

Study for the Month of May 2014

The Papacy Series-Part XV

By Nathaniel Fajardo

Whole Gospel Ministries

PO Box 1764 Loma Linda, CA 92354

Tel (951) 685-1956 (leave a message) email: HYPERLINK "mailto:natfajardo777@yahoo.com"

natfajardo777@yahoo.com

Web: www.wholegospelministries.org

Pope Francis Declares Pope John II and Pope John XXIII as Saints

Date: 4/28/2014

By Liam Moloney (HYPERLINK "mailto:liam.moloney@wsj.com"

liam.moloney@wsj.com). Giada Zampano contributed to this article.

Source:<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/>

VATICAN CITY—Pope Francis proclaimed as saints Pope John Paul II and Pope John XXIII—*considered the two greatest popes of the 20th century*—in an elaborate ceremony that drew hundreds of thousands of pilgrims to St. Peter's Square.

Recommended Stories (on each pope): Pope John XIII, and Italian born of modest means, reigned from 1958 to 1963 and convened the reforming Second Vatican II Council. Pope John Paul II, a Pole whose papacy was the third-longest in the [Roman Catholic] church's history, from 1978 to 2005, became known as a globe-trotting evangelizer.

Pope Francis, who was elected pontiff last year after *Pope Benedict became the first pope to resign in 600 years*, proclaimed the pair of saints, saying, "**We declare and define Blessed John XXIII and John Paul be saints and we enroll them among the saints** Pope Francis celebrated the Mass with about 160 cardinals, 700 bishops and 6,000 priests in St. Peter's Square. . . .

The former pontiff, one of Pope John Paul II's closest advisers, has rarely been seen in the public since his resignation, although he attended a ceremony creating new cardinals in February. Before starting the ceremony, Pope Francis embraced his predecessor, whose arrival was greeted with applause. *Hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from around the world descended on St. Peter's Square, spilling out onto Via della Conciliazone, the wide boulevard that leads to the Vatican. Some 600 priests and 200 deacons distributed Holy Communion to pilgrims outside the basilica.*

The canonization ceremony got under way when Cardinal Angelo Amato, prefect of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints, asked the pope **three times** to proclaim the two as saints. He was accompanied by the **two postulators, or promoters, of the sainthood causes of the two pontiffs**.

Most of the canonization was conducted in Latin, with a few parts in ancient Greek. **Relics of the two new saints---blood from Pope John Paul II that was used in his beatification ceremony in 2011 and a piece of the skin from Pope John XXIII taken from his body as part of his 2000 beatification**—were brought to an altar bedecked with thousands of roses from Ecuador.

The cardinals, bishops and priests stood on the left side of the courtyard in front of St. Peter's basilica. The other delegations, including heads of state such as Spain's king and queen and the Italian and Polish presidents, sat on the right side of the courtyard.

A Vatican spokesman said that 500,000 pilgrims were in the area around St. Peter's, with another 300,000 people watching the ceremony on the screens erected throughout

the city. The crowd stood in a standing ovation at the end of the ceremony. The city which will have seen an *estimated three million visitors between Easter and early May*, laid out an elaborate plan to manage the crowds, including erecting giant screens in squares outside of the city to take the pressure off the area around the Vatican. The massive event brought the city to a virtual standstill *Sunday* morning, but the city's plans appeared to have worked, with no reports of significant problems.

In accordance with Pope Francis's wishes to avoid the elaborate, multiday celebrations that marked previous canonizations, the celebration was relatively low-key. For instance, 11 *Roman* churches were open through the night for prayer and confessions, with liturgies *scheduled in seven different languages*.

While Pope John XXIII is particularly beloved by Italians, who dubbed him 'the Good Pope' for his jovial, grandfatherly manner, Pope John Paul II has arguably been the bigger draw. The process of recognizing his sainthood took only nine years. At his funeral, the mourners chanted "Santo Subito" (Saint immediately). Pope Benedict dispensed with the need to wait five years from death before starting the sainthood process.

"Popes John XXIII and John Paul II were both beloved of the people," said Kathleen Sprows Cummings, director of the University of Notre Dame's Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism. "Both had a long history of *the people's devotion*, and *both were proposed for canonization soon after their deaths*."

