



University of Navarra

# Chaplaincy News

March 2006

## Contents

- 1 Faith and Superstition
- 2 Discovering the Gaze of Christ
- 3 Unraveling *The Da Vinci Code*
- 4 Activities in March

People have always had a tendency to conjure or manipulate God through secret arts known only by the initiated. The most dangerous of all heresies that the Church has had to fight from within since the beginning of time is agnosticism (from the Greek, *gnosis*, or knowledge).

## Faith and Superstition

In Chapter 18 of the Acts of the Apostles, the story of the evangelization of the city of Ephesus by Saint Paul is told and some of the practical consequences of Christian conversions: "Many of those who had believed came to confess and to carry out their practices. Many of those who practiced magical arts brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all." (Acts, 19-19).

People have always had a tendency to conjure or manipulate God through secret arts known only by the initiated. The most dangerous of all heresies that the Church has had to fight from within since the beginning of time is agnosticism (from the Greek, *gnosis*, or knowledge). It is a diffuse religious current, like a vine with a thousand heads that share the common characteristic of possessing superior knowledge, only for those who have been initiated, and that takes them above faith, morality and the authority of the Church. Finally, it takes them against themselves. This incredible knowledge tends to be founded upon supposedly ancient documents and hidden, as for example, as some of the apocryphal gospels.

A current religious manifestation of agnosticism is called New Age, which claims to have reached the culmination of human religiousness. As often happens with the pseudo-knowledgeable agnostic, there is an attempt to dominate the future, with prophecies that – when they are not fulfilled – lead to a scaling

of new, mysterious discoveries that become interplanetary conspiracies. This agnostic attitude, precisely because it is a temptation that comes from human arrogance, can appear in any cultural context: alchemy over chemistry, astrology (horoscopes) over astronomy or the spiritualism that places the dead over God.

In view of the success of the many books, movies, and TV programs that address this topic, one must suspect that these superstitions (superior beliefs over faith) have become widely accepted. And, paradoxically, it is when there is an ignorance of faith as revealed by God, that it becomes easy to believe anything.

Point 445 of the Compendium of Catechism of the Catholic Church states: "What is it that God prohibits when he demands: "You will have no other God before me?"..... It is superstition, which is a deviation from the true cult of God, and which is expressed through forms such as divining, magic, witchcraft and spiritualism.

"They have no faith. But they have plenty of superstitions. We laughed and at the same time felt sorry when that 'strong character' became alarmed on hearing a particular word — which, of itself, meant nothing, but for him was unlucky — or on seeing someone break a mirror!" (The Way, 587).



## Discovering the Gaze of Christ

Extract from the Message of His Holiness Benedict XVI

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

Lent is a privileged time of interior pilgrimage towards Him Who is the fount of mercy. It is a pilgrimage in which He Himself accompanies us through the desert of our poverty, sustaining us on our way towards the intense joy of Easter. Even in the “valley of darkness” of which the Psalmist speaks (Ps 23:4), while the tempter prompts us to despair or to place a vain hope in the work of our own hands, God is there to guard us and sustain us. Yes, even today the Lord hears the cry of the multitudes longing for joy, peace, and love. As in every age, they feel abandoned. Yet, even in the desolation of misery, loneliness, violence and hunger that indiscriminately afflict children, adults, and the elderly, God does not allow darkness to prevail. In fact, in the words of my beloved Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, there is a “divine limit imposed upon evil”, namely, mercy (Memory and Identity, pp. 19ff.). It is with these thoughts in mind that I have chosen as my theme for this Message the Gospel text: “Jesus, at the sight of the crowds, was moved with pity” (Mt 9:36).

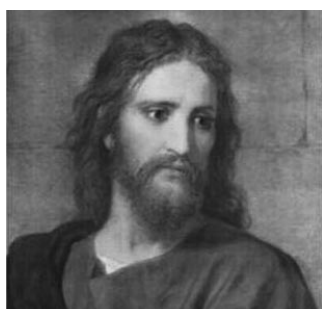
In this light, I would like to pause and reflect upon an issue much debated today: the question of development. Even now, the compassionate “gaze” of Christ continues to fall upon individuals and peoples. He watches them, knowing that the divine “plan” includes their call to salvation. Jesus knows the perils that put this plan at risk, and He is moved with pity for the crowds. He chooses to defend them from the wolves even at the cost of His own life. The gaze of Jesus embraces individuals and multitudes, and he brings them all before the Father, offering Himself as a sacrifice of expiation.

