

The **REVELATION**
CODE Letter

A **Positively Apocalyptic** Novel

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For my two sons, John and Michael:

My sons, I love you! Pray for me always!

I will pray for you to be brave, to be true to the values of your Catholic Christian faith, and always, at every moment, to be prepared to spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ and His Mother Mary!

“[I]T HAS BEEN SAID WITH PROFOUND INSIGHT THAT
‘BEAUTY WILL SAVE THE WORLD.’”

Pope St. John Paul II, *quoting Dostoyevsky*

“[T]HE BEAUTIFUL APPEALS TO THE COGNITIVE POWER: FOR
THINGS THAT GIVE PLEASURE WHEN THEY ARE PERCEIVED
... ARE CALLED BEAUTIFUL.”

St. Thomas Aquinas

“BY GAZING AT CREATION WE THINK WE CAN GLIMPSE THE
CREATOR SPIRIT, GOD HIMSELF, RATHER LIKE CREATIVE
MATHEMATICS, LIKE A FORCE THAT SHAPES THE LAWS
OF THE WORLD AND THEIR ORDER, BUT THEN, EVEN,
ALSO LIKE BEAUTY -- NOW WE COME TO REALIZE:
THE CREATOR SPIRIT HAS A HEART. HE IS LOVE.”

Pope Benedict XVI

“THE APOCALYPSE ... CREATES HOPE. IF WE SUDDENLY *SEE*
REALITY, WE DO NOT EXPERIENCE THE ABSOLUTE DESPAIR
OF AN UNTHINKING MODERNITY BUT REDISCOVER A
WORLD WHERE THINGS HAVE MEANING.”

René Girard

“IN THE DESIGNS OF PROVIDENCE, THERE ARE NO
MERE COINCIDENCES.”

Pope St. John Paul II

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Preface

“Write this: before I come as the Just Judge,
I am coming first as the King of Mercy.”
Christ’s words to St. Faustina Kowalska

Diary, ¶ 83

It was 5 A.M. on November 11, 2016. A man sat down at the computer in his den while sipping from a mug filled to the brim with hot, black coffee. The mug had the words *USS Abraham Lincoln CVN-72* printed on it – a memento from a trip to the aircraft carrier from days long passed. As he settled into his brown leather chair, the man had one thought in mind; yet, even though it was Veteran’s Day, that thought had nothing to do with reminiscing about his prior years of military service as a naval intelligence officer. Instead, he wondered: *What sort of beauty has come from the intellectual workbench of Bishop Robert Barron today?* This day, before making his regular perusal of Bishop Barron’s wonderful *Word on Fire* website, the man checked his Gmail account for the Bishop’s *Daily Gospel Reflections*. There he found a reflection on Luke 17:26-37, and this is what he read:

Friends, in today’s Gospel passage the Lord compares the clueless behavior of our time with that of Noah. Listen to his warning: “Jesus said to his disciples, “The coming of the Son of Man will repeat what happened in Noah’s time.”” Those aren’t very reassuring words.

Then he specifies: people were eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage right up to the time of the flood, and then, when it came, with shocking suddenness, they were destroyed. The end of an old world had arrived, but the inhabitants of that world were clueless. A new world was

coming, but the prospective citizens of it had no idea how to prepare for it.

Our version of Noah's world-destroying flood might be the crashing of a huge comet into the earth. What if we knew that a comet was coming, but we did nothing about it; we adjusted in no way to it? This was the situation of those in Noah's time and, Jesus suggests, those in his own time. And it's our situation, too. We must prepare for the Lord's coming by patterning our lives on the Gospel.

After reading Bishop Barron's jarring words, the man closed his eyes and said a silent prayer. *Heavenly Father, I ask You one more time: What do You want me to do?* Then, in response to that prayer, he had one overriding thought take hold in his mind. *It's time to finally write that letter to the Cardinal!*

Chapter 1

The Cardinal's Visit to the Shrine

*O taste and see that the Lord is good!
Happy is the man who takes refuge in him!*

Psalm 34:8

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon on Eden Hill. The plush green grounds around the Shrine were filled to the brim with thousands of pilgrims, all seeking the fulfilment of a promise that had come by way of two Polish giants of their Catholic faith, Pope St. John Paul II and St. Maria Faustina Kowalska. They were all seeking God's divine mercy.

Each and every one of these pilgrims knew that Jesus Christ had appeared to a young nun in Poland in the 1930s, that is, to St. Faustina, shortly before the Second World War began, and that He had promised her that, for those who would go to confession, and then receive Holy Communion on Mercy Sunday - the Sunday after each Easter - there would be a complete annihilation of the effects of the sins on their souls.

In fact, Jesus had said to St. Faustina, "Whoever approaches the Fount of Life on this day will be granted complete remission of sins and punishment." This meant that those mercy-seeking souls would return to the same holy condition that they were in on the day that they were baptized. For the Catholic pilgrims at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, this was a promise too good to pass up, so, on this Saturday afternoon, they were all seeking out the absolution of confession, to ready themselves for the Mass of Mercy on the following day.

Amongst the crowds, Fr. John was hurrying to return to his make-shift confessional post inside a large white tent, the type that's able to hold over a hundred guests comfortably for a wedding reception. He heard a friendly voice call out his name in that unmistakable Boston accent of a "Southie."

“Father John, how are ya’?” It was the voice of Michael Ryan, a sergeant with the Boston Police Department.

“Mike, I’m doin’ fine. It’s sure great to see you! And I see that you have your second youngest, Tommy, with you. How you doin’ young man?” The four-year old’s smile beamed brightly.

“Mike, where’s your lovely wife, Carol?”

“She’s in line for confession, and the other kids are with her. She’s holding my place while I take Tommy to the restroom.”

Every year, for the past ten years, this former-U.S. Marine, who had bravely won a bronze star during the “Second Battle of Fallujah” in the Al Anbar province of Iraq, would make several trips to Eden Hill’s Shrine for Mass. He had met Fr. John there a year earlier, during Fr. John’s first year “stationed” at the Shrine, and they had become fast friends over several Saturday evening dinner meals at the home of Carol’s older sister, Rebecca, who lived near Stockbridge, Massachusetts. Rebecca, a *Visiting Angels* nurse, was a regular at the Shrine; between her morning and afternoon visits to her elderly patients, each day she would go to Eden Hill for the 2 P.M. Mass.

“I’m on my way back to my confessional post. I just took a short restroom break myself, and I snuck in a Diet Coke, too. It’s a warm one for April, isn’t it, Mike?”

“Sure is, Father.”

“Mike, did you know that Cardinal Flanagan is up here from New York City? He’s the main celebrant for the Mass tomorrow, and he’s in the big tent right now hearing confessions.”

Sgt. Ryan had once met Cardinal Nicholas Christopher Flanagan, known to nearly all American Catholics as a bigger-than-life magnet for

Christ. He had said Mass for Sgt. Ryan's battalion near the banks of the Euphrates River in Iraq. After that Mass, Mike had an opportunity to pose for a photo with the then-Bishop for the Archdiocese of the U.S. Military, a photo that Mike and Carol keep handsomely framed on the wall of their South Boston home, right beneath the family's crucifix.

A few months after 9/11, Pope John Paul II had appointed then-Fr. Flanagan to his position as Bishop for the U.S. Military. And nine years later, Pope Benedict XVI had appointed him as the Cardinal for New York City, saying from Rome to all New Yorkers, "Today, I offer you a gift: a big heart for a big city!" This jovial Irishman was a natural for his seat at the spiritual center of New York City, St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Although Sgt. Ryan's respect for Cardinal Flanagan was immense, his loyalty to his friend was undeterred. "Father, I'm still coming to you for my confession, since you know my soul the best! Besides that, your regular penance of ten *Hail Marys* is always easily said. And who knows what that new-found Yankee fan from New York City would have me do for penance once he heard my Boston Red Sox accent!"

Fr. John laughed. "Great! Then I'll see you over at the big tent." And kneeling down on one knee to look the four-year old in the eyes, Fr. John shook the young man's hand firmly and said, "Tommy, it's sure great to see you again."

The look in Tommy's eyes was penetrating. In that brief instant, Fr. John thought two things, both of them occurring to him at once in the strange way that thoughts often coalesced within his unique but beautiful mind.

