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## Streaming Coming

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate our 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary, the work of CPO has never been more critical. Most would agree that we are experiencing a serious crisis in the world and in our Church.

Our series, *Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism* by Fr. Altier is entering its third year of being aired on EWTN. It continues to be one of the best resources available to help catechize and build up our Church. The following is just one of many edifying letters and emails we have received:

"I have learned so very much about my Faith from watching *Beauty, Truth, Goodness: The Fundamentals of Catholicism* by Fr. Robert Altier, on EWTN. The lectures on Confession have changed my life. I spent time writing down all of my mortal and venial sins and called my priest. Since I had compiled many pages, I was very apprehensive about going. After I finished my confession, my priest reacted exactly the way I expected him to after listening to Fr. Altier's lecture. He said of all his 30 years of hearing confession that mine gave him the most joy.

Thank you from New York."

### God reward you for helping save souls!

We're excited to announce we will soon begin a streaming/on demand service for our excellent audio and video programs. This will allow anyone to enjoy CPO's inspiring programs on their computer or phone. We hope, by offering this service, we will reach many young people.

Our second **Youth Retreat** was a huge success! The teens offered valuable feedback, telling us they had not previously been aware of many of the teachings about the Sacraments and other Catholic Truths. They left that day with an exciting new knowledge of their faith!

We plan to offer another popular **Adult Retreat** on March 28<sup>th</sup>. For more information and to register, please see the flyer on page 8.

Thank you for your prayers and continued support and God bless you and yours in the New Year,

Colleen Perfect  
 President,  
 Catholic Parents OnLine



# Besides Me There Is No God

## Spiritual ramifications of Pachamama ritual at the Vatican

By Fr. Robert Altier, CPO Spiritual Director

I think most people are familiar with the scandal of the Pachamama ritual that took place at the Vatican in October. The topic I would like to address is the spiritual ramifications of this ritual. Before I get to that, there are a couple other points that need to be addressed. First, throughout the history of the Church and Judaism before us, idols and false gods were always destroyed. We believe in one God; the allowance of anything else suggests that we do not believe there is and can be only one God.

Second, to acknowledge such “gods” by taking part in any kind of ritual or honoring them in any manner is a violation of the First Commandment. In the missionary activity of the Church, there has always been acceptance of inculturation. This means that any part of the culture that is not in opposition to the teaching of the Church is acceptable and can be encouraged. The Church does not want to turn everyone into Romans; rather, the Church wants every culture to become Catholic. However, any kind of pagan worship or ritual, as well

as anything used for these rituals are always destroyed. The good parts of the culture can remain, but those parts that violate God or human dignity cannot be accepted and must be destroyed.

In October, an Amazonian shaman was brought to the Vatican where she performed her ritual or worship of the Pachamama statue. This ritual took place in the Vatican gardens in the presence of the Pope, as well as many others in the hierarchy. Many have been scandalized by this, but the problems caused by this are far greater than the scandal of the event.

We need to make some distinctions for the purposes of understanding. If someone brought an idol into your parish church, that would be a desecration and it could invite some demonic activity in the building. If your pastor decided to take part in a pagan ritual, that would invite demonic problems for him, but it would not directly affect the rest of the parish. However, if your pastor brought an idol into the parish and engaged in a

ritual, that would not only affect the area where the ritual took place and the people immediately involved, but it would cause problems for the entire parish.

In October, the Pastor of the Universal Church had a pagan idol brought into the Vatican where he participated in the pagan ritual. This will bring demonic problems to him, to everyone who was there, and to the Vatican. But since the Vatican is the center of the Church, this is going to cause problems for the entire Church.

Considering that Pachamama is basically symbolic of mother earth, the worship of this idol is earth worship. In other words, at the Vatican there was a ceremony that deified or divinized the earth. If the earth is going to be made divine, then what is truly divine is going to be minimized. I would expect that the demonic influence caused by this sacrilege is going to cause a lot of confusion for people regarding what is natural and what is supernatural. The earth and all creatures are natural and God alone

## YOUTH RETREAT 2019



is supernatural. But the confusion brought about from this false worship is likely to result in making the earth *more* than something natural and making God into something *less* than supernatural.