Enlightened by this Paschal truth, the Church knows that if we are to promote development in its fulness, our own “gaze” upon mankind has to be measured against that of Christ. In fact, it is quite impossible to separate the

response to people’s material and social needs from the fulfilment of the profound desires of their hearts. This has to be emphasized all the more in today’s rapidly changing world, in which our responsibility towards the poor emerges with ever greater clarity and urgency. My venerable Predecessor, Pope Paul VI, accurately described the scandal of underdevelopment as an outrage against humanity. In this sense, in the *Encyclical Populorum Progressio*, he denounced “the lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life, the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness” and “oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions” (ibid., 21). As the antidote to such evil, Paul VI suggested not only “increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning towards the spirit of poverty, cooperation for the common good, the will and desire for peace,” but also “the acknowledgement by man of supreme values, and of God, their source and their finality” (ibid.). In this vein, the Pope went on to propose that, finally and above all, there is “faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ” (ibid.). Thus, the “gaze” of Christ upon the crowd impels us to affirm the true content of this “complete humanism” that, according to Paul VI, consists in the “fully-rounded development of the whole man and of all men” (ibid., 42). For this reason, the primary contribution that the Church offers to the development of mankind and peoples does not consist merely in material means or technical solutions. Rather, it involves the proclamation of the truth of Christ, Who educates consciences and teaches the authentic dignity of the person and of work; it means the promotion of a culture that truly responds to all the questions of humanity.

In the face of the terrible challenge of poverty afflicting so much of the world’s population,

Even now, the compassionate “gaze” of Christ continues to fall upon individuals and peoples. He watches them, knowing that the divine “plan” includes their call to salvation.





indifference and self-centered isolation stand in stark contrast to the “gaze” of Christ. Fasting and almsgiving, which, together with prayer, the Church proposes in a special way during the Lenten Season, are suitable means for us to become conformed to this “gaze.” The examples of the saints and the long history of the Church’s missionary activity provide invaluable indications of the most effective ways to support development. Even in this era of global interdependence, it is clear that no economic, social, or political project can replace that gift of self to another through

which charity is expressed. Those who act according to the logic of the Gospel live the faith as friendship with God Incarnate and, like Him, bear the burden of the material and spiritual needs of their neighbours. They see it as an inexhaustible mystery, worthy of infinite care and attention. They know that he who does not give God gives too little; as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta frequently observed, the worst poverty is not to know Christ. Therefore, we must help others to find God in the merciful face of Christ. Without this perspective, civilization lacks a solid foundation.

## Unraveling *The Da Vinci Code*

For the first time, in this interview, a representative of the “evil one of the film” – the Opus Dei prelature – offers his view on this production, which Sony-Columbia will release in May.

Marc Carroggio, who oversees Opus Dei’s relationship with the international media, told ZENIT that interest about the book and the film “is turning out to be a sort of indirect publicity for us.”

Carroggio added that, given the existence of the movie, there will be no fight against anyone. An effort is being made to take advantage of the great interest aroused to propose the figure of Jesus Christ, he stressed.

*What do you most dislike about the book and now the movie?*

I realize that fiction has its own rules and you shouldn’t take it too seriously, but like any Christian I dislike the frivolous way the book plays with the life of Jesus Christ.

Moreover, scripts like this demonize a particular group. It presents the Catholic Church as a band of criminals who for 2,000 years has tried to hide a huge lie.

Although the story is absurd and at times somewhat humorous, it produces a hateful image of

the institution and it is well known that hateful images like this produce feelings of hatred in those who lack a critical sense.

I don’t think we need more caricatures of any religion. We should all be working for harmony, tolerance and understanding. You cannot be seeking peace with your left hand while you are beating people over the head with your right.

*Opus Dei does not usually give official responses to events. Will there be an exception for the “Da Vinci Code” movie?*

Some people are waiting for a “declaration of war” from the Catholic Church and from Opus Dei. This might interest those who are marketing the movie – you know, a big fight in public.

But I can assure you that Opus Dei’s only response will be a declaration of peace. No one is going to make threats or organize boycotts or anything like that.