He thought that if eyes are the "windows to the soul", then Tommy's soul was the clearest and cleanest soul that he'd seen in a long time; it was

a soul that seemed almost to *thank* Fr. John for showing love to his dad – *for cleaning his dad’s soul!*

And it was that piercing look in Tommy’s eyes that caused Fr. John to simultaneously think about “*the look*” in Caravaggio’s painting, *The Calling of St. Matthew – the wordless look of Christ!* In that haunting painting, it was Christ’s *look* that melted Matthew’s heart, even while Matthew was sitting with his friends counting his tax money, a *look* that changed his life forever, changing a soul from a sinner to an eventual saint – a saint given the singular honor and privilege to open the first pages of the Holy Bible’s New Testament.

As of late, that fact had been beguiling to Fr. John. God actually chose a hated and scorned tax collector, a man accustomed to *counting* money; but God turned that skill of *counting* to a whole new purpose. This time, right at the beginning of the New Testament, Matthew would *count* generations – the generations from Abraham to Christ.

Fr. John saw his own life in a similar way. Sinner to a “wanna-be” saint – of the *non-canonized* sort, though, as he well knew. But he had often wondered if God would ever use his skills – the ones that he developed as a Ph.D. in astrophysics – to serve the Kingdom of God ...

Letting go of Tommy’s little hand, and with those thoughts still dancing together in his mind, off Fr. John went to reclaim his folding chair inside the big tent. He was ready to once again dispense God’s mercy to the faithful, to those seeking the Catholic sacrament of confession.

* * *

Sgt. Ryan waited his turn for confession, all the while examining his conscience, just as he had been taught by the nuns at the Catholic elementary school that he attended in South Boston, St. Brigid’s School.

Sgt. Ryan's sins generally revolved around his passions for the flesh, what is sometimes referred to as "losing custody of the eyes."

As he stood in line, surrounded by his beautiful family, he thought about those days when he'd be driving his beat in his Boston PD patrol car, and a gorgeous young woman would walk by. Too often, his eyes would linger a bit too long on her shapely figure, or the finely-honed curve of her calves, before he fully realized what he was doing. This tendency was particularly troubling to him, though, when, during a New England Patriots game, a beer commercial would come on and Carol's eyes would catch his eyes looking too intently at the scantily-clad lovelies dressed in a way that Madison Avenue knew helped to sell beer to red-blooded American football fans like him.

This would always cause him to then look deeply into Carol's eyes with a genuine *I'm-so-sorry* look, and say, "I love ya', babe. You know you're my *one* and my *only* love forever." But that momentary spark of pain that he had caused his wife would convict him, and it would be something that he would regularly call to mind, at least until his next confession.

Sgt. Ryan especially liked going to Fr. John for confession. He knew that Fr. John had known these same types of passions in his own past, since Fr. John had been a married man, and then a well-known womanizer after his wife died on their honeymoon in Italy.

* * *

Fr. John was in his mid-thirties, and he was born John Michael Adamczyk in Brooklyn, New York. He met the love of his life, Sara Marie Boyd, at Stuyvesant High School in lower Manhattan. "Stuy", as the high school is commonly known to its faculty and students, was first founded in 1904. It was and is one of the premier science high schools in the United States,

known world-wide for producing many science professors for the Ivys, as well as a hefty number of Rhodes scholars and even some Nobel laureates. Incoming students to this public school gem are selected by means of a very competitive science-and-math-based examination, one that is open to all student residents of New York City's five boroughs. In the case of both John and Sara, Stuy's entrance exam revealed that both of them were the "best of the best", so they both easily gained admission to the highly-sought-after high school.

John met Sara during the second week of their freshman year. They were paired up as teammates on the "Stuy Birdies," a badminton club-team that both had joined for some after-school, mind-clearing fun. John was immediately smitten with Sara. Many boys were. This had been true since Sara was just a young child. But Sara had never had a boyfriend before. She just hadn't been interested, that is, until she met John.

Sara had natural, no make-up good looks. She had beautiful, shoulder-length brown hair, and greenish-gray eyes. But that's not what stood out most about Sara. Rather, it was the dark brown freckles that marked her entire face and forehead - that's what made Sara's beauty so unique and captivating.

When Sara was four she had a reckoning with those freckles. After being teased about them by another girl in the neighborhood, Sara was troubled and perturbed by her *uniqueness*. Her father remedied that, though, when he told her about his belief that God had specifically designed the "pattern" of her freckles and that he also believed in his heart of hearts that the famous Michelangelo's guardian angel must have taken the full nine months that she was in her mommy's tummy to paint each and every one of those freckles on her face. Then her dad showed her a book that had the paintings of Michelangelo on the walls and the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. That was the last time that she complained about her freckles.

In fact, from that point on, more often than not, when Sara would look into the mirror to get ready for school in the mornings, she would forever think of angels and Michelangelo, and even being pregnant with her own baby someday. She had often hoped that “Michelangelo’s guardian angel”, as her dad said, was on hold in the wings just waiting for the creation of her own child’s freckles.

John loved those freckles too, so much so that when Sara coyly let it be known during lunch one day (by a type of “stage whisper” to another classmate) that she planned to join the Stuy Ballroom Club the next year, John, who had never danced even one dance step before, followed her to the sign-up sheet. He had hopes of partnering with her for some Latin ballroom dance moves. In fact, from the day that he first met her, John would have followed Sara to the moon, even if he had to singlehandedly build the rocket ship to get there! And, as many of John’s teachers would attest to, with the smarts that he had been given, that prospect actually had possibilities.

Even though he was a faith-filled altar boy before high school, John’s Catholic faith had started to waver and wane a bit during his first year at Stuy. Not so for Sara, though. While most of the teachers at Stuy were scientists who didn’t believe in God, Sara was a faithful rock, always willing to chime-in and share nuggets of her faith, without fear or worry, even when an occasional scornful look came her way from a teacher or a classmate. Every day, in fact, Sara purposely wore a gold chain around her neck - what she called her “Catholic faith chain” - and she always did so *on the outside of her shirt or sweater*. That chain contained her First Communion gold cross, given to her by her father, and a gold Medal of the Immaculate Conception, given to her by her mother on that same blessed day. Sara wore these symbols to evangelize without words.

But whenever a teacher or classmate would ask her about them, Sara was always happy to also use words to tell about her faith. When female classmates would ask about her chain, she'd beamingly speak about the encounter that St. Catherine Labouré had with the Virgin Mary in France in 1830. Telling them about the words engraved on the Medal - "O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee" - she'd explain how those words contain an important teaching of the Catholic Church, one that is often overlooked by those who like to criticize the Church for its lack of woman priests.

Sara would say, "The Catholic Church actually teaches that the highest, truest, and most perfect *creature* that God ever created was a *human woman!* Do you understand how important that is?!", she'd say with gusto. "Mary was born without the Original Sin, the sin that we were born with, and the sin that every pope and priest was born with as well. And she never sinned even once during her entire life, *unlike* every single pope and every single priest. And even more than that: every single angel and every single saint bows to her when she passes by them in Heaven! Why? Because she bore, from within her own body, the *Creator* of every single angel and every single saint."

Sara would continue, "She's the Admiral of God's Navy! She's the General of God's Marines! She's the *Mother* of God! So while every pope and every priest is a *male*, they know, in their heart of hearts, that a *female* is above them in the Church's chain of command." Sara relished being able to share that tidbit with her feminist friends, since she too considered herself to be a feminist, one who modeled herself after Mary, though, the highest creature - not after Gloria Steinem.

And everyone at Stuy knew that Sara was not a soul that could be trifled with; she was just way too smart for that. Indeed, Sara was always first in her class at Stuy, first from the straight *As* on her Fall report card in

her freshmen year, all the way through Stuy's graduation day. Much to the chagrin of many of her teachers and classmates, she was always the "top student" in the class. But no one could have carried the "top student" honor with more humility and class than Sara. She was always gracious to her classmates and teachers, always willing to give a helping hand to anyone in need, always willing to spread simple joy with her ever-present smile.

Sara's mom often said of Sara that she was "The Lord's Newest Evangelist, and her primary means of evangelism is that Catholic chain and that beaming smile!" Joy was indeed her main character trait. And this was so true that if a student or a teacher ever said anything negative behind Sara's back to disparage her, even in the slightest way, there would always be three or more of their peers who would immediately come to her defense.

Sara was born into a devout "*Catholic*-Irish family of eight", as Sara's dad liked to proudly say, always placing the heavy emphasis on the "Catholic" in that descriptive phrase. He would sometimes jokingly say, "Some people drunkenly put the *Irish* first in that phrase! I pity those poor fools!", jokingly mimicking the voice of "Mr. T" when he delivered that punch line. There was always a little bit of truth that Sara's father would mix in with his humor. He considered himself *Catholic, American, and Irish*, and always in that order ... with the *Irish* part in distant last.