Two thousand years ago St. John told us that the spirit of Antichrist could be recognized by the denial of Christ come in the flesh. I think one of the effects of this pagan worship ritual will be to focus on the fact that Jesus was human while denying or downplaying His divinity.

Fr. Mitch Pacwa explained that in the Amazon where there has been some acceptance of Christianity, the accepted hierarchy is: 1. The gods of the mountains, because they are higher than the earth; 2. Pachamama, which is mother earth; 3. Jesus, then Mary and the Saints.

Since the demons that will be brought into the Church will be related to the pagan ceremony that took place in the Vatican, I think they will try to exalt the earth and diminish the Lord.

There are already some people who have decided to abstain from meat on Mondays for the earth. This sounds obviously similar to the Catholic tradition of abstaining on Fridays. In other words, this is a spiritual and

religious reality for these people. So, it has begun. However, we need also to keep in mind that the devil is not so stupid that he will try to get you to worship the earth and completely repudiate Jesus. No, he has already tipped his hand on how this might work.

If we consider the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses, we can see one possibility. Both of these groups profess belief in Jesus, but neither believes in the Holy Trinity and, consequently, neither believes Jesus is both God and man. The Muslims provide another possible option: Jesus is a prophet, but He is not God. Even Oprah Winfrey has joined the chorus telling us that Jesus is a way, but not *the* way. In other words, you may not have to deny Jesus entirely, you just have to deny Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity, come in the flesh.

In the past few years we have seen an unveiling of a statue of Satan in Detroit, the erecting and ceremonial unveiling of a replica of the entrance to the temple of Baal in several cities, including London and New York in 2016, and last year in Washington D.C. Today there is a statue of Moloch, a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice, outside the entrance to the Colosseum in Rome.

The battle lines are being drawn and the devil thinks he is winning. The Pachamama scandal is only one piece of a larger puzzle. The vile creature does not care which lie you accept, all that matters is that you turn away from the real Jesus.

For those who choose to remain faithful, the times are getting bad and it appears they will get worse. However, if we are going to be truly faithful to our Lord, then we must live by the words of our Lord. He told us that the Gates of Hell will not prevail against the Church, so we just need to trust, remain faithful, and not compromise the Truth.

Secondly, He told us that when we see the things happening that we are witnessing, we are to stand up and lift up our heads because our redemption is near at hand. God told St. Paul that where sin abounds, grace abounds all the more. This being the case, the worst of times will create the greatest of Saints. No need to fret or despair; lift up your head and keep your focus on Jesus, because He Who is True God and True Man wants to lift us to the heights of holiness by our proving our love for Him Who loves us.

## RETREAT TEAM LEADERS *Delexi Healy, Corinne Jensen, Erik Bromback, Sean Healy*



# Walking With Jesus

By Marilyn Grutsch

I recently read a book called *Hiking the Camino – 500 miles with Jesus*. The book was written by Father Dave Pivonka, the current President of Franciscan University in Ohio. In his book, he compares the Camino walk with the journey of life here on earth. His initial impetus for going on this hike, was to celebrate and thank God for his 10 years as a priest. But as he journaled during the 31-day trek, it became clear to him that it was much more than that. Each day brought about new growth in his own personal journey in life, but his insight is an excellent guide to his readers in this spiritual path of life.

The Camino de Santiago, known in English as the Way of Saint James, is a network of roads or paths that lead to the shrine of the apostle Saint James the Great in the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela in northwestern Spain. Tradition has it that this is where St. James is buried. It has become a place of pilgrimage, sometimes spiritual and other times, just as an adventure or to be a part of history. But, from testimonials from pilgrims who have experienced the Camino walk, one is forever changed by this journey.

As in any new venture, to make the most of it, one needs to prepare ... to learn as much as possible about what lies ahead. Questions, such as "Where does this begin? How to train for this 'hike'? How long will it take? What to pack?" are good planning strategies. Just as in our walk with Our Lord, we must think about what sort of relationship we are hoping to foster with God ... how to begin, where we hope it will lead us, what do we need

to do to get there, how much do we take with us?

In preparation for the Camino walk, Father prayed for guidance, read as much as he could about it, got advice from those who had previously made this journey, asked a fellow priest friend to hike with him, physically trained for it, and gathered his supplies. The key would be to only carry about 10 percent of his weight in his pack.



