

**For the fool speaks folly,  
and his heart is busy with iniquity,  
to practice ungodliness,  
to utter error concerning the Lord....**

**But he who is noble plans noble things,  
and on noble things he stands.** (Isa. 32:6, 8 ESV)

Holy Week, 2006

Dear Friends,

To have the privilege of greeting you once again is precious indeed. As I write, it is Holy Week, and my heart is full of bursting with the message of our crucified and risen Lord and with thanksgiving for our great, unspeakable inheritance in Him. The Paschal message proclaims the victory of the holy over the unholy, the noble over the ignoble, and of a Kingdom whose King reigns in righteousness and enables us to do the same.

**For our sake he** (God the Father) **made him** (God the Son) **to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. Working together with him, then, we appeal to you not to receive the grace of God in vain....** (2 Cor. 5:21—6:1 ESV)

**“You shall be holy, for I am holy.”** (1 Pet. 1:16 ESV)

Since I attended the Palm Sunday Eucharist, tears of joy, when not falling, are close to the surface. That is because in the Eucharistic liturgy, as we celebrated Jesus’s triumphal entry into Jerusalem, I had such a heightened sense of the throng’s cries of **“Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord,”** and personal memories<sup>1</sup> came flooding in of the myriad ways our King comes to us, never ceasing to purify, hallow, and strengthen us for the battles we face. Today, for all of us who dearly love the *real* and the splendor of the truth that streams from it, these battles are increasing and loom ever larger. But in them, we find that most faithfully, our King always causes us, *in Him*, not only to overcome but to be *fruitful* as through us he invites multitudes of lost and wandering souls to enter His Kingdom and find His healing.

It is no small thing to be wed to Him, to be a church in anticipation of the wedding feast of the Lamb! You may want to ponder Zechariah 14:1-9 and Revelation 19:6-16, and then go back to verses 8 and 14 of Revelation 19 for what it means, as individual members of the bride of Christ, to wear white raiment at that feast and then, in that glistening

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<sup>1</sup> These memories I have relived in the current writing of the history of this ministry, one that is autobiographical.

raiment, to accompany the King of Kings as He returns at the end of time. It is no small thing to be fruit-bearers in the Kingdom. Who of us blood-bought ones can, in the midst of a Palm Sunday Eucharist, meditate on such Scriptures and not be overcome with tears of joy?

From the joy of the Paschal message (perhaps it was more keenly precious to me because of the battle pitched against it in this our day), I turn to the most critical battle we as Christians are facing. It is the gnosticism (actually a full return of paganism in its rankest forms) that is flooding into the vacuum opened up by the West's rejection of its Judeo-Christian worldview, moral base and spiritual walk with the King. Those of you familiar with the work of Pastoral Care Ministries know that we have long been concerned with the gnosticisms afflicting the church today. In *The Healing Presence*, chapter 14, I wrote at some length on the way it was seeping into our culture and even into the church through Carl Jung and secular (reductionistic) social sciences. Now, of course, we see the "fruition" of all this darkness as it comes through writers, such as Dan Brown in *The Da Vinci Code*, who shamelessly parade lies as history before a culture largely unbaptized in the truth.

Brown's main purpose, precisely as Canon Dr. Michael Green writes in *The Books the Church Suppressed: Fiction and Truth in The Da Vinci Code*, is twofold:

*1) to make the case for a revival of paganism, which embraces the "sacred feminine" and ... is very much the goddess Gaia concept of New Age thought....Such is the ideology of Monism, as much present in Brown's book as it is in Eastern Hindu thought...and 2) not only to advance the feminist principle of paganism, but to attack Christianity directly. In order to do this he has to undermine the authority of the New Testament records...making use of the Gnostic gospels.<sup>2</sup>*

In his comprehensive but wonderfully readable book, Dr. Green tells of debating Duncan Greenlees, a modern "real live Gnostic," who stated on BBC Radio:

*"Gnosticism is a system of direct experiential knowledge of God, the Soul of the Universe. In the early centuries of this era, among a growing Christianity, it took on the form of the Christian faith, while rejecting most of its specific beliefs. Its wording is therefore*

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<sup>2</sup> Michael Green, *The Books the Church Suppressed: Fiction and Truth in The Da Vinci Code* (Oxford, UK & Grand Rapids, Mich.: Monarch Books, 2005), p. 14. For its soundness, clarity of thought, depth and quality of information imparted, I recommend this book.

*largely Christian, while **its spirit is that of the latest paganism of the West.***"

*Note those final words: "Its spirit is that of the latest paganism of the West." That is a very accurate assessment.*

*It was the shrewdness of the early Fathers that saw the magnitude of this threat, and that is why they attacked Gnosticism so robustly....<sup>3</sup>*

Never since the early centuries of the Christian church has there been a greater attack on the holy Scriptures and the divinity of Christ as we in the West now see. Baal and Ashtoreth worship is now fully established, even in America. For this aspect read chapter 13, entitled "The 'Sacred Feminine'--Where is it leading us?" in Green's book, along with chapter 14 of *The Healing Presence* where I deal with this paganism as the revival of Baal and Ashtoreth worship, the idol gods of sexual promiscuity and orgy. Also, for greater insight into historical gnosticism, see Kurt Rudolph, *Gnosis* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982) and Harold O. J. Brown, *Heresies* (New York: Doubleday, 1984).