Sara's dad was a Lieutenant in the FDNY. He died on 9/11 inside the South Tower, the second Tower hit at the World Trade Center, but the first to fall. He was one of the "first responders", those who always rush in, while the regular folks are rushing out.

Sara's mom had actually witnessed that dreadful event on TV from their modest Belle Harbor home in Queens. She had some of Sara's younger siblings sitting on the couch with her when the horror happened. About thirty minutes before, Lt. Boyd had called his wife to say that he was

on his way to lower Manhattan. She told him what she'd seen on the TV that morning, and she told him to pray. As her husband ended the call, after he repeated to her their regular sign-off, "I love you, babe", Mrs. Boyd had an unnerving feeling shoot through her entire body.

Sara too had seen the ghastly 9/11 events unfold live in front of her eyes. She sat at her desk with her mouth agape watching the TV mounted on the classroom wall at Stuy, one that was usually used for the morning announcements and the Pledge of Allegiance. She and the classroom of kids almost didn't believe what they saw, because when they eyed the collapse of the South Tower on *ABC News*, Peter Jennings didn't seem to notice. So she thought to herself, *Did I really just see that?* Sara prayed and prayed for her father in those moments, wondering if he was in that building. When a minute or more had past, and the anchors on the TV screen had finally realized and confirmed that the South Tower had indeed collapsed, Sara broke out into a stream of tears, fearing the worst for her dad.

A few days later, at a coffin-less funeral Mass held for her dad at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Belle Harbor, Sara knew with 100% certainty that in the moments that she was praying at her public-school desk, her father had entered into heaven. There he had met his friend, brother, and Creator, Jesus Christ, He whose symbol she always wore proudly around her neck. But the solace that knowledge provided to her as she sat in the front pew at St. Francis Church never seemed to overcome the plain, painful human grief that she felt in the deepest part of her heart.

* * *

Despite Sara's ongoing suffering, though, nothing ever seemed to deter her from her studies, especially her love for mathematics. With no effort on her part, Sara always saw God's perfect order and design in the numbers of math, and in the numbers that she also found in-built in other ways into

God's creation. In fact, she was certain that there was a Divine Mind behind what she called "the laws of math."

Beginning at a young age, good people and simple things pointed Sara in this direction. For instance, Sara's favorite teacher of all time, Mrs. Edith Sophia, taught her something in the fifth grade that she never forgot. One day, *entirely from memory*, Mrs. Sophia wrote the following number pattern on the old-fashioned chalkboard in her classroom at P.S. 114.

$$1 \times 1 = 1$$

$$11 \times 11 = 121$$

$$111 \times 111 = 12321$$

$$1111 \times 1111 = 1234321$$

$$11111 \times 11111 = 123454321$$

$$111111 \times 111111 = 12345654321$$

$$1111111 \times 1111111 = 1234567654321$$

$$11111111 \times 11111111 = 123456787654321$$

$$111111111 \times 111111111 = 12345678987654321$$

Remarkably enough, before Mrs. Sophia had even completed writing out the last line of numbers, Sara had already memorized the entire symphony of numbers that she saw displayed before her, including the line of numbers that was not yet completely written out in chalk on the board.

The ten-year old Sara didn't, at that precise moment, have to do the calculations herself, because she trusted the *source* of those numbers, her beloved Mrs. Sophia, who also taught her, and some of her fellow P.S. 114 classmates, CCD Sunday school classes at St. Francis. And, similarly, Sara knew the *pattern* of the numbers before they were fully unfolded on the chalkboard in front of her. To her ten-year-old mind, the pattern was

entirely self-evident. More than that, though, it was elegantly beautiful. And that's what intrigued Sara so much about math. *At bottom, it was its beauty.* "Math is so beautiful", Sara would often exclaim to her mom as she worked at the kitchen table doing her homework while her mom prepared dinner. In fact, that was something that she would say often to all who would listen.

So, back in the fifth grade, even before Mrs. Sophia put down her chalk on that Autumn day, all of the numbers were committed to Sara's long-term memory, and Sara used those numbers as a teaching tool later in life when she tried to impart to her Stuy classmates the beauty of the mathematical design that she always found in-built into God's creation. And she too could write out that number pattern, without any notes, in about three minutes. And when she did so, she'd say to her classmates, "Do you see the elegant symmetry of these numbers? It's reflective of God's entire cosmos!" And by using the newest scientific ideas that they'd been learning about in class, she'd explain exactly how.

In fact, during her Valedictorian Address at Stuy, Sara repeated the story of Mrs. Sophia's number pattern, a story that many of Sara's classmates were familiar with by then. But this time there was a new twist. Mrs. Sophia was sitting in the audience, and Sara asked her to come up and stand just below where Sara stood on the stage at the podium. As Sara recounted the story to her classmates, from the angle where Sara's mom sat, it was almost as though Sara was standing on Mrs. Sophia's shoulders. Then, at Sara's prompting, the retired teacher picked up a large 4'x3' placard containing the number pattern that she had mapped out for her students so many times throughout the years. As she placed the number board on the easel stand right below Sara's feet, Sara's mom preserved the moment with a photograph.

Then, while *figuratively* standing on the shoulders of her favorite teacher *and* her favorite number pattern, Sara concluded her Valedictorian

Address this way: “In the fifth grade, Mrs. Sophia began to unfold for me a crucial truth, and a fundamental pattern, one that I’ve seen repeated over and over again during these last four years at Stuy – whether I’ve been studying Calculus or Chemistry, the Big Bang or Darwin’s *fact* of evolution.” For Sara, the big picture of Darwin’s big idea proposal had passed from the realm of scientific *theory* into the realm of scientific *fact*. Having accepted the proof of the Big Bang provided by the CMB in the heavens, though, Darwin’s idea of evolution was no stumbling block to her religious faith. Not in the least.

Sara continued, “If we’re willing to use math and science to honestly peer into our universe, we will find an unmistakable ordered design and pattern there, one that arouses our senses and our reason, one that leads us to ask an ultimate question: How did that design, that ordered design, how did it get there? Galileo, the scientist that Einstein dubbed the ‘Father of Modern-Day Physics’, proposed a solution to this ultimate question. He said this: ‘The laws of nature are written by the hand of *God* in the language of mathematics.’”

Mrs. Boyd took note that Sara emphasized the word *God* in that sentence in just the same way that she had often heard her husband emphasize the word *Catholic* when he would say that they were a “*Catholic-Irish* family of eight.” Yes, in that brief instant, Mrs. Boyd could hear her husband’s baritone voice thundering out of her daughter’s soprano frame.

Then Sara looked up from her notes and out into the audience. She looked first to her mom, and smiled, then to her siblings, and then to her classmates. Finally, she landed her gaze on he who she *knew* would be her future husband. Looking directly into John’s eyes, she said this, as though she was speaking *only* to him, “You see, one of the greatest scientific minds of all time, the great Galileo, believed that it was *God* who wrote the order into the mathematical design of nature.”

Sara then glanced down at her favorite teacher, and she said, “*Sophia* means ‘wisdom’ in Greek. For you, *Mrs. Sophia*, so appropriately named, the fount of wisdom for me in my fifth grade math class *and* later in my Confirmation class at St. Francis in Belle Harbor, Queens, allow me to conclude this address by quoting back to you what you once quoted to me. It’s a statement from Pope John Paul II’s *Catechism*, which, in turn, quotes from the Book of Wisdom: “Because God creates through wisdom, his creation is ordered: ‘You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.’”

Again Sara firmly fixed her gaze upon John, and when she did so this time she could see the tears welling up in his eyes; but when Sara saw those tears, she didn’t flinch for a second. With a prayer earlier that morning, she had steeled herself for that moment, wanting to teach the love of her life a lesson from the center of her heart, one that she had hoped he’d remember forever. “My fellow classmates,” she said intensely locking eyes with her future husband, “find the *order* in creation and you will find the *source* of that order: *God*. That is true wisdom!”

As the tears began to freely flow down John’s cheeks, Sara knew that she too would cry if she didn’t look away, so, as she had planned to do, she glanced once again at her math mentor, and said, “Thank you, Mrs. Sophia. Thank you for helping me to begin to see that fundamental truth eight years ago.”

Right before she stepped away from the podium, after looking over to her mom one more time and mouthing the words *I love you*, Sara peeked toward the sky and whispered words that were only audible to her, “Thank you, Daddy! I love you, too!” Although Sara’s mother was on her feet about 200 feet away, applauding wildly, when she saw her daughter’s lips move, she knew exactly what she had said. She knew that her daughter thanked her father, and tears poured down Mrs. Boyd’s face too. But her

smile still beamed! It was a smile as equally wide as the day that she had held Sara in her arms for the first time, those eighteen-long years before. She too beheld the sky, and she quietly whispered to her husband, “I love you, babe.”

