

# 'Peace Of Soul' - - - By Monsignor Fulton Sheen

This is the eleventh of fourteen installments of "Peace of Soul," the challenging best-seller by Monsignor Fulton J. Sheen, leading exponent of Catholic doctrine.

By MONSIGNOR FULTON J. SHEEN  
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Installment XI  
Chapter Twenty-One

An overemphasis on temporal security is a compensation for a loss of the sense of eternal security. When the soul becomes poor through the loss of its wealth, which is virtue, the owner seeks luxury and riches to atone for his inner nakedness. The richer the soul, the less store it sets on the material. It is not poverty that makes men quarrelsome and unhappy, as the Communists claim; it is an overfondness for the things that money buys. Poor monks are usually friendlier and far happier than millionaires.

And it is also an error to say that, if economic conditions were good, there would be no proponents of Communism. Those who make this statement forget that: (1) Poor economic conditions are only an occasion for embracing Communism, not a cause; in some instances, economic trials are, instead, an occasion for renewed spiritual living. (2) Economic conditions were excellent in the Garden of Eden, but the first "Red" got in and made a shambles of it. (3) What makes an unstable society is not the fact that people do not have enough but that they always want more.

From this clatching at goods results a fear of death, a dread that we may lose whatever we have accumulated, that our temporal security will vanish into eternal insecurity. This fear of death, suffered by the modern pagan, differs from the fear of death of the faithful in several ways.

**PAGAN FEAR**  
The pagan fears the loss of his body and his wealth, the faithful fears the loss of his soul. The believer fears God with a filial fear such as a devoted son has toward a loving father; the pagan fears, not God, but his fellow man, who seems to threaten him. Hence the increase in cynicism, suspicion, irascibility, spite, and war; the neighbor must be killed, by word if not by sword, because he is an enemy to be dreaded. The modern pagan, in refusing to continue life by the procession of birth,

becomes the sower of death. Denying the immortality of his own soul, he refuses immortality to the race by stifling his reproductive function, and thus he doubly courts the fear of death.

The world fears the very things Our Lord told us not to fear. He said we were not to fear dying, nor to fear being "casted on the carpet" for our faith, nor to fear economic insecurity, nor to fear the future.

But Our Lord told us what we were to fear — the consequences of judgment if we did not live right, blaspheming against the Holy Spirit, miserliness, and the denial of our faith.

The modern man has completely reversed this order of things to be feared. He takes lightly those things which the Saviour warned us to fear; but he trem-

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Sits at those things which the Saviour bids us not to fear. Sometimes his unhealthy fear is hidden under a cover of silence: this is particularly true of the fact of death.

The modern man seeks to forget about death altogether or, if he cannot do that, to conceal it, to render it unobtrusive, to disguise it. He feels awkward in the presence of death, does not know how to console or what to say. Everything in his attitude contradicts the Christian injunction, "Remember thy last end." For he regards all discussion of death as morbid, yet he will laugh at a comedy in which a dozen people are killed and will stay awake half the night reading a detective story about a murderer. This, too, is death, and it enraptures him; but he concentrates upon the circumstances by which death comes, rather than upon the eternal issues of death, which alone are all-important. This modern insensitivity to death is an insensitivity to personally, to the moral order, and to destiny.

**FEAR OF DYING**  
Those who try to ignore death sometimes say that it is a fear of dying that makes men religious. Certainly this fear has something to do with faith; it is one of the factors of religion because it brings man face to face with the mystery at the heart of life. Why? "Whither?" "Wherefore?" ignore it, deny it, laugh at it, but each life runs up a bill which home day must be met, and with strict justice. Animals die, and so do men, but the difference is that men know they must die. By that very fact, we men turn toward death, we get above it, we transcend it, look at it, survey it, and thus stand outside it. This very act is a dim foreshadowing of immortality. Our mortality is frightening to us largely because we can contemplate immortality, and we have a dim suspicion that we have lost the immortality that once belonged to us. We ought to have it; yet we have it not. Something has interfered. We are not all we ought to be. If death were merely a physical event, we would not fear it; our fear comes from the moral fact that we know we ought not to die.

We fear death because it was not part of the original plan laid down for us. And we also fear it because we have made so poor a use of our years of life. When the sense of sin is keen, this fear of facing our own failures may become paradoxically acute so that the individual wants to lose himself in order not to have to live with himself. This is suicide and nihilism.