Among those present was Floribeth Mora Diaz, a Costa Rican woman. ***The [Roman Catholic] church certified that her 2011 recovery from brain aneurysm after she prayed for [the deceased] Pope John Paul II to intercede was one of the two miracles required to declare the pontiff a saint.*** Also present was Sister Marie Simon-Pierre Normand. The church has deemed that *intercession from the [dead] pontiff* led to her full recovery from Parkinson's disease, thus providing for the *other miracle*. "Many said I was totally crazy [to claim that the late pope's intercession saved me], but I am a healthy person and a happy one, which is what counts," Ms. Mora Diaz told reporters last week. Also attending was Sister Adele Labianca, who was present when fellow nun Caterina Capitani recovered from a terminal illness after praying for Pope John XXIII's intercession in 1966. Sister Capitani died in 2010. The Vatican certified the event as a miracle. Last year Pope Francis applied a rarely used waiver to dispense with a second certified miracle to declare the late pontiff a saint." (end of news quote).

OUR COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS:

On Sainthood. -- Christians who anchor their faith exclusively upon the Rock Christ Jesus—the foundation Stone of the true Christian Church---certainly never on Peter, one of the twelve disciples, (Matt. 16: 18; Isa. 32: 2; 1 Cor. 10: 4 Matt. 7: 24, 25 and upon the unvarnished truths of His word---not the sayings and commandments of man, church decretals, edicts and traditions--- no matter how long and how often they have been repeated and perpetuated by the Romish Church, and sadly by the once-Protestant churches who have ceased "to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), can rejoice in the Lord always! (Phil. 4: 4; 1 Thess. 5:16). Why? He who through His own all-sufficient atoning sacrifice paid at Calvary, as the Lamb of God, has provided an infinite fund of moral and divine power for every humble, repenting sinner. Christ employs this very power in our behalf. If we accept and act on this by faith that works by love, *He calls us saints*. The godly patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament and the faithful apostles and true disciples in the New Testament and all His faithful, numberless martyred *saints* thereafter, have experienced this saving grace and the Biblical process of sainthood called **sanctification**—*a process that takes place throughout their life until the end of their earthly journey in the first death*. Consider the

sobering truth in the following passages of Scripture as regards man's sinful, fallen human nature which exposes the serious error of anyone claiming to be sinless, particularly the papal claim to infallibility:

"For *all* have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Rom. 3: 23. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on Him [Christ] the iniquity of us all." Isa. 53: 6. "*If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* If we confess our sins [to God, not to the priest], He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. *If we say that we say we have no sins, we make Him [God] a liar. And His word is not in us.*" 1 John 1: 8-10, K.J. V.

The consequence of lying, misrepresenting, counterfeiting and changing God's Word, His everlasting gospel, His immutable law and His plan of redemption as taught in the sanctuary doctrine of the Bible, is here declared by John:

"But *the fearful and unbelieving, and the abominable, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is *the second death*." Rev. 21: 8. (compare to 21: 5, 6).

"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues [seven last] that are written this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy ["message," margin], and out of the holy city, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book. He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus." Rev. 22: 18-10.

On the other hand, the same infallible Word assures all penitent and humble sinners:

"For when we were yet without strength, in due time *Christ died for the ungodly*. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare die. *But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*, much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God *by the death of His Son*, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but *we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ*, by whom we have now received the atonement [His atoning sacrifice at the cross]." Rom. 5: 6-11.

All born after the fall have fallen short of the glory of God. But the good news of salvation is: all have full and free access to God through Christ alone according to the plan of redemption prepared before the foundation of the world, *except* those who have committed the unpardonable sin by (1) persistently rejecting God's repeated merciful invitations to repent. They have finally grieved away the Holy Spirit. Matt. 12: 31, 32; Eph. 4: 30; 1 John 5: 16 (last part) and 17 (2) attributing the works of God to the works of Satan. The religious leaders of the Jewish nation accused Jesus of blasphemy and of casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils—Satan himself. Christ's reply to them was: "If I cast out devils by Satan, than their kingdom is divided. And a divided kingdom cannot stand. See Matt. 12: 25, 26; Mark 3: 24, 25; Luke 11: 17, 18.

Once more, **Biblical sainthood is available to all** "for God is no respecter of persons" Acts 10:34. See also Rom. 2 11 (6-24); Eph. 6 9 (5-8); Col. 3: 25 17-24; James 1: 1, (2-9); 1 Pet. 17 (1-25). All can and will become saints here and now by heaven's estimation without waiting first to (a) die (b) depend on the Roman Catholic Church's Congregation of the Causes of Saints to "start the process" or (c) hear the popular

demand “Santo Subito” or (d) wait for any of the popes to “dispense with the need to wait five years from death before starting the sainthood process” or (f) for any of them to “apply a rarely used waiver to dispense with a second certified miracle to declare a late pontiff a saint.”