As he eyed Lt. Boyd’s daughter through his tears, those were the exact words that John was thinking as well. *I love you, babe*. He couldn’t wait until the day that he’d marry her.

* * *

“As I always say, Rome made me a Cardinal, not a saint ... at least not yet!” Cardinal Nicholas Christopher Flanagan delivered this, his famous, oft-repeated statement, at the conclusion of a story that he had just told during a spaghetti-and-meatball dinner. It was still the eve of Divine Mercy Sunday, and most of the pilgrims had already left the Shrine’s grounds, getting some rest in order to return bright and early the following morning to get their seats. The confessions in the big tent were now completed for the night, and the clergy were sharing fellowship at a big-family-like gathering around large tables formed into a very large square inside the Shrine’s rectory.

And, as always, when the Cardinal delivered his new signature line, he did so with his old signature belly-shaking laugh, and with all the passion one might expect from a former summer-theater Shakespearean actor, as the Cardinal had been back in his college days at Steubenville. That laugh let everyone know that the statement was completely self-deprecating, and not self-inflating – not even in the slightest way. The training that he had received at Mandulin Seminary by one of the Catholic Church’s greatest minds wouldn’t permit it.

Cardinal Flanagan’s story had been about a particularly unpleasant dealing with the Mayor of New York that he had that prior week. The uber-

liberal mayor was dead-set against any tax credits for parents who choose to send their kids to private schools. The tens of thousands of families that sent their kids to Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of New York were out of luck; New York's mayor had used his considerable influence to ensure that the tax-credit measure was blocked in the New York State Assembly in Albany.

Almost sheepishly, Fr. John piped in, "Cardinal, did you know that my brother is the Mayor's press secretary?"

"Of course, John. I've spoken to your brother, Phillip, several times. And have no fear, my friend, I know that every family has at least one lost sheep. Funny thing is, some of the libs in my own family think that I'm that lost sheep!" When the laughter at the table subsided, the Cardinal continued with a smile, "But our boss has charged us with going to the outer limits after those lost sheep, too. So, John, never stop praying for your bother, even if you have to check for your wrist watch when you return from Thanksgiving dinner!"

Fr. John didn't know it, but his brother Phillip's boss had a certain begrudging respect for the Cardinal. It stemmed from the date of the Cardinal's First Mass inside St. Patrick's Cathedral after he had returned from Rome with his new "Red Hat." During his homily, the Cardinal spontaneously told a story about two garbage men who had seen him in his "civvies" on the steps of St. Patrick's after the Cardinal's morning "run", which is perhaps more accurately described as his early morning "*brisk walk*."

The Cardinal recounted that story in his Inaugural homily, and it brought down the house. "You see, this morning, these two garbage men knew that, for some reason or another, I was someone famous, because members of the press were taking pictures of me, and a bank of TV-news cameras were collecting videotape for broadcast. But when they walked up

past the members of the press to pose with me for a *selfie*, I think that those two garbage men just wanted to be on the news tonight. I say this because when I invited them into the Cathedral, they protested loudly, ‘Oh, we just pick up the garbage, mister, we haven’t stepped foot inside a church in the last 25 years. We’re too afraid we’d be struck down by lightning!’”

As the Cardinal delivered the punch line of this joke, he glanced down directly at the fallen-away Catholic Mayor of New York, and the fallen-away Catholic Governor of New York, both of whom were sitting together in the second pew of St. Patrick’s Cathedral. Neither had been to regular Sunday Mass in decades, and except for family baptisms, weddings, and funerals, they too stayed out of church. The Cardinal privately referred to those kinds of folks as the “Catholics of the beginnings, the middles, and the ends.”

Cardinal Flanagan had a flare for the power of language, especially when he was talking to the powerful. He thought of it within the construct of the words found at Luke 21:12-15, where Jesus said to his disciples, “you will be brought before kings and governors for my name’s sake. This will be a time for you to bear testimony. Settle it therefore in your minds, not to meditate beforehand how to answer; for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which none of your adversaries will be able to withstand or contradict.”

Of course, the Cardinal didn’t announce these inward promptings of the Holy Spirit outright when they occurred; but his adversaries undoubtedly knew when they were the butt of his jokes. He thought of this as being the humorous side of what is identified at Genesis 3:15, when God pronounced that a real battle would occur, in one form or another, until the end of time. Sometimes that battle is carried out in a war of words, funny ones and deadly-serious ones. And Cardinal Flanagan, the former-

Bishop for the U.S. Military, repeatedly dealt two-fisted blows to God's adversaries with both of these types of word wars.

There was no battle of words, though, at the spaghetti-and-meatball gathering at the Shrine. These men were entirely simpatico. They shared much laughter, each assisted along by a single bottle of *Sam Adams* beer, a favorite of the Cardinal, and most of the Marian priests at the Massachusetts Shrine. As the dinner broke up, Cardinal Flanagan walked over to Fr. John and he kindly put his big mitt of a hand on his shoulder, saying, "John, would you mind talking with me in a more private setting? I have a request to make."

"Certainly, Your Eminence," replied Fr. John.

"Very good, my friend, let's meet in the rector's study in about 45 minutes." Holding up his i-Phone, the Cardinal said, "I have to first make a call back home to the Big Apple to clean up a few matters that have come up over the last few hours. These *smart* phones never stop, do they? Do you think that makes us *dumb* for carrying them around all the time?"

Fr. John chuckled, inwardly wondering what this meeting could be about. Then he finished his *Sam Adams* beer.

#

Chapter 2

Fr. John's Wait

He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my step secure.

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.

Psalm 40:2-3.

The hymn from that evening's Vesper was still reverberating in Fr. John's mind, giving him comfort. And this was particularly needed now because Fr. John felt exactly like he had as a sometimes mischievous youngster. He had that pit-in-his-stomach feeling, just like those handful of times when he had been sent to the principal's office back at St. Stanislaus Kostka Elementary School. Fondly known as Saint Stans, it was the sole Catholic school in the "Little Poland" section of Brooklyn, which is itself lovingly known to its residents as "Greenpoint."

This time, though, Fr. John was standing alone waiting on a Cardinal, of all people, in the study of the National Shrine's rector, of all places. As he waited, Fr. John's mind now spontaneously turned to the Vesper's reading from earlier, from the Apostle John. "*My beloved: For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith*" (1 John 5:4). As he repeated those consoling words from memory into his mind, Fr. John looked at some of the books on the shelf, and he was somewhat startled by what he saw.

It was a blast from the past, you might say, something that was from a period in his life when he *lacked the faith* of which the Evangelist wrote. Fr. John had not known it, but the rector had three books written by *Dr. John M. Adamczyk, Ph.D.*, on his bookshelves. Each of these books were *New York Times* bestsellers; not an easy task to accomplish, especially since they were all about his scientific specialty of astrophysics. He thought

to himself that the books must be new additions to the rector's collection as he hadn't seen them on the self even just a few months earlier. Maybe, just maybe, those talks about science that he'd been having with the rector over their regular lunch and dinner meals had piqued an interest.

Taking one of his own books off the self, that is, *The History of the Unlocking of the Mystery of Time*, Fr. John wondered if the Cardinal knew his whole story. He wondered whether the Cardinal knew that he had been an ardent atheist as a college student and professor. And he also wondered if the Cardinal knew what drove him from the Catholic Church when he was just a young MIT student.

* * *

"I do," said John, peering deeply into Sara's eyes, almost seeing into her soul. Not only did Sara's eyes dance, her smile seemed almost boundless throughout the sacramental Wedding Mass. Mrs. Boyd, too, was joyful, looking beautiful in a bright yellow dress. And it was Sara's older brother, Steven, a NYPD rookie cop and Army vet, who had the honor of walking Sara down the aisle. He wore his dress-blue uniform with a black ribbon across his NYPD badge. The ribbon was worn in honor of his father, in whose place he stood at the foot of the altar, having handed off the bride to her groom.

The Wedding Mass was in Queens at Sara's parish, but the reception was held in a big white tent at McCarren Park, about 40 minutes away in Greenpoint. The address of the park, 776 Lorimer Street, had been a source of mathematical interest to John since he was a kid. It was plastered on the McCarren Play Center, the place where he had spent so much of his youth playing basketball, soccer, handball, tennis, and volleyball. That number - just one notch off of the lucky 777 - had symbolized *joy* to John because it was also the address where his beloved pop, Gabriel, had worked as an employee of the New York City Parks & Recreation Department.

