

Pro-Life Pilgrimage

Editor's note: *A day of blessings. Our 2nd Pilgrimage for Life was a blessing. Could it not be otherwise for those striving to do God's will, defending the life of the weakest member of our society – the unborn child? The article translated from the original French and reproduced below appeared in a French weekly, written by Mr. Rémi Tremblay who interviewed the day of the event.*

(PRÉSENT Magazine, 2018sept18) It was this past Saturday, September 15, 2018, in Montreal that the Quebec Life Coalition (QLC) held its second annual pilgrimage to put an end to the murders of unborn children.

Inspired by the "Message to the people of God," published on June 24, 2018, by the Archbishop of Montreal Monseigneur Christian Lépine, close to twenty faithful men, women, and children gathered to take part.

They traveled aboard a chartered bus to five shrines in the greater Montreal area - the cathedral of Montreal Mary Queen of the World, Saint Mary's church in Greenfield Park, the Franciscan monastery in Rosemont, Saint Sylvain church in Laval and to Saint Joseph's Oratory, as well as to three abortion facilities to offer their prayers and sensitize the public.

Event organizer Brian Jenkins, vice president of the QLC, spoke of this pilgrimage as a success, saying that

he was interested in doing a third version again next year, if not sooner.

For him, the cause of life is "a huge fight" that cannot solely be won "by our own means," hence the importance of prayer and "submitting ourselves to the will of God." With governments making abortion one of its priorities and which openly limit the rights of pro-life persons (*editor*, PM Justin Trudeau limiting Liberal MPs freedom to vote in favour of life and provincial Health Minister Gaetan Barrette legislating 50 m bubble zones around abortion facilities province-wide), prayer is in order.

Indefatigable, QLC campaigners will organize also at the end of the month a 40-day prayer vigil for the end of abortion, set for the downtown core of Montreal, thereby taking part in an event that will take place simultaneously in over 400 other cities.

(Postscript – Here are a few examples of God's blessings. 1. While praying across the street from the abortion facility in south shore Longueuil, a motorist stopped to thank us for our prayerful witnessing; 2. At the Laval abortion centre, a mother, carrying an infant, and her own mother stopped to ask the cleric travelling with us to bless her, her child, and her mother; 3. Finally our final destination, Saint Sylvain church, had an element of the providential, as the pastor who agreed to greet us and give an allocution on Saint Sylvain and his importance in the pro-life movement, was nowhere to be seen. Fortunately, the sacristan was leaving as we arrived, granting us entry to the church, where I gave the allocutio.)

The Problem of Evil...

The problem of evil is the most serious problem in the world. It is also the one serious objection to the existence of God.

When Saint Thomas Aquinas wrote his great *Summa Theologica*, he could find only two objections to the existence of God, ... One the apparent ability of natural science to explain everything in our experience without God, and the other, the problem of evil.

More people have abandoned their faith because of the problem of evil than for any other reason. It is certainly the greatest test of faith, the greatest temptation to unbelief. And it's not just an intellectual objection. We feel it. We live it. That's why the Book of Job is so arresting.

The problem can be stated very simply: If God is so good, why is this world so bad? If an all-good, all-wise, all-loving, all-just, and all-powerful God is running the show, why does he seem to be doing such a miserable job of it? Why do bad things happen to good people?

The unbeliever who asks that question is usually feeling resentment toward and rebellion against God, not just lacking evidence for his existence. C.S. Lewis recalls that as an atheist he "did not believe God existed. I was also very angry with him for not existing. I was also angry with him for having created the world."

When you talk to such a person, remember that it is more like talking to a divorcée than to a skeptical scientist. The reason for unbelief is an unfaithful lover, not an inadequate hypothesis. The unbeliever's problem is not just a soft head but a hard heart. And the good apologist knows how to let the heart lead the head as well as vice versa.

There are four parts to the solution to the problem of evil. First, evil is not a *thing*, as entity, a being. All beings are either the Creator or creatures created by the Creator. But every thing God created is good, according to Genesis. We naturally tend to picture evil as a thing – a black cloud, or a dangerous storm, or a grimacing face, or dirt. But these pictures mislead us. If God is the Creator of all things and evil is a thing, then God is the Creator of evil, and he is to blame for its existence. No, evil is not a thing but a wrong choice, or the damage done by a wrong choice. Evil is no more a positive thing than blindness is. But it is just as real. It is not a thing, but it is not an illusion.

Second, the origin of evil is not the Creator but the creature's freely choosing sin and selfishness. Take away all sin and selfishness and you would have heaven on earth. Even the remaining physical evils would no longer rankle and embitter us. Saints endure and even embrace suffering and death as lovers embrace heroic challenges. But they do not embrace sin.