Who does God say *His saints* are? “*Here is the patience of the saints, here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*” Revelation 14: 12. It was the persecution of God’s saints by the Roman church particularly through its Office of Inquisition during the Dark Ages that “*made war against the saints*” (Rev. 12: 17). “And the dragon was wroth with the woman [the true church] and *went to make war with the remnant of her seed **which keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus.***” Rev. 12: 17. This persecuting power is further described by John, as taught by the Reformers in the past:

“And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication. And upon her forehead was a name written, “MYSTERY BABYLON, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND THE ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. . . .” Rev. 17: 4-6.

Look up every word “saint,” or “saints” in the Bible. They are mentioned at least 101 times from the Old to the New in the King James Version. They refer to the followers of Christ, called Jehovah in the Old Testament and the followers of Jesus Christ, the incarnated Jehovah in the New Testament. Their names are “written in the Lamb’s book of life” (Rev. 21:27)—not merely “enrolled” by the Papacy “among the saints.” At the close of Christ’s final work as Intercessor and Judge these are those whose life and deeds, both public and secret were examined in the currently ongoing pre-advent or investigative judgment taking place in the heavenly tribunal in the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary. They are found worthy of eternal life, and are numbered among the redeemed of the ages. They are resurrected from their graves when Christ comes, and return with Him to earth in the City of New Jerusalem that descends heaven after the Biblical millennium. Saints also refer to the unfallen angels. The first mention of saints is in Psalm 10: 16, referring to “Aaron and *the saints of the Lord.*”

2. On the subject of claiming authority to declare dead people as “saints” through whom unnumbered millions will now pray to, asking intercession through them instead of praying to God in the name of Jesus Christ, mankind’s only Savior, High Priest, Mediator, Advocate, and Intercessor, the Papacy “fast-tracked” its own process, changed their own rules --“applying a rarely used *waiver* to dispense with a second *certified miracle* to declare the late pontiff a saint.” By this act, it unmistakably reveals itself as the power unmasked in the prophecies of Daniel, John, and Paul as the one who “*thinks to change times and laws.*” See Daniel 7: 25; cf. “the little horn” of verses 7, 8. Paul refers to him as “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” of “the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thess. 2: 3-9). See Rev. 13: 1-10, 18; 17: 1-9, 15-18. “Think” here is the Hebrew *cebar*, which means “to bear in mind; to hope.” Thus, the man of sin plans and schemes to change God’s times and laws, vainly hoping that he will succeed. But no one can change the mind of God nor His law for it is “forever settled in the heavens.”

What a stark contrast to God who “changeth not” (Malachi 3: 6), who alters not His own eternal law and rules. “Forever is Thy word established in heaven.” See the whole chapter of Psalms 119. The 142 verses all *magnify*--- not do away, abrogate or nullify the law, statutes, and testimonies of God. The papacy has “*thought to change*” God’s law of Ten Commandments by (1) removing the whole second commandment that expressly forbids the making and worshipping of images “of any likeness of anything that is in the

heavens above or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the waters under the earth" (Exo. 20: 4-6; Deut. 5: 8-10) (2) splitting the tenth commandment (Exo. 20: 17; Deut. 5: 21) into two, making appear that it is still "ten commandments," and claiming the authority to "transfer the sanctity of the seventh day to the first day of the week," and call it "the Lord's Day," which is the FOURTH COMMANDMENT (Exo. 20: 8-11; cf. Gen. 2: 1-3; Heb. 4: 1-11). The Christian mainstream says the moral law "has been done away with." But Christ Himself declared: "*It is easier for heaven and earth to pass [away] than one tittle [smallest letter, margin] to fail.*" Luke 16:17. See also Matt. 5: 18. Heaven and earth are still here and will only be changed into "the new heavens and the new earth. Isa. 65: 17-25; Rev. 21: 1-5.