Gabriel's title at McCarren Park was "City Park Worker", and he reveled in his job. He performed general maintenance work at the McCarren Play Center, and around the vast park, including plumbing, painting, electrical, and carpentry work. But Gabe, as his friends and coworkers called him, was especially gifted with a "green thumb"; he had been since his childhood days. That meant that his favorite work was always found outdoors. He loved mowing the lawns of the park; planting trees and shrubs; and seeding, cultivating, and fertilizing everything that could grow in the Brooklyn soil.

In the wintertime, Gabe was in charge of snow removal for the entire park. This was particularly pleasing to John because when they had snow-days off from school, John would often ride along in the big plow truck with his dad, which was any kid's dream. Then, in order to dig out his own sidewalk for his pop, John would scurry the seven blocks back to the family's home on Humboldt Street.

There was no snow on this bright July afternoon, though, as Sara and John twirled together under the big white tent, intertwined in their first dance as bride and groom. To the pure delight of their 109 guests, under a string of white lights hanging overhead, the newly married couple put some of their dance moves - the ones that they had learned together during their days in Stuy's Ballroom dance club - to good use on the make-shift parquet floor. They danced and danced to an "unplugged," string version of *U-2's* somewhat troubled love-song, *One*. The members of the accompanying string quartet were former classmates from Stuy, and the voice of the front man for the *U-2* cover-band was sonorous: "*We're one but not the same, we get to carry each other!*" Sara wanted *that* song because of *that* line: it summed up for her just what her marriage meant. As she closed her eyes and spun around on the dance floor, the cover-band sounded just like the real thing. And she *knew* that the love between her and the man in her arms was indeed the real thing.

John and Sara had chosen to go together to MIT, the prestigious university in Boston, because they both received a full, free-ride, a necessity because of their modest, middle-class means. And it didn't take John long to propose to his wife-to-be: he did it when they were at home from MIT for their freshmen-year Thanksgiving visit. Although Sara's mom had hoped that marriage would wait until after Sara and John had graduated, she quickly relented after she had a heart-to-heart talk with the young couple that Thanksgiving night. These mature-beyond-their-years young adults were ready - emotionally, spiritually, and in every other way. And the marriage would still be more than a year away, in the summer before their junior year.

Over the next 18 months, Sara and her mother had planned the wedding over the phone and during her visits home from MIT. And their plans worked out perfectly. Both mother and daughter were overjoyed with how the wedding festivities turned out.

At the end of the evening, with the stars shining brightly in the moonless dark sky, Sara and John were driven to the first stop on their honeymoon adventure. Sara's brother drove them into Manhattan to the famous Plaza Hotel where they would share a deluxe room on the 19th Floor, one with a view of Central Park. That luxury was a gift from Mrs. Boyd.

And late that night, when John and Sara joined together into that "one flesh" husband-and-wife nuptial embrace, the first sexual encounter for either one of them, the new spouses conceived a child. They didn't know it, of course - at least not yet.

* * *

"Hurry honey! We've got to get down to the lobby to get our taxi! Traffic to JFK might be slow this time of morning," Sara said, mostly out of her

extreme excitement for their overseas journey. Both of the honeymooners were taking their first trips out of the country, except for a one-day jaunt up the Northway that they had taken by bus to the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. That was a Stuy senior-class trip to see a collection of the French sculptor Auguste Rodin on loan from the Musée Rodin in Paris, including his most famous sculpture, *The Thinker*.

The newlywed couple had a jam-packed itinerary planned for their 45 days in Europe. They had \$4,300 to work with, not including airfare, so, except for a few frills along the way here and there, including a one-night stay at a five-star hotel in Paris, and another three-nights at a fancy hotel in Rome toward the end of their trip, they were taking the typical college-student route: back-packing it all the way, planning to stay at some inexpensive hotels, some B&Bs, and even some youth hostels as they went their way.

First they flew into Warsaw, Poland, though, and stayed several nights with some of John's relatives, making day-trip excursions into the country. John's parents, who supplied the cash for the honeymoon adventure, had required that the first stop be the proud homeland of John's grandparents. The love - and wonderful home-cooked meals - that they received from John's family was a jubilant way to start their journey. From Warsaw they went on to Kraków, visiting sites from John Paul II's earlier life, including the Sigismund Chapel, which was a masterpiece of the architecture and art of the Renaissance, as well as the Divine Mercy Sanctuary, which was the resting place of St. Faustina.

After staying a night in Kraków, they began their whirlwind tour of over a dozen European cities, mainly by train. They saw the Schönbrunn Palace in Vienna, and drank great beer in Munich, Frankfurt, and Berlin. Then they went to Amsterdam and Brussels, before strolling down the Avenue des Champs-Élysées in Paris one evening, drinking wine and

sipping coffee at its various outdoor cafés, after having spent a full day visiting the Louvre, seeing everything from the Mona Lisa to the artifacts of King Sargon II and the ancient Code of Hammurabi. All told, they spent eight days working their way through France, including two days on rented bikes.

They had in fact biked the 50 miles from Paris to the Chartres Cathedral, and back the next day, a place that Sara had always wanted to visit since she was a young girl, if for no other reason than because she had always been fascinated by the fact that the designers of that Roman Catholic beauty had shared her joint love for math and faith. She was thrilled by the fact that the master builders of the Chartres had gone so far as to have crafted a sculpture of the famous mathematician Pythagoras right on the outside of the Cathedral! Seeing that sight for herself with her new husband, it brought great happiness to Sara to know that a mathematician, born more than 500 years before Christ, shared a place of honor among the Catholic saints!

From France, the newlyweds went to Madrid and Barcelona, before entering Italy, their most anticipated destination. Sara posed holding up the Leaning Tower of Pisa; then they went on to Florence where they visited the tomb of Galileo and his Catholic nun daughter at the Basilica of Santa Croce; then on to Venice, where they rode in a Gondola, ate sumptuously, and toured the famous Saint Mark's Basilica, one of the favorite stops of the young couple. They then worked their way down the coast of the Adriatic Sea, and, by bus, they cut across Italy to Pompeii, Naples, and, finally, Rome, their second to last stop before they would fly off to London. The plan was to spend two nights in London before flying back to the States to arrive at JFK ten days before their junior-year studies would begin at MIT.

But now they were still in Rome, taking in the sights of the Eternal City. Their flight out of London back home wouldn't be for another four days, so it was time to just relax, and drink in the beauty of everything around them, including each other. Over the past two nights they had enjoyed one another's company, in the way newlyweds do, for hours at a time, lingering in each other's arms, often until dawn.

After visiting the Sistine Chapel - where the "maker" of Sara's freckles had helped Michelangelo do his most famous work - and Saint Peter's Basilica for confession and Holy Mass, Sara and John were enjoying a delicious Italian meal at an outdoor restaurant.

"So what's been the favorite part of the honeymoon?," Sara asked softly, as John filled up her glass with a delightful red wine produced by the Antinori family of Tuscany, wine producers since the 14th century.

"I think you could figure that out, my love," he said with a knowing smile.

"No, not that, silly! What's been your favorite country, your favorite city, your favorite place?!"

"Well, not to offend my wonderful relatives in Poland, because they were so warm and kind to us, but I think it has been here in Italy, especially Venice and Rome."

"Me too", said Sara. "In fact, if I had to pick *one* moment, this would be the one. Right now! I wish that I could save it and bottle it, just like this red wine! Then we could uncork it each year on our anniversary, and have a sip. *A sip of right now!*", she spoke in a hushed voice. "We're less than a mile from the home of the Church, and a million miles from anything but joy!"

John lifted up his glass, “Let’s toast, then, my bride: To a million more moments of joy, just like this one, for the remainder of our long lives!”

“Amen,” Sara said in an almost breathless whisper.

* * *

The bathroom door of the hotel room was closed, but John could still hear wrenching sounds coming from within. Sara was getting sick. Finally, after about five minutes, the door opened, and Sara said, “Sorry, I’m sure those aren’t the sounds that a husband wishes to hear coming from his new bride. I’m feeling better, though. It’s just a strange feeling, unlike anything I’ve ever felt before.”

“What do you think it is? Could it be last night’s dinner?”

“No. I don’t think that’s it.”

Looking puzzled, John asked, “What is it then?”

“I have a funny feeling ... well, I think ... I think ... it could be that I’m pregnant.”

John stood stunned by that statement. He didn’t speak. He couldn’t.