In life, it is so difficult to pare down our extras and to learn to detach from those things that will hold us back from getting to where we want to be. If our ultimate goal is heaven, what things are weighing us down, binding us to earthly pleasures and making us so soft and weak that we don't have the strength or ambition to push through our hard times? But we have help in this journey if we study our faith and read and call upon those who have made this journey before us – the saints.

Because we are physical creatures, as well as spiritual, sometimes God leads us through physical and external challenges to bring light to our inner struggles within our souls. Pope Pius XI

wrote that our bodies "should serve as instruments for the interior sanctification of our souls."

As Father began his trek, he was amazed at how easy the first day seemed to be and was patting himself on the back that he had prepared so well. He thought to himself, "*What's all the hype about this being so demanding?*" But, as God sometimes brings us back to reality, at the end of the second day, he was miserable,

sore, and certain that his pack must be much heavier than everyone else's. This is so typical of our human nature, to be smug about our lives when everything is going well, taking personal credit for our good fortune. But then when things get tough, we compare our "crosses" to those of others and conclude that theirs must be a lighter load. Father even became a bit envious of a young Brazilian man named Pablo who only carried a very small back pack, which he

surmised was as light as a feather, only to find out later when he tested it, that it felt like it had lead weights in it. St. Francis de Sales once said, "*Many would be willing to have afflictions provided that they not be inconvenienced by them.*" In the midst of his agony, Father remembered his motive for this hike and prayed, "*All this for the King.*"

He continued on this arduous journey and met people of all walks of life along the way: a woman from Denmark who had recently recovered from cancer; an Italian woman whose goal for walking the Camino was to get things right in her life. Another gentleman said he was searching for something but not sure what it was,

which was a very common theme for the travelers. He recalled St. Augustine's words: "You made us



*Pilgrims on the Way of St. James*

*for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You!"*

One particular woman he met, Mara, said this wasn't her real name, but chose to use it while on this trip because it meant "*bitterness and sorrow.*" She was hoping to leave all her woundedness behind as she journeyed. Even though she saw the world through a different lens and disagreed on most theological points with the priests, she spent three days walking with them and even learned to pray the rosary with them. Father said he learned much from her and felt God asking him not to convince her of anything nor to have any agenda, but to just love her. He reflected: "*Sometimes in life, we want a person to change so badly, that we fail to recognize the beauty of their soul.*" What did Father learn from her? God is calling us to slow down, see the person in front of us, and to remember that this person is deeply loved by God.

As the days wore on, the initial thrill of the hike subsided as everyone was physically wearing down. As much as Father felt the weariness, he realized many of the pilgrims were suffering beyond their control, with physical

or mental afflictions. At times, Father asked himself, "*But why am I putting myself through this: cold showers, tremendously sore feet, sleeping in rooms with dozens of strangers, no privacy or luxuries?*" What came to his mind were Jesus' words in John 10:17-18: "*No one takes My life from Me, I freely choose to lay it down.*" and in 1 Peter 2:21: "*For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow His footsteps.*" God was revealing to him the beauty in self-donation. The suffering pain of body and feet became a sweetness, transcending human discomfort while allowing him to briefly be touched by the Divine.

Many of us will never walk the Camino in Spain, but whether we know it or not, we are all children of God being called to walk our own "Caminos." In order to progress, we must renew our commitment to Christ daily. We walk by faith, without a clear roadmap, but Christ promises to be a "*lamp to our feet*" (Psalm 119: 105), leading us one step at a time. "*Father, I am seeking: I am hesitant and uncertain, but will you, O God, watch over each step of mine and guide me?*" Saint Augustine.

## **CPO BOARD**

*Fr. Robert Altier*  
*Kurt Virnig*  
*Jeff Davis*  
*Joe Kolles*  
*John Trojack*  
*Colleen Perfect*  
*Marilyn Grutsch*  
*Terese Jensen*



# Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award

On October 31, 2004, CPO lost a true friend and one of our founding Board members, Art Herkenhoff. Art was a hero in all the areas that truly matter: in Faith, family and pro-life involvement. Art had enormous courage in the face of opposition to proclaim the Truth of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church, and he always exhibited true charity, humility and joy. Each year CPO receives many outstanding nominations for the Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award.