On Miracles. – If miracles, that is, as defined by the Roman Catholic Church needed for beatification and sainthood are only those "unexplainable mysterious healings" of terminal sickness by prayers to or in the name of dead saints and popes, which they, not medical professionals, certify, then all those untold millions of miraculous healings and life-savings done by medical interventions of skillful and dedicated surgeons and medical professionals, ranging from those inspiring stories of those saved on the brink of death or are actually declared no longer breathing, and the wonderful life-saving stories in the battlefield, as well as healing brought about a change of lifestyle and the judicious, intelligent use of natural remedies—make all these wonderful people saints—doesn't it?

And if all the faithful adherents of the Roman Catholic Church need to do is to pray to the canonized dead saints for healing, why should they even have and run hospitals? According to Wikipedia, "The Catholic Health Association of the U.S. (CHA) was founded in 1915 as the Catholic Hospital Association of the U.S. and Canada. The association has offices in Washington, D.C. and St. Louis, Missouri. *The association is a ministry of the Roman Catholic Church. Comprising more than 600 hospitals and 1,000 long-term care and other facilities in all 50 states, the association is the largest group of non-profit health-care provider in the nation. Every year one out of six hospitalized patients in the U.S. cared for in a Catholic health facility.*"

Moreover, if such is the doctrine of praying to the saints, then all sickness and diseases flooding the world brought about by a profligate lifestyle, gross intemperance and indulgence on food and drink known to be injurious to the health can be continued by the sufferer. Now, where does *temperance or self-control*—one of the fruits of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit described in Galatians 5: 22-26 come into the picture---in the conversion experience of the Christian, if at all? Directly opposite to the nine listed "fruits of the Spirit" are at least seventeen "works of the flesh" (Gal. 5: 19-21). Many Christians are guilty of these sinful works of the flesh, including those listed in Romans 1: 1-32, and yet presumptuously continue in them, assured by the church that "good works and the forgiveness of sins by the priests will absolve them anyway by the payment of money. The godly German Roman Catholic priest Dr. Martin Luther courageously exposed the fallacy of the Doctrine of Indulgences in His Ninety-Five Theses which he nailed on the door of the Church in Wittenberg in 1517—which became the catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. Pope Leo used money raised from the sale of Indulgences for the lavish renovation of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome through their main agent Johann Tetzel, a Dominican priest. Tetzel went about his money-raising activity, saying, "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs." Nowhere in the sacred Scriptures can purgatory be found, much less using money to pay for the remission of sins. It is only through Christ's substitutionary death and the blood He shed at Calvary can our sins be forgiven, if repent them with godly repentance and confess them to Him.

Regarding miracles, the following quotations from Ellen G. White make much more Bible sense to those who love and are seeking the real truth (emphasis provided):

*“The miracle-working power of Christ’s grace is revealed in the creation in man of a new heart, a higher life, a holier enthusiasm. God says: ‘And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.’ Ezekiel 36: 26, NLT. **Is not this, the renewal of man, the greatest miracle that can be performed?** What cannot the human agent do who by faith takes hold of divine power?– Testimonies, Vol. 9, p. 152; see Evangelism, pp. 289-90 by the same author.*

“Jesus loves to have us come to Him just as we are, sinful, helpless, dependent. We may come with all our weakness, our folly, our sinfulness, and fall at His feet in penitence. It is His glory to encircle us in the arms of His love, and to bind up our wounds [Ps. 147:3], to cleanse us from all impurity [Ps. 51:2; 1 John 1: 19].” – Ellen G. White, *The Faith I Live By* (devotional) p. 134. *Review & Herald*, 1958.

“When the message of truth is presented in our day, there are many who, like the Jews, cry, Show us a sign. Work us a [physical] miracle. Christ wrought *no miracle* at the demand of the Pharisees. He wrought *no miracle* in the wilderness in answer to Satan’s insinuations [Matt. 4: 1-11]. He does not impart to us power to vindicate ourselves or satisfy the demands of unbelief and pride. *But the gospel is not without a sign of its divine origin. Is it not a miracle that we can break from the bondage of Satan?* Enmity against Satan is not natural to the human heart; it is implanted by the grace of God. *When one who has been controlled by a stubborn, wayward will is set free, and yields himself wholeheartedly to the drawing of God’s heavenly agencies, a miracle is wrought; so also when a man who has been under strong delusion comes to understand moral truth.* Every time a soul is converted, and learns to love God and keep His commandments, the promise of God is fulfilled, ‘A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.’ Eze. 36:26. *The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals and ever-living Savior, working to rescue souls. A consistent life in Christ is a great miracle.* In the preaching of the word of God, the sign that should be manifest now and always is the presence of the Holy Spirit, to make the word a regenerating power to those that hear. This is God’s witness before the world to the divine mission of His Son.” – *The Desire of Ages*, p. 407, Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, CA., 1949.