“There’s a pharmacy that I saw yesterday when we were out. It’s called *Farmacia Cristo Re*. I’d like you to go there and get a home pregnancy test for me to take.”

“Sure. I’ll ask for directions at the lobby desk, then I’ll hurry back. You rest in bed until I get back.”

“Okay.”

John quickly put on his shoes and rushed out the door on this incredible errand. After getting directions, John rushed to the pharmacy, asked for help, and then returned 35 minutes later with a *Clearblue*

pregnancy test, one that would be able to detect the pregnancy hormone *human Chorionic Gonadotrophin*, known as *hCG*.

While John was gone, Sara drank several glasses of water, so as soon as John took the device out of the box, she was immediately ready to go into the bathroom to take the test. Before she closed the door, she smiled at her husband. His heart was pounding. And when the door closed, he put his hand on his own chest, and he could feel the thumps. As he waited in complete silence, he wondered if she felt the same way.

Within three minutes, the bathroom door sprang open and Sara burst out. She leaped into John's arms, pushing him backwards onto the bed. Straddling him, her hair hung over her face, enveloping his own. He was staring straight into her greenish-gray eyes, with her freckles looking like a constellation of stars, the precise pattern that he fell in love with nearly six years before. She beamed the good news with her smile. So John already knew when she finally said, "I'm pregnant!" Complete joy overtook them both. And because they could barely speak their thoughts, they let their bodies speak to each other the feelings that they felt. It was a heavenly moment as they made love.

* * *

This was to be their last full day in Rome. With the news from that morning still leaving them a bit stunned, they talked over an early afternoon meal at another outdoor café. The sky was a clear blue and the sun was bright. Sara wore sunglasses to help with the glare.

John stared at her and thought to himself that she looked just like a movie star, and he felt himself to be the luckiest man in the world. He was married to the kindest, most intelligent, most beautiful woman, and now they were going to have a child together. They were going to be ... *yes, a family!*

John asked, “What do you want her name to be?”

“How do you know our baby is going to be a *her*?”

John smiled, “Because God surely wants to make a replica of some of his best work. Right now, my sweet, Michelangelo’s angel must already be at work painting some of her freckles!”

She laughed and thought of her dad. “My dad has got to be smiling from heaven today. And could you hear the joy in my mom’s voice?” The couple had called Sara’s mom and John’s parents from their hotel room earlier.

“Indeed! She will be a grandmother soon – the finest one in Queens, I’m sure. And my parents were just so happy, too. My mom told me that she’s got some special Polish dishes to fatten you up for the baby. Get ready for some *Flaki* soup, some *pierogi*, and some *borsch*, with a dash of sour cream and dill.”

“I love your mom’s cooking. And the Polish food we had in Warsaw and Kraków only increased that love. That reminds me ... we need to send your aunt in Warsaw a postcard letting them know the ‘big news.’ We can do that once we get back from the Colosseum today.”

“That sounds good. Let’s pay the bill and get on our way.”

Soon the newlyweds were walking the three miles toward the Colosseum, taking a leisurely we’ll-get-there-when-we-get-there pace, taking in all of the sights of humanity on the Rome streets. And once they arrived, they similarly took their time going through the Colosseum, taking a 90-minute tour from an English-speaking guide. They learned how Ignatius of Antioch was fed to the lions there in 107 A.D. They also saw the Cross that was placed there by Pope John Paul II at the turn of the millennium. And later, as the sun began to set, they got a sense for how the Colosseum

looks each Good Friday when the pope comes there for the *Via Crucis* procession - that is, the Stations of the Cross - into the amphitheater.

At the conclusion of their sightseeing at the Colosseum, John suggested that they take a taxi back to the hotel so they could shower before going out to get another bite to eat - and this time Sara assured John that she would be passing up the wine with dinner. There was a line of taxis waiting for the Colosseum tourists. John opened the door of the white Ford compact taxi with a Rome crest on the doors. Sara slid in and moved even further in to sit directly behind the driver, a thickly-built man in his 40s, with his head completely shaved. John gave the name and address of the hotel to the driver in Italian and they were off.

John exchanged pleasantries with the taxi driver, speaking very passable Italian, which he learned mainly from a *Rosetta Stone* computer program that he had worked on for a few months. Sara had already taken the lead when they needed to speak French, of which she was fluent.

After a few moments of silently looking out the window, Sara said, "I think her name should be Beatrice."

John looked a bit perplexed, and he said, "What?"

"Our daughter. I've been thinking about it, and I think that her name should be Beatrice. Beatrice Marie Adamczyk. What do you think of that name?"

John looked over at Sara and smiled, and he was about to say the words *I love it!* But as their taxi entered an intersection, he caught sight of a red sports car speeding toward them.

He instinctively reached out toward his bride, but the *Ferrari 458 Italia* barreled directly into the driver's side of the taxi. Instantly, broken glass burst around them and the Ford's metal started to fold and buckle,

pinning the occupants in ungodly positions. Being closest to the impact, the taxi driver, and especially Sara, took the brunt of the bone-crushing collision.

John's head reeled toward the passenger-side rear window, smashing the glass and causing a severe concussion, one that instantly caused him to go unconscious. It was a blessing that John couldn't see what was happening to his bride next to him.

When he awoke six hours later, John immediately asked the nurse at his side about Sara. "She passed from us," said the nurse in broken English.

Tears began to stream down John's face when he learned that his 20-year old bride had died while she was still in the back seat of the taxi. The nurse said that there was "massive internal bleeding" and "severe damage to her brain." As the nurse continued to speak to him trying to offer words of consolation, John stared out the window in an almost catatonic state, knowing that his entire world has crashed in around him. Everything had changed.

Later when the Rome police came to take his statement, John learned that the taxi driver had also died. But the driver of the *Ferrari* - the one who sped through the stop light because he was so staggering drunk - he had survived and suffered barely a scratch.

That was too much for John. Seething anger immediately began to grow. An hour later, when the nurse came in to give him Sara's "Catholic faith chain," the one with the crucifix and the Marian Medal, he knew just what he would do with it.

The next day John entered St. Peter's Basilica, and he walked right up to the altar. Standing at the top of the stairs that lead down to the tomb of St. Peter, he dropped Sara's "Catholic faith chain" down into the tomb of the Church's first pope. At that moment John formally renounced his

faith, declaring to himself that no just God could allow such a thing to occur to a young bride who had loved the Lord God so. John declared himself to be an atheist, one of those atheists who secretly hate the Being in whom they claim not to believe.

* * *

After taking the first two weeks of the Fall semester off in order to grieve, John returned full bore to his studies at MIT. He obtained his bachelors, his masters, and his doctorate degrees all from that esteemed Massachusetts university, excelling all the way through in an accelerated manner. And when John finished all of his studies, Caltech felt lucky to be able to offer him a prized professorship in their science department. He was a full professor at the young age of 25.

John loved the Southern California lifestyle, especially the wine from up in Napa Valley, and the women from all around the world. As he had at MIT, John changed sexual partners on at least a monthly, if not a weekly, basis. And now, that included the beautiful co-eds on the campus where he taught.

There was a whole in his heart, though, it seemed, one that he constantly sought to fill - in all the wrong ways, as he would later come to understand with the help of a ... yes, a scientist-priest!

* * *

Caltech's young "bright", as he was known to many of his colleagues and to the students who idolized him, was going to debate the existence of God that night, and he was going to do so with a man who professed to be an adopted child of God, a cause of much anticipation that evening on the Pasadena, California campus. The auditorium was filled to standing-room-only capacity. Students were chatting as they waited for the lights to dim.

And now the moment had arrived: out walked the well-known Professor John M. Adamczyk, Ph.D., from the left side of the stage, and from the right side of the stage, out walked a man unknown to the students. He was dressed in black, wearing a Roman Catholic white collar, and he would take up God's case that night. This was no Ken Ham, though; it was Fr. Anthony Abner, a Jesuit priest with four advanced degrees, a man who specialized in Big Bang cosmology.

The debate that ensued led to the conversion of at least one heart that night – the debater who challenged God's existence. But it would take over a year, and a friendly conversation that began the morning after the debate over a fancy cup of coffee. It was then that Fr. Abner began his slow “new evangelization” of Professor Adamczyk.

Fr. Abner began that process using nothing but science. In fact, he began with a discussion about a topic that the Caltech professor had written about – the *arrow of time* coming forth from the Big Bang. Using only the peer-reviewed scholarship of their respected colleagues in physics, Fr. Abner got his new disciple to finally come to terms with – that is, *to think deeply about* – exactly how *fantastically improbable* it was that the *arrow of time* came forth from the Big Bang the way that it did, how unlikely that this would “just happen” by undirected chance, rather than as part of a “purposeful design” of an Intelligent Being.

