Neo is finally unplugged from the virtual reality he assumed was real his entire life. Initially, it was not a pleasant experience - not for Neo or for myself - but over time I came to appreciate the great gift I had received (namely, the Truth) and desired to know more.

Perhaps a year or so later (around the summer of 2005), I discovered and read John's booklet, [*The Permanent Instruction of the Alta Vendita*](#), which was my first education in the evils of Freemasonry and Modernism. His discussion of their history and implementation, especially in relation to the Second Vatican Council, was another game-changer for my spiritual life. *What on earth has happened in the Church?* I began asking myself. This led me to begin studying in earnest the teachings of the pre-conciliar Popes and comparing them to the teachings of Vatican II, specifically, certain novelties present in the conciliar documents.

John's booklet helped me understand even more that, indeed, something went terribly wrong at the Council, yet it also pointed out the glorious hope for future restoration offered by Our Lady of Fatima. Reading John's booklet was thus a major catalyst for my interest in learning all I could about the Third Secret of Fatima.

As Providence would have it, my first personal contact with John began with a simple email involving the Third Secret. By this time, it was the fall of 2011 and I had long since become a CFN subscriber, as well as an avid supporter of the Fatima Center. I happened to be reading the August-September 2011 issue of *Inside the Vatican* - specifically, Dr. Robert Moynihan's editorial, "Passing of a Friend" (p. 4), a posthumous tribute to the then-recently deceased Archbishop Pietro Sambi (Papal Nuncio to the United States) - when, to my great surprise, I read the following account of a conversation between Dr. Moynihan (Editor-in-Chief of ITV) and Archbishop Sambi:

We were discussing the Third Secret of Fatima, the allegations that the Vatican has not published the entire text of the Third Secret as revealed to Sister Lucia, and the response of Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, the Vatican secretary of state, in a book where Bertone states that there is nothing more to be revealed. Sambi said, "Excuse me." He got up, went out of the room, and came back with a book. "Here," he said. **"Do you know this book? You should read it." It was Christopher Ferrara's *The Secret Still Hidden*.**

"Wait," I said. "You are the Pope's representative in the US, and you are urging me to read a book that questions what the secretary of state wrote?" Sambi replied, "All I am saying is that there are interesting things worth reading in this book. And in the end, we are all after the truth, aren't we? The truth is the important thing..." [Emphasis added]

I knew Chris and John were colleagues, and that a favorable mention of Chris' book in ITV was major news, so I decided to search for their contact info online and send an email alerting them both to this exciting development. John was the first to respond:

Dear Mr. Gaspers,

Many thanks for your encouraging email. I forwarded it to Chris' personal email and to others' personal emails at the Fatima Center. I much appreciate your note.

Prayers and best wishes,

JV

Thanks to John forwarding my message to Chris' personal email (the only address I could find online was a general one for the American Catholic Lawyers Association), I received the following reply from Chris shortly thereafter:

Dear Mr. Gaspers,

Well, I am bowled over by this news. I have to give Moynihan credit for even mentioning my name. He risks Inside the Vatican becoming Outside the Vatican.

Maybe this is another sign that the dam is breaking and the truth will soon come flooding out over the whole Church and the world. Thanks for making my week, if not my year!

In Christ,

Chris Ferrara

Interestingly, all of this correspondence between myself, John, and Chris took place on August 15, the Solemn Feast of Our Lady's Assumption. Surely this was no accident!

Thus began my friendship with John, which, until last summer [2016], consisted entirely of email correspondence. And yet, despite the long-distance nature of our relationship, John's messages were so personable that a sincere rapport quickly developed between us. Shortly after our initial email exchange, I shared with John an article idea for CFN and he graciously agreed to take a look. I had long since dreamed of one day having my writing published in some venue, so the fact that John Vennari, a man whose work I so greatly admired, was willing to review my work was quite thrilling. He ended up making my dream a reality by running "The Truth About Islam," my first published article, in the December 2011 issue of CFN. ...

I'll never forget meeting John in person. When I arrived at the hotel where the CFN Conference was being held [June 10-12, 2016], he was in the main lecture hall helping prepare things for the conference opening later that evening. He caught sight of me and, with his characteristically warm smile, came over and greeted me as one would an old and familiar friend. ... John made a special point to ensure that this "new kid on the block" felt welcome, and his gesture was much appreciated.

Seeing John interact with his wonderful family over that weekend was truly a joy. It was obvious that he, Susan, and their children were not only a close-knit clan but also a thoroughly Catholic *ecclesia domestica* ("domestic church"). His example of being the strong, wise, prayerful, and loving head of his family is sorely needed in this time of great crisis, when far too many husbands/fathers have either "fallen asleep at the wheel" or just plain abandoned their God-given role. As a husband and father of two beautiful children myself, I look to John as a shining example of what it means to be a true Catholic gentleman and spiritual head of my family. It is high time for Catholic men to wake up and get serious about leading their families on the narrow and straight way of virtue "that leadeth to life," rather than allowing them to wander down the broad path of sin "that leadeth to destruction" (see Matt. 7:13-14).

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Our dearly beloved editor and brother in Christ, Joseph John Vennari, fought a good fight, finished his course, and kept the Faith (see 2 Tim. 4:7). May he now possess forever the glorious vision of our Risen Lord, Whom he served so faithfully throughout his life! We love you, John!

At the 2019 [Catholic Identity Conference](#) (CIC) held in Pittsburgh, PA (Nov. 1-3), just before the final speech of the conference (given by Christopher Ferrara), CIC organizer and emcee Michael Matt of The Remnant Newspaper honored longtime CFN editor [John Vennari](#) (RIP) by playing John's hilarious music video, "[Parody - Bergoglio and Synod](#)", which features John on guitar, bass, and vocals performing his own "Me and Bergoglio Down at the Synod" — a spoof on Paul Simon's "Me and Julio Down by the Schoolyard".

This tribute to John Vennari was recorded by current CFN managing editor Matt Gaspers, who attended the 2019 CIC. John's middle child, Philomena Vennari, was also at the conference as a staff member, which made this tribute all the more special.