“Christ is our great Physician. He is ready to come into our medical missionary training schools to work for the students, and heal them. During Christ’s ministry on the earth, His great heart of love struck a sympathetic cord of tenderness in the hearts of the people. When He told the sick that they were whole, they believed Him. His very words seemed to be accompanied by the power of conviction, and the people believed that He spoke the truth.

“Unbelievers have inquired, ‘Why are not miracles wrought among those who claim to be God’s people?’ Brethren, ***the greatest miracle that can be wrought is the conversion of the human heart.*** We need to be reconverted, losing sight of self and human ideas, and beholding Christ, that we may *transformed to His likeness. When this, the greatest of miracles, is wrought within our hearts, we shall see the working of other miracles. God cannot work through us miraculously while we are unconverted.* It would spoil us, for we would take it as an evidence that we were perfect before Him. Our first work is to become perfect in His sight [Matt. 5: 48], by living faith claiming His promise of forgiveness. ‘Ask what you will,’ Christ declared to His disciples, ‘and it shall be done unto you.

“Let us remember that He also said, ‘He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me. I am come a

light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness.’ [John 12: 44-46]. ‘Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also’ [John 14: 19]. ‘Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye except ye abide in Me.’ [John 15: 4]. *Those who see Christ by living faith, those who abide in Him, **will have power to work miracles** for His glory. . . . My husband and I were neither doctors nor children of doctors, but we had success in the treatment of disease. In a time when man of the people---even the children of physicians---were dying all around us, we went from house to house to treat the sick, using water and healthful food. Through the blessing of God, we did not lose a single case.* “– Ellen. G. White, Manuscript 169A, July 14, 1902.

As Max Lucado says: “God loves you just the way you are, but He refuses to leave you that way. He wants you to be *like* Jesus.”

Hundreds of thousands watch two popes become saints

Date: 4/28/2014

By Philip Pullella and James Mackenzie

Source: Reuters. <http://news.yahoo.com/hundreds-thousands-watch-two-popes-become-saints-085840802.html>

VATICAN CITY (Reuters)-Pope Francis proclaimed his predecessors John XXIII and John Paul II saints in front of more than half a million pilgrims on Sunday, hailing both as courageous men who withstood the tragedies of the 20th century. . . .

The fact that *the two being canonized are widely seen as representing contrasting faces of the [Roman Catholic] Church* has added to the significance of an event that *Francis hopes will draw the world’s 1.2 billion Catholics closer together after a string of sex abuse and financial scandals.* . . .

John XXIII, who reigned from 1958 to 1963 [5 years] and called the *modernizing Second Vatican Council*, lived through both world wars [2nd and the Cold War].

John Paul II, *the Pole* who reigned for nearly 27 years, witnessed the devastation of his homeland in World War II and is credited by many with helping end the Cold War and bring down Communism.

While both men were widely revered, *there has also been criticism that John Paul II, who died just 9 years ago, has been canonized too quickly. Groups representing victims of sexual abuse by Catholic priests also say he did not do enough to root out a scandal that emerged toward the end of his pontificate and which has hung over the church ever since. The controversy did nothing put off the rivers of Catholic faithful.* “I think that they were two great popes, each of them had their own peculiar character [was it Christ-like?], so they deserve what is happening,” said Leonardo Ruino, who came from Argentina.

“THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. “For years Pope John Paul II took the church to the ends of the earth, and today the ends of the earth have come back here,” said Father Tom Rosica, head of Canada’s Salt and Light Catholic television network. . . . John, an Italian often known as the ‘Good Pope’ because of his friendly, open personality, *died before the Second Vatican Council ended its work in 1965 but his initiative set off one of the greatest upheavals in [the Roman Catholic] Church’s teaching in modern times.* The Council ended the use of Latin at Mass, brought in the use of modern music, and opened the way for challenges to Vatican authority, which alienated some traditionalists. [what was great in the Bible sense about these?]. John Paul continued many of the reforms *but tightened central control, condemned theological renegades and preached a stricter line on social issues such as sexual freedom.* A charismatic, dominant pope, he was criticized by some as a rigid conservative but the adoration he inspired was shown

by the huge crowds whose chants “santo subito!” (make him a saint at once!) at his funeral in 2005 were answered with the fastest declaration of sainthood in modern history.”- (end of news quote).