And the improbability that the *arrow of time* began its flight forward by chance was compounded by the curious fact that the whole concept of a “Big Bang” was first *reasoned into existence* by a Belgian-born Catholic priest, Fr. Georges Lemaître, who, like John, was also educated at MIT. Fr. Abner would talk for hours with John about this fellow priest, who had died in June of 1966 when Fr. Abner was still in diapers. It was Fr. Lemaître who used the work of his future friend, the great Albert Einstein *and* his theory of relativity, to figure out creation's origin.

Fr. Abner and John would talk about how Fr. Lemaître studied Einstein's theory of relativity and noticed a certain something about it. And noticing that certain something, what did he do? He took out a pencil and some paper and began to make mathematical computations. And this was the part that fascinated these two new friends.

Incredibly enough, Fr. Lemaître figured out the Big Bang origin of the universe, not by looking out into the heavens with a telescope, nor by any other means of observational scientific experimentation. Those things would indeed come in time. But, rather, *Fr. Lemaître figured out reality - the reality of creation's Big Bang origin - with nothing more than pure mathematics.* Fr. Abner and John both shared a real awe about this fascinating fact: *numbers and symbols written on a piece of paper unveiled the beginning of time.*

Because it was a Catholic priest who originally figured this out, and because Fr. Abner, a man who was similarly immersed in science, grew to be such a good friend, the hardened walls that John had built around his heart began to crumble, especially once Fr. Abner was able to unlock the meaning of the Cross of Christ, and how it perfectly explains exactly how evil can exist in a universe that is ultimately in the control of a God of all Goodness. John's atheism was ready to give way at its foundations.

* * *

It was a Saturday morning and John had just come home from a mountain bike ride on a dirt path in Point Mugu State Park along the Pacific Ocean. Before getting in the shower, he checked his home computer for any new emails. Surprisingly, he had an email from Mrs. Boyd, his bride's mom. It read:

My dear son, John,
I've been thinking a lot about you recently. Last week, after a dream about Sara, I was stirred to call your Mom, Marjan. We talked about

you, Sara, and life in general. I know that your Mom prays a Rosary for you every day, as does your Dad, Gabriel. You have also remained in my prayers over these years since Sara's death, and, of course, I love you very much.

I'm contacting you now because three days ago I received a visit from Cynthia Messing, one of your old Stuy classmates. She gave me a videotape of Sara's Valedictorian Address at Stuy. Her grandfather had made it and she thought that I'd like to have a copy of it.

It brought tears to my eyes when I saw it.

My son Steven and I got to talking about what to do with the video, wondering how we might best honor Sara with it. Steven suggested that we put his sister's speech on *YouTube*. The "link" (that's what they call it, I guess) to that video is at the very bottom of this email. I hope you're able to watch it one day.

I love you very much, John! And I'll join your Mom and Dad: along with them, I too will pray the Rosary for you each day.

May God bless you,
Mrs. Boyd

John immediately clicked on the link at the bottom of the email and he saw his once-upon-a-time bride on that beautiful graduation day. There she was talking about Mrs. Sophia's striking number pattern, Galileo's belief in the mathematical order of *God's* creation, and, yes, the words that she had addressed directly - and piercingly - to him: "You see, one of the greatest scientific minds of all time, the great Galileo, believed that it was *God* who wrote the order into the mathematical design of nature." Then came her closing words to her class, but again delivered while looking directly at him: "My fellow classmates, find the *order* in creation and you will find the *source* of that order: *God*. That is true wisdom!"

Viewing those words placed John back into the seat that graduation day, feeling the same powerful feelings that he had felt while looking up at the stage to his future wife. But this time, having lost her, those feelings were magnified. With tears coming down his face once again, John pulled out his cell phone and punched in Fr. Abner's number. "Father, it's John. I need to go to confession."

* * *

Fr. Abner got into his car and drove four hours to do something that he had been praying about every day for over a year. That afternoon, which just happened to be at precisely 3 P.M., Fr. Abner absolved the sins of a fellow child of God. John Michael Adamczyk had come home to the Catholic Church ... a process that, with time, untimely led to him being ordained as a Marian priest at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome seven years later.

Painstakingly and patiently, over a period of several years, it was the Marians of the Immaculate Conception that carefully discerned John's vocation as a priest. There were two main issues that John had to work through before he could accept that becoming a priest was the right vocation for him. He had to first decide whether or not his real vocation should be as a husband and father. This was actually the easier of the two decisions, because John truly believed, at the core of his heart, that Sara was the only bride for him. One might say, John instinctively knew that was why he went from one sexual partner to another, without ever settling down. John instinctively knew that Sara was really the only person meant to be his wife.

With that understood, both the Marians and John had to discern whether a *formally* sexually immoral man and ardent atheist, could really be meant for the life of the priesthood. But ultimately it was the statement of an old Marian priest, Fr. Klemens Cherubim, that summed up the answer for both the Marians and John. One day, after a long afternoon

conversation with John at the Shrine in Stockbridge, Fr. Cherubim said to him: “You know, John, sometimes the Good Lord calls those who were immersed in the slop of the pig pen, because they can, often times, have greater empathy for the sinner. Remember what Christ said about those who’ve had greater debts forgiven: they often appreciate the mercy that they’ve been given more, because it’s been poured out upon them with greater abundance.”

Years after that, after much study of philosophy and sacred theology, John was selected by Rome to represent the Marians of the United States. Yes, John was to be ordained by the Holy Father himself.

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On the morning of his ordination, John got into a conversation with one of the old Vatican priests, Fr. Tom Girard, an American who had been stationed at the Holy See for the last 20 years. Over a cup of coffee, John told Fr. Girard the story of how he had renounced his “Catholic citizenship” all those years before, only to be taking it up again, now in the fullest of ways, in the very same spot. Fr. Girard’s eyes twinkled when he heard that story, and how John spoke with such love and admiration about Sara’s great faith, and how she literally *wore it around her neck*. He then asked John to tell him the month and year that he had dropped Sara’s “Catholic faith chain” down into the tomb of St. Peter. When John supplied that information, Fr. Girard smiled, wished him well on his ordination that afternoon, and scurried off.

Immediately after his ordination by Pope Francis, an ordination in which the Holy Pontiff ordained 153 new priests from all around the world, John – that is, *Father John* – saw Fr. Girard coming toward him with a great, big smile radiating on his face. The newly-ordained priest was at a social gathering at the Vatican, one to celebrate the new ordinations with some

wine, tea and cake. Fr. John had been talking with his mom, his dad, and Mrs. Boyd, who had made the trip from Queens to see her “son” ordained.

“Father John!”, exclaimed Fr. Girard. “First of all, congratulations on your *second* wedding day, this time marrying the Bride of Christ - His Church! From what you’ve told me about her, I am certain that your *first* wife dances in heaven on this joyful day!”

Fr. John smiled. He then introduced Fr. Girard to his parents and to Mrs. Boyd. Fr. Girard greeted all with great warmth, and then he turned to Mrs. Boyd, saying, “Do you recognize this?” Fr. Girard then put a gold cross and a gold Medal of the Immaculate Conception into Mrs. Boyd’s hands.

“That’s Sara’s Catholic faith chain! Where did you get it?”

Fr. Girard explained how the Vatican had a very well-documented lost-and-found system, and knowing the date and place of where it was “lost”, Fr. Girard was able to pinpoint the proper place to find it all these years later. There was a policy of keeping these types of items for 25 years, a policy, it seemed, that only the oldest institution in the world would have.

Mrs. Boyd turned to Fr. John. “This is a sign from heaven, John. Along with the Virgin Mary, Sara has been watching over you all these long years. I know that from my dreams. And now this! Sara’s been waiting for this day, John.”

And handing the gold cross and metal to Fr. John, she said, “Please take this and keep it with you. Father John, it will now be with you for your first Mass, please keep it with you until you say your last Mass.”

Fr. John hugged her. “I will. I promise. And I will love my new bride as fervently as I loved my first bride. More than that, though, I recognize that these things that once belonged to Sara only have real

meaning for the same reason that she found that they had real meaning. They represent for us the Savior's redemption of humanity, and the Mother of God who bore Him for this saving task. I will cherish these things belonging to Sara because of my love for Jesus Christ, and because of my love for Mary."

"Amen, Father John. Amen," said Mrs. Boyd.