Now that gnosticism as New Age paganism is seen for the blatantly perverted and sexually idolatrous ends it serves, sleepy Christians whose lamps have run low on oil must begin to read the Scriptures with new eyes. Christians must be enlightened by the Holy Spirit and by their own priceless Christian histories and doctrines that they have, in the West's materialistic culture, so weakly defended and lost sight of. Our freedoms as Christians, hard bought in the West, are swiftly being lost, and people are waking up to the fact that our nations are at stake in this battle. We hardly recognize the culture we are now living in, the tower of Babel loosed by the paganisms that have so wantonly been allowed to come in.

Dr. Green sounds the warning all Christians must hear in showing where the "sacred feminine" is leading. These are only a few excerpts from this valuable book, and it is with thanks to Monarch Books that special permission is given to quote them:

We get nearer to the essence of Brown's position in the most graphic scene in the book. It is what Brown calls the *hieros gamos*, the "sacred marriage", where masked men and women engage in a sexual orgy. His hero explains that this is not really about eroticism but rather a very ancient ceremony designed by the ancient Egyptians to promote fertility. It was here that the participants encountered the god. The man could achieve knowledge of the divine through orgasm, and the woman through the miracle of childbearing. He says, "The ability of the woman to produce life from her womb made her sacred. A god." This age-old ceremony of sacred marriage points to the only communion

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

with the divine we shall ever experience. “The next time you find yourself with a woman, look in your heart and see if you cannot approach sex as a mystical, spiritual act. Challenge yourself to find that spark of divinity that man can only achieve through the sacred feminine.” “The women smiled knowingly, nodding,” he adds, while “the men exchanged dubious giggles and off-colour jokes.” It is the women who understand.

The [gnostic] *Gospel of Philip* hints broadly at all this. It has a lot to say about the “bridal chamber”, which was reserved for the private initiations of “free men and virgins”. According to Irenaeus, mantras were sung in the ceremony until the man could achieve a climactic instant when his mind went blank and he could see God. That is the sort of sex that Brown advocates--a physical union for spiritual ecstasy. It is through this that we can attain “altered consciousness”, an ecstatic mindless experience. This has of course got close connections with Eastern spirituality. In Hindu and Buddhist meditation the prime aim of spiritual ecstasy (to which not just orgasm but profound meditation is another route) is often achieved through the constant repetition of a mantra until the mind goes blank. In other words, as New Age gurus maintain, the enemy of meditation is the mind. And that is precisely the position advocated by the ancient Gnostics. The *Tripartite Tractate* encourages readers to be “filled with the Spirit but be emptied of reason”. What a contrast that is to a Christianity that sees the mind as one of the greatest marks of the image of God in humankind.

The plot thickens as we examine the concept of androgyny, the fusing of male and female. In the scene Brown paints of the *hieros gamos*, all are wearing masks, the men black and the women white. The Mona Lisa is smiling, because that name really conceals Amon and L’isa (Isis), the androgynous pair, also represented by the androgynous figure next to Jesus at Leonardo’s *Last Supper*. Both paintings, Brown believes, present an image that is neither male nor female but a subtle combination of the two. The Mona Lisa smiles because she knows this. She has *gnosis*. This means, of course, that we can equally celebrate homosexuality and heterosexuality. Indeed it even makes any form of sexual expression normal. If sex is the route to spirituality, the more the merrier...of any kind of sex.

Does this matter, apart from the vexed question of the propriety of homosexual acts? Yes, it does. Because the joining of opposites means that those joined in this way rise above all distinctions, which, as the Hindus say, are mere illusion, *maya*. And if that is the case, where is the difference between good and evil? There is none. The Gnostic text *Thunder, Perfect Mind*, much loved by Elaine Pagels, makes this very clear. A woman who claims to be Isis says, with an all-inclusiveness that resonates with today’s political correctness, “I am the whore and the holy one, the wife and the virgin, knowledge and ignorance, shame and shamelessness. I am sinless and the root of sin derives from me. I am the one called truth and iniquity.” Here is a claim to spirituality that transcends the difference between right and wrong, and regards them equally. This is the direction in which Brown is wanting to lead us, and millions of people are being carried along by the story and duped by his world view, which fits so comfortably with twenty-first-century “totalitolerance” and hedonism.

We must not fail to notice where his claim to transcend the difference between right and wrong leads: straight to the contention of one of the figures in the book that “it was *man*, not God, who created the concept of...sin.” If you can transcend the difference between right and wrong, you eradicate the concept of sin and guilt--and equally, therefore, of redemption. This is classic Gnosticism....<sup>4</sup>

Gnosticism is all about the insinuation of the unholy into the holy. The reconciling of good and evil on the deepest levels of human conscience, constituting a Black Mass of sorts. What Dr. Green rightly describes above is the equivalent of a Black Mass, put forward as an orgy for a lost world. Is it any wonder that we Christians weep for pure joy in this, our very special Holy Week, and in the Holy One in whose light and love we dance, worship and *become*?

*Continually restate to yourself what the purpose of your life is. The destined end of man is ... holiness.*<sup>5</sup>

It is to be ennobled.

In the King of Kings,

*Leanne Payne*

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 167-169.

<sup>5</sup> Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1959), Sept. 1.