Sexual abuse of children by God’s law are abominable sins, and in the real world are *crimes* punishable by law, not mere “scandals.” Double standards are one of the hallmarks of man-made and church-made laws in contrast to God’s law by which every single person’s acts--- secret or public are measured and judged by for eternity: “For all must stand at the judgment seat of Christ.” Romans 14: 10. See Eccl. 12: 13, 14, etc. The gospels of Matthew (18:1-6), Mark (9:42), and Luke (17 :2) records Christ’s particularly scathing condemnation of those who abuse children, showing His special regard for these little ones. We quote the first one: ***“But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the sea.”***

MEANWHILE THE ISSUE OF SEX ABUSE IS GETTING SWEEPED UNDER THE RUG!

John Helprin of The Associated Press reported 5/6/2014 with headline:
“At UN, Vatican sex abuse compared with torture.”

The AP report said:

A UN committee compared the Vatican’s handling of the global priest sex abuse scandal with torture Monday, raising the possibility that its failure to investigate clergy and their superiors could have broader legal implications.

But the Vatican’s top envoy in Geneva, Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, claimed that *the Holy See was getting its house in order after a decade-long effort to deal with a global priest sex abuse scandal.*

“There has been, in several documentable areas, stabilization and even decline of cases in pedophilia,” he told a committee of experts in charge of the UN Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which the Vatican ratified in 2002. At the Holy See’s first appearance before the committee, experts mainly peppered the Vatican with tough questions to be answered Tuesday. *For instance, they asked why the report on its implementation of the treaty was almost a decade late, and why the Vatican believes its responsibility for protecting against torture only applies within tiny Vatican city, a nation with only less than 1,000 inhabitants.*

“I wonder if you can tell us how you ensure that the criminal prohibition against torture in Vatican city covers all individuals from whom the Holy See has jurisdiction,” asked committee member Felix Gaer.

Experts said a finding by the committee that *the systematic abuse amounted to torture* could have drastic legal implications for the [Roman Catholic] church as it continues to *battle civil litigation around the world resulting from the decades-long scandal that saw tens of thousands of children raped and molested by priests.*

Katherine Gallagher, a human rights attorney for the New York-based non-profit legal group, the Center for Constitutional Rights, said such a finding could open the floodgates to abuse lawsuits dating back decades because there are no statute of limitations on torture cases. Gallagher, whose group represents Vatican sex scandal victims, *said rape can only legally constitute a form of torture because of the elements of intimidation, coercion, and exploitation of power.*

“The torture committee’s questions really were about sexual violence and rape, and they made it clear that *these acts fall within the definition of torture and the Vatican’s obligations under the torture convention,*” she said after the hearing.

“A recognition of the torture committee that *this is one of the most significant crimes*

could really open up a new level of prosecutions and accountability,” she added. . . .

Pope Francis has said he takes personal responsibility for the “evil” of clergy sex abuse, and has sought forgiveness from victims. He has insisted that the [Roman Catholic] church must be even bolder in its efforts to protect children. [How?]

On Saturday, members of the Pope’s sexual abuse advisory board said that they will develop “clear and effective” protocols to hold bishops and other church authorities accountable if they fail to report suspected abuse or protect children from pedophile priests. Francis announced the creation of the commission last December and named its members in March after coming under initial criticism for having ignored the sex abuse issue. The UN committee, which is composed of independent experts, will issue its final observations and recommendations May 23. In January, a UN committee that monitors a key treaty on children’s rights accused the Holy See of systematically placing its own interests over those of victims. That committee rejected the Vatican’s argument that it had limited geographical responsibility.” –Associated Press writer Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report. See HYPERLINK "http://news.yahoo.com/un-vatican-sex-abuse-compared-torture-150408881.html?so" <http://news.yahoo.com/un-vatican-sex-abuse-compared-torture-150408881.html?so>

Sexual abuse by Roman Catholic prelates of both women and children (pedophilia) was long known by the “Holy See,” U.S. lawmakers, and the Philippine government (the Philippines is the third nation with largest number of Catholics. Brazil is first, followed by Mexico. The U.S. and Italy are fourth and fifth, respectively].