Furthermore, the cause of physical evil is spiritual evil. The cause of suffering is sin. After Genesis tells the story of the good God creating a good world, it next answers the obvious question "Where did evil come from?" by the story of the fall of mankind. How are we to understand this? How can spiritual evil (sin) cause physical evil (suffering and death)?

God is the source of all life and joy. Therefore, when the human soul rebels against God, it loses its life and joy. Now a human being is body as well as soul. We are single creatures, not double: we are not even body and soul as much as we are embodied soul, or

... extract “Fundamentals of the Faith” by Peter Kreeft

ensouled body. So the body must share in the soul’s inevitable punishment – a punishment as natural and unavoidable as broken bones from jumping off a cliff or a sick stomach from eating rotten food rather than a punishment as artificial and external as a grade for a course or a slap on the hands for taking the cookies.

Whether this consequence of sin was a physical change in the world or only a spiritual change in human consciousness – whether the “thorns and thistles” grew in the garden only after the fall or whether they were always there but were only felt as painful by the newly fallen consciousness – is another question. But in either case the connection between spiritual evil and physical evil has to be as close as the connection between the two things they affect, the human soul and the human body.

If the origin of evil is free will, and God is the origin of free will, isn’t God then the origin of evil? Only as parents are the origin of the misdeeds their children commit by being the origin of their children. The all-powerful God gave us a share in his power to choose freely. Would we prefer he had not and had made us robots rather than human beings?

A **third** part of the solution to the problem of evil is the most important part how to resolve the problem in practice, not just in theory; in life, not just in thought. Although evil is a serious problem for thought (for it seems to disprove the existence of God), it is even more of a problem in life (for it is the real exclusion of God). But even if you think the solution in thought is obscure and uncertain, the solution in practice is as strong and clear as the sun: it is the Son, God’s solution to the problem of evil is his son Jesus Christ. The father’s love sent his Son to die for us to defeat the power of evil in human nature: that’s the heart of

of the Christian story. We do not worship a deistic God, an absentee landlord who ignores his slum; we worship a garbageman God who came right down into our worst garbage to clean it up. How do we get God off the hook for allowing evil? God is not off the hook: God is the hook. That’s the point of a crucifix.

The Cross is God’s part of the practical solution to evil. Our part, according to the same Gospel, is to repent, to believe, and to work with God in fighting evil by the power of love. The King has invaded; we are finishing the mop-up operation.

Finally, what about the philosophical problem? It is not logically contradictory to say an all-powerful and all-loving God tolerates so much evil when he could eradicate it? Why do bad things happen to good people? The question makes three questionable assumptions.

1. Who’s to say we are good people?
2. Who’s to say suffering is all bad?
3. Who’s to say we have to know all God’s reasons?

Conclusion: With a childlike faith we must trust the infallible, all-seeing God when we hear his word but do not see from our reason or experience. For God permitted the greatest evil – the passion and crucifixion, for our salvation, even though persons choose hell rather than choosing life eternal.

(I summarised the ending of the section of the author’s treatise. For a complete account, kindly refer to: Kreeft, Peter. Fundamentals of the Faith. Ignatius Press, 1988.)

Pilgrimage Photos



Pro-Life Rosary Pilgrimage - Prayer Chain (above)
outside Maisonneuve-Rosemont Hospital (below)



Pro-Life Events

- 1. 40 Days for Life** prayer vigil for the end of abortion continues through Sunday, November 04, 2018, at 505 St-Catherine Street East, corner Berri Street, daily 8h to 17h.
- 2. Fundraising dinner to aid women in a crisis pregnancy.** Saturday, October 27, 2018. Chomedey.
- 3. Knights of Columbus Fundraising Breakfast,** Saint Bernadette Church, Sunday, Nov. 04, 2018.

For more information, call (514) 344-2686.

Pro-Life for the End of Abortion

Heavenly Father, we pray that the scourge of abortion be lifted from our land,

That those who promote it may be brought to a change of heart,

That all who are tempted to abortion may be lovingly helped to protect the precious gift of life,

And that all who have experienced an abortion be comforted with the healing gift of love.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Culture of Life is published by
Quebec Life Coalition
C.P. 55053 Comptoir postal Maisonneuve
Montréal QC H1W 0A1

Email: info@cqv.qc.ca
Internet: www.cqv.qc.ca
Toll Free: 1-855-996-2686
Local: (514) 344-2686 Cell: 438-930-8643

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