Death is a source of meditation on many of the great truths. It is a sign of evil in the world, for in the Christian death belongs not only to the biological order but also to the moral and spiritual realms. The first record that we have of death in the Scriptures associates it with sin and a rebellion against Love. Death makes its first appearance in this world as punishment. And death is, from the first, twofold: for a distraction must be made between the death of the body and the death of the soul.

**Chapter Twenty-Two**  
The revelation of the coming of the anti-Christ means that men have refused to keep eternal values, for death is not the triumph of death, but the triumph of meaning. Jerusalem has passed away because it did not know the time of its visitation. That same statement holds true for every other civilization. And so, by making an end to evil,

Death is the end of evil, we see this revealed in the faces of the dead, which are often more harmonious than they were in life, as the sleeping face is more restful than the waking.

Death will individualize and personalize all of us. Because it separates the soul from the body, it finds out each and every one in its search; it will reveal the real me as against the surface me. The soul will stand naked before God, seen at last as it truly is. And if a soul is not then clothed with virtue, it will feel ashamed, as Adam and Eve were, when they had sinned and hid from God; for it was only after their sin that they felt naked and ashamed.

This relationship between nakedness of the soul and sin is always a close one — at the judgment of a soul, in Eden, and in the life, where, the less grace a man and woman have in their souls, the more gaudily they dress, in a kind of compensation, as we noted earlier.

The separation of the soul from the body after death will bring another change. It will do away with the special advantages which some of us enjoyed in this life, for the body in relationship to the soul might be likened to a person driving a automobile. One man drives a broken-down life in a 20-horsepower motor, another in a 30-horsepower motor, and still another in a 200-horsepower motor, but when there is a traffic violation of the law no one is judged by the kind of car he is driving but by whether or not he broke the law. In the same manner, at the

moment of death, when the soul leaves the body, we shall be judged not by the earthly advantages that we had — beauty or talent, or the wealth that accompanied the body, or the social advantages — but only by the degree to which we responded to Divine Love.

As Dives was separated from his five brothers by death, so each of us will be separated from the group and from the crowd. Then each and every one must step forward, alone, out of the ranks.

There will be no attorneys there to plead our case, no allies to argue that we were not in our right minds when we did wrong. There will be only one voice: it will be the voice of conscience which will reveal us as we really are.

Since we are faced with this inevitable event, how shall we meet it? The pagan and the Christian have different ways of answering. The pagan as he lives moves progressively closer to death; the Christian moves backward from it. The pagan tries to ignore death, but each tick of the clock brings him nearer to it through fear and anxiety. The Christian begins his life by contemplating his death, knowing that he will die, he plans his life accordingly, in order to enjoy eternal life.

There are two stages in the pagan's experience, human life and human death. In the Christian's there are three human life, human death which is a gate to the third stage. Divine life. Christianity has always recommended the contemplation of death as an encouragement to good life; and this is actually effective, for although we cannot go backward in time, we can go forward in time. A man can therefore say to himself, "What I am living for today, that I shall die for tomorrow."

Next Week: The Psychology of Conversion.

# Lourdes Bishop Denounces Communism in Public School

Paris — (CIP) — Bishop Pierre Marie Theas of Tarbes and Lourdes has issued a public protest against Communist propaganda carried on at a public high school in his diocese. He declared that a teacher of philosophy at a public high school is spreading Communist propaganda in his classes, glorifying Communist concepts and praising the Soviet Union.

THE BISHOP did not give the name of the teacher and the school but stated that the attention of the teacher's superiors had been called in the matter and that these refused to intervene and defend him. "Destructive propaganda" has been carried on in that particular school for several years, Bishop Theas declared.

IN HIS statement, Bishop Theas recalled that religious instruction is forbidden in French public schools under the assumption that schools must be absolutely neutral in ideological matters. The toleration or promotion of Communist propaganda in public school classes is undoubtedly a much greater violation of neutrality than religious instruction, Bishop Theas said.

# Honor Priest-Poet Friend of Longfellow

Brussels — (CIP) — Art and Christianity, a Catholic organization of Belgium honored the memory of the Flemish priest-poet, Guido Gezelle at its last annual meeting at Herongenboosch.

Father Gezelle was regent at the English College in Bruges, while the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1802-84) was staying there at a hotel, which now houses the European College.

# India Judge Wore Crucifix on Bench

Trivandrum, India — (NC) — S. I. Sathyanesan, retired judge of the High Court of Travancore, has died here. He used to wear a crucifix under his robes when he sat on the bench. He was a convert and a daily communicant and used to spend hours in prayer to seek divine guidance in pronouncing judgment.

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**15,000 Germans Plan Rome Holy Year Visit**  
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