Christian Edwardson documents the following (emphasis mine):

“There were two papal ordinances which especially contributed toward the terrible and widespread depravity of her priesthood: (1) enforced celibacy (forbidding priests to marry), and (2) exemption of the clergy from the domain of civil law, so that government officials could not punish them from any crime. H. C. Lea says of the Roman Catholic clergyman:

‘No matter what crimes he might commit, secular justice could not take cognizance of them, and secular officials could not arrest him. He amenable only to the tribunals of his own order, which were debarred from inflicting punishments involving the effusion of blood, and from whose decisions an appeal to the supreme jurisdiction of distant Rome conferred too often virtual immunity.’ –‘History of the Inquisition of the Middle Ages,’ Vol. I, p. 2. New York: 1888.

“This author makes further statement concerning a ‘complaint laid before the pope by the imperial Diet, in recounting the evils arising from the ecclesiastical jurisdiction which allowed clerical offenders to enjoy virtual immunity, adduced, among other grievances, the license afforded to those who, debarred by the canons from marriage, abandoned themselves night and day to attempts upon the virtue of the wives and daughters of the laity, sometimes gaining their ends by flattery and presents, and sometimes taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the confessional. It was not uncommon, indeed, for women to be openly carried off by their priests, while their husbands and fathers were threatened with vengeance, if they should attempt to recover them. As regards the sale to ecclesiastics of licenses to indulge in habitual lust, the Diet declared it to be a regular and settled matter, reduced to the form of an annual tax, which in most dioceses was exacted of all clergy without exception, so that when those who perchance lived chastely demurred at the payment, they were told that the bishop must have the money, and that after it was handed over they might take their choice whether to keep concubines or not.’ – ‘An Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church,’ pp. 431, 432, and Note 1. Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., Riverside Press, 1884.

“Let the reader remember that those ‘complaints were made by the highest authority

in the empire.’ – *Ibid*.

“Professor Philip Limborch records the same fact, and adds:

‘Erasmus says: “There is a certain Gewrman bishop, who declared publicly at a feast, that in one year he had brought to him, 11,000 priests that openly kept women,’ : for the pay annually a certain sum to the bishop. This was one of the hundred grievances that the German nation proposed to the Pope’s nuncio at the convention at Nuremberg, in the years 1522 and 1523. Grievance 91.” – ‘*History of the Inquisition*,’ p. 84.

“H.C. Lea says:

“The extent to which the evil sometimes grew may be guessed from the case mentioned by Erasmus [11,000 priests!], in which a theologian of Louvian refused absolution to a pastor [priest] who confessed to having maintained illicit relations with no less than two hundred nuns confided to his spiritual charge.” – ‘*An Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy*’, pp. 567, 568.

“While the pope had ample machinery in the Inquisition for correcting his sinning priests, yet he was very lenient with them, except for ‘heresy.’ In fact, heinous depravity seemed to have been worse where the Inquisition reigned supreme.

“H.C. Lea continues:

‘It is rather curious that in Spain, the only kingdom where heresy was not allowed to get a foothold, the trouble seems to have been greatest and to have first called for special remedial measures.’ – *Id.*, p. 568.

“Of the ‘remedial laws’ enacted in 1255, 1274, and 1302, Lea says:

‘*However well meant these efforts were, they proved as useless as all previous ones, for in 1322 the council of Valladolid, under the presidency of the papal legate, enacted still more laws.* The acts of this council, moreover, are interesting as presenting the first authentic evidence of a custom which subsequently prevailed to some extent elsewhere, by which parishioners were wont to compel their priests to take a female consort for the purpose of protecting the virtue of their families from his assaults.’ – *Id.*, p. 310. “The same fate of affairs continued until the sixteenth century was well advanced.” – *Id.*, p. 312.

In the Philippines. - “Such conditions seem most unbelievable. But, when in 1900 W.H. Taft was sent to the Philippines to establish civil government with a public school system there, he reported finding in those islands conditions similar to those described above. See Senate Document No. 190, 56th Congress, 2nd Session:’ Message from the President of the United States, 1901 A.D.” - *Facts of Faith, Southern Publishing Association, Nashville 8, TN, U.S.A, 1943*, pp. 159, 160.

To be continued next month

2. If the pope can ask forgiveness for and in behalf of all the accumulated evils—of sexual abuses and tortures associated with it for their priests, prelates, and bishops of their church, why can’t all citizens be granted the exact same privilege who are determined by due process of the law of the land to be guilty of the crime of sexual abuse—ask

forgiveness from their victims and then be set free to go back to society?
(To be continued next month)

PAGE

PAGE 9