The Board of Directors chose to present the 2019 Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award to a remarkable gentleman, Ed Gorman. Ed Gorman, owner of Gorman's Restaurant in Lake Elmo, has always been more concerned with what God thinks of him rather than public opinion. He has made this quite clear at his restaurant by distributing pro-life "baby feet" lapel pins to patrons. He welcomes pro-life political candidates to display their campaign signs in front of the restaurant during election cycles. This has caused some of his restaurant patrons to complain about not having



*Ed Gorman receiving the Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award from Fr. Altier*

signs representing "the other side." Ed responds to these comments by stating, "As far as I am concerned there is no other side except life."

Pro-life posters adorn the restaurant's kitchen walls promoting a positive message to his employees, many of whom are teenagers and young adults. He risks his livelihood and puts it all on the line for life. Ed was

awarded the 2010 Catholic Spirit's Leading with Faith Award.

Ed shows incredible generosity to people in need. He and his lovely wife Kathy have assisted many Catholic churches and schools by donating their time and resources to fundraising. It is not uncommon to find them scooping up ice cream sundaes at schools and church fundraisers. Ed



*Fr. Altier, Colleen Perfect and Art Herkenhoff family members with Ed Gorman and his wife, Kathy*

joined the Women's Life Care Board of Directors shortly after the beloved Art Herkenhoff passed away.

Ed would have loved Art. They would have had a great time at the Life Care Center board meetings. At that time the Women's Life Care Center was located in a very small office space in North St Paul. The center needed more room and better visibility and with Ed's help and endless energy, he was instrumental in finding a wonderful new location in Little Canada. That Life Care Center is still doing amazing things for life!

*Ed Gorman received the 15<sup>th</sup> Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award at the CPO annual Luncheon & Fundraiser held at the Southview Country Club in St. Paul on October 26, 2019.*

## ***NOMINATIONS FOR 2020 ARTHUR A. HERKENHOFF AWARD***

*The CPO Board of Directors seeks the names of individuals who would be worthy of nomination for the 2020, 16<sup>th</sup> annual Arthur A. Herkenhoff Award. The persons nominated should exhibit the same qualities, principles and values which characterized the life and person of Art Herkenhoff: Faith, family, pro-life involvement, courage, charity and joy.*

*Please submit your nomination by October 1, 2020.*

*You may complete the Online Nomination Form on our website at [catholicparents.org/official-candidate-nomination-form/](http://catholicparents.org/official-candidate-nomination-form/) or contact us at 651-705-5409 and we'll be happy to mail you the form.*

***Watch the 2019 CPO  
Ultimate Lenten Youth Retreat Talks***  
*by Fr. Altier and the Young Adults*

***[catholicparents.org/2019-cpo-ultimate-lenten-youth-retreat-talks/](http://catholicparents.org/2019-cpo-ultimate-lenten-youth-retreat-talks/)***

*Austin Busse, Director of Faith Formation and Youth Ministry at Maternity of Mary parish, welcoming youths to the 2019 Retreat and leading them in some icebreakers.*





## Church in Crisis: How to be a Light in the Darkness

**Saturday, March 28, 2020**

**8:00 AM - 2:30 PM**

Maternity of Mary

Presented by Father Robert J. Altier

*Syncretism and paganism are like  
poisons entering the veins of the  
Mystical Body of Christ, the Church.*

*Bishop Athanasius Schneider*



The day begins with 8:00 AM Mass at Maternity of Mary Catholic Church, followed by a continental breakfast, and includes three dynamic presentations by Fr. Robert Altier, a delicious lunch, the Rosary and more.

Maternity of Mary Catholic Church  
1414 Dale Street North  
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55117

***Please join us!***  
***Register early, seating is limited.***

### **REGISTER:**

Online at [catholicparents.org](http://catholicparents.org) or

By mail, send name(s), address and check to: Catholic Parents OnLine  
P.O. Box 130815  
St. Paul, MN 55113

Cost is \$25 per person, \$40 per married couple  
Includes continental breakfast and lunch. (Please note if you want Gluten-Free.)

*Tickets will not be mailed out in advance; name tags will be waiting for you at the registration table after Mass.*