We would have been happy if the producer, Sony-Columbia, had given us some sign that they would respect us. I would call their response so far “polite but noncommittal,” with little indication that they intend to respect religious beliefs.



*I can assure you that Opus Dei’s response will be a declaration of peace. No one is going to make threats or organize boycotts or anything like that.*



University of Navarra

# Chaplaincy News

March 2006

## Activities in March

How do you think the members of Opus Dei will react to the movie?

The reaction of the members of Opus Dei, like that of many other Christians, will be to "use the lemon to make lemonade."

Actually this event gives us a wonderful chance to talk about Jesus Christ. After all, it is the figure of Jesus Christ that explains, to a large degree, the popularity of the book.

The novel is essentially parasitical: The author makes a name for himself by attacking a major cultural figure, and he presents it as art. If the plot did not center on Jesus Christ, the book would lose its appeal.

I think that the best response is simply to help people to know Jesus Christ. I suspect that in the coming year, many people will be moved to read the Gospels or a book about the life of Jesus Christ.

They will be drawn to consider the great themes of faith, which give light to the most difficult questions of human existence. For me, these are all ways of turning the lemon into lemonade.

In a certain way, Dan Brown has made Opus Dei more fashionable and given you an opportunity to explain yourselves. Have you noticed an increase in numbers of people seeking information?

Undoubtedly. In the last year, in just the United States, more than a million persons have visited our Web site [www.opusdei.org] and this is primarily due to interest generated by "The Da Vinci Code."

So we are receiving a sort of indirect publicity.

### Barcelona

#### Holy Mass:

Monday to Friday  
Time: 7:45 a.m. and 12:35 p.m.

#### Confession:

*EVERY DAY:*  
10 minutes before Holy Mass  
Confession can also be heard at any time:  
please contact the priests

#### Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 1, Day of Fasting and Abstinence  
• Imposition of Ashes during the Holy Mass (7:45 a.m. and 12:35 p.m.)  
• Imposition of Ashes without Holy Mass (5 p.m.)

#### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

• Thursday, 2, 9, 16 and 23  
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

#### Monthly Retreats:

Professors, Alumni, participants in Continuous Education Programs, non-teaching staff, family members and invited friends.

##### Men

• Thursday, 9 (Retreat with Mass)  
Time: 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.  
• Tuesday, 14  
Time: 7:30 p.m. to 9 p.m.

##### Women

• Monday, 6  
Time: 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.  
• Tuesday, 14  
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.  
• Tuesday, 21  
Time: 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.  
• Thursday, 16  
Time: 4:50 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.

#### Retreat Course:

##### Women

• From March 2 at 6 p.m. to Sunday, March 5 at 6 p.m.  
Place: Can Viladoms

#### Chaplaincy visiting hours:

- *Joan Garcia Llobet*  
Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 10:30 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- *Domènec Melé*  
Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 9 p.m.  
Tuesday and Thursday, 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. and scheduled times
- *Ricardo Peris*  
Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- *John Twist*  
Monday to Thursday, 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.  
Wednesday and Thursday, 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### Madrid

#### Holy Mass:

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday at 1:45 p.m.  
Wednesday at 8:30 a.m.  
Saturday at 8 a.m.

#### Confession:

*EVERY DAY:*  
15 minutes before Holy Mass  
From 3:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
Confession can also be heard at any time:  
please contact the priests

#### Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, March 1, Day of Fasting and Abstinence  
• Imposition of Ashes during the Holy Mass (08:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m.)

#### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

• Friday, 3, (De 15:15 a 16:00)

#### Monthly Retreats:

Professors, Alumni, participants in Continuous Education Programs, non-teaching staff, family members and invited friends.

##### Men

• Monday, 13  
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m.  
• Thursday, 16  
Time: 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
• Thursday, 16 (for IESE Alumni)  
Time: 7:45 p.m. to 9:15 p.m.  
Venue: Vitrubio, 3

#### Retreat Course:

##### Men

• March 23-26 at El Soto (Soto del Real), Madrid

#### Chaplaincy visiting hours:

- *Pelegrín Muñoz*  
Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- *Ernesto Juliá*  
Friday, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

*\* All activities take place in IESE's chapel, unless otherwise indicated.*

#### Saints Days and Holy Days:

1 Ash Wednesday, Lent begins, 17 Saint Patrick, 19 Saint Joseph, 25 Annunciation of the Lord