The next day, beneath the main altar of St. Peter's Basilica, near the tomb of St. Peter himself, near where Sara's "Catholic faith chain" had been dropped and then recovered by a humble Catholic nun visiting from Spain, Fr. John celebrated his first Catholic Mass. Sara's gold cross and metal now hung on the brown scapular that he wore around his neck.

* * *

Fr. John was still standing there in the rectory's office at the Massachusetts Shrine, holding one of his *New York Times* bestsellers from those days gone by, reminiscing with the memories in his mind. He'd come a long way, on a very hard path, but he knew that he was doing exactly what God had planned for him all along. At that point he heard some footsteps outside the door of the rector's office. He placed his book back on the shelf, and he turned toward the door with just a bit of trepidation. The door opened and in walked the Cardinal with his most trusted advisor, a retired Auxiliary Bishop.

A thought instantly darted into Fr. John's mind. *This will be interesting.*

#

Chapter 3

The Cardinal's Interview and Proposal

Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind. For thy steadfast love is before my eyes, and I walk in faithfulness to thee.

Psalm 26:2-3.

Cardinal Flanagan smiled warmly at Fr. John. “Thanks for waiting for me, Fr. John. I had more issues to address back in New York than I originally thought.” Gesturing toward the man at his side, he continued, “This, of course, is Auxiliary Bishop Chuck Wienke. I bring him out of retirement now and again for some special projects. Some like to call him my Tom Hagan, my *consigliere*. But I just call him my smartest friend.”

Fr. John returned the smile. “It’s my pleasure to see you again, Bishop Wienke. I’ve actually met you before. You confirmed me back at Saint Stan’s in Greenpoint.”

“The pleasure is mine, my young friend,” said Bishop Wienke. “And it’s wonderful to see you again. I thought that I might have confirmed you, so I called Fr. Kruszka at St. Stan’s before we travelled up from the City. He speaks so highly of your mom and your brother David and his family.”

Fr. John replied, “Yes, my mom was Saint Stan’s first female Eucharistic minister after Vatican II. And my dad was one of the long-time *Kolektorzy*, the Offertory collectors at Mass for Saint Stan’s. And, as you might know, my brother David is an ADA in the Brooklyn DA’s Office. He’s the Bureau Chief of the Homicide Section - my mother’s favorite son,” he said laughing.

The Cardinal responded, “I had the pleasure of meeting David and his wife when I was at Saint Stan’s last year for a Saturday Vigil Mass. A good man, he is, as is my old friend Bishop Wienke.”

Retired Auxiliary Bishop Charles George Wienke was born in Pittsburgh 78 years prior. His parents both came from first generation German immigrant families. His father was a steelworker, while his mother was a home maker. Together they raised four children, all boys. Bishop Wienke was trained at Catholic University as an undergraduate, and then he studied in Rome for the priesthood. After serving as a parish priest for decades in various areas in Pittsburgh, he was appointed as Auxiliary Bishop for Brooklyn by Pope John Paul II. He is known for his mastery of languages, speaking seven fluently: Hebrew, Greek, Latin, German, French, Spanish and English. He's also widely known in Catholic hierarchy circles for his photographic memory.

The Cardinal motioned toward three comfortable, high-back chairs and a small coffee table placed in the middle of the rector's office. "Please, let's sit together over here. I've arraigned for Brother Pio to bring us some of my favorite whiskey to enjoy as we chat." Just as the Cardinal said this, Brother Pio appeared in the open door carrying a tray with three glasses, a glass pitcher of ice water, and a bottle of *Johnnie Walker Red Label*. Brother Pio placed the tray on the small table.

Cardinal Flanagan said, "Brother Pio, thank you, my friend. Have a good evening." Brother Pio smiled and left the room as the Cardinal sat down in his chair and began to pour very modest amounts of the whiskey into the three glasses, followed by healthy quantities of water and ice. He then held up his glass and joked, "And on the ninth day, God created *Johnnie Walker Red*."

As he sat back into his chair, Fr. John grinned and asked, "So who or what was made on the eight day, Cardinal?"

"That is classified information, John," replied Bishop Wienke, with a wink. "You're not allowed to know that unless you become a Cardinal. But you *are* allowed to know this: I think that *Johnnie Walker Red Label*

became the Cardinal's favorite once he learned that it was Winston Churchill's chosen Scotch."

"Well, I don't know about that," the Cardinal laughed. "But what I do know is that Churchill was a fighter, thank God. For the most part, he used nothing but the English language to hold off that mini-beast, Hitler, until our own boys could get into the fight. Those like your dad," said the Cardinal, while glancing toward Bishop Wienke. Then, doing his very finest Churchill impersonation, the Cardinal said, "We shall fight on the beaches ... We shall never surrender."

"True enough, Cardinal." Turning to Fr. John, the Bishop, with a smile on his face, said, "My pop was a U.S. Marine who volunteered for duty with the OSS going on covert-ops throughout France. He fought with the French Resistance against the Nazis. I was just a kid then, of course."

As Cardinal Flanagan took a sip of his Scotch, he crossed his legs, much like Fr. John had seen Abraham Lincoln do in old photographs. At that moment Fr. John noted that he was indeed in the presence of Church authority, as the Cardinal was actually wearing red socks, and the Bishop was actually wearing purple socks, just as he had been told in the past was the tradition of the Church, but he had never noticed it in person.

Cardinal Flanagan put his Scotch glass down on the table and then said, "John, I'm not sure if you know it, but years back, long before I was sent to New York, and well before he became a bishop, the Church sent then-Father Wienke to Saint John's Law School, where he finished top in his class. So he's an actual member of the New York and Pennsylvania bars, in addition to being the best Canon lawyer in the country."

"That's subject to much debate," said the Bishop.

"Not by me," said the Cardinal. "John, I often call upon him for counsel for the thorny issues and the difficult questions."

Before he retired as Auxiliary Bishop, the prelate oversaw the defrocking of all of the pedophile priests in the New York Diocese, as well as advising other bishops around the United States on how to do the same. He also worked closely with the DA's Offices of the five boroughs. He was merciless in carrying out that awful duty, not just because he understood the horror that those demons inflicted on their vulnerable prey, but because he saw the perpetrators, not as *traitors* of Christ, but as Satan's own undercover plants *purposefully* placed to do the most possible damage to the mission of Christ's Church. When questioned or challenged about his draconian attitude and style in carrying out this job, the Bishop would always respond, "Last time I checked, Old Testament strict justice is still part of the Bible, too."

This was an attitude coached into the Bishop by his U.S. Marine Corps dad who would often tell his sons: "There are some people out there who are just like the Nazi wolves, absolutely determined to do evil in this world. A bullet between the eyes - literally or figuratively - is the best way to defend the sheep against this kind." Of his three brothers, two became Pittsburg cops, and the third retired as a Master Gunnery Sergeant in the U.S. Marines Corps.

The Cardinal leaned forward in his chair, resting his elbows on his knees. "John, I'm sure you're wondering exactly why we've asked to meet with you in private - so I'll cut right to the chase. This is a job interview, of sorts. But we aren't going to tell you what the job is until we decide if we want to pick you for it."

"Okay, I'm game," responded Fr. John.

Cardinal Flanagan asked, "Let's start with this ... do you know the gospel reading for tomorrow?"

“Sure. That’s an easy one, Cardinal. As you know, it’s the same reading every single Divine Mercy Sunday. It’s from the Gospel of John, Chapter 20, the story of the *Undoubting* Saint Thomas.”

“Interesting,” replied Cardinal Flanagan, “why do you call him the *Undoubting* Thomas?”

“Because it takes in the *whole* story of that gospel reading, not just the first part. It’s a more fair representation of the story, I think. And I happen to believe that this gospel was purposely designed – by the Holy Spirit’s mysterious and divine work – to be the gospel reading for each Divine Mercy Sunday. It’s really a powerful message for our troubled times.”

The Cardinal asked, “What do you mean by that, Fr. John?”

“Well, I think I’m a bit biased, but of all the gospel readings throughout the liturgical year, I most identify with the Divine Mercy gospel. I guess it’s because I most identify with Thomas.”

Bishop Wienke asked, “How so?”

“Saint Thomas came to his faith in the divinity of Christ initially by means of his *reason*. In fact, he actually *required* reason-based proof to come to that belief. And here, I think, is the important part – Jesus was *not* upset by that fact. Unlike the Gospel of Mark, where it says that Jesus ‘upbraided’ the Apostles ‘for their unbelief’ in His resurrection, in John’s gospel, it’s quite different as concerns the Apostle Thomas. There, Jesus is overtly kind and even extravagantly accommodating to Thomas.”

“That’s quite true,” responded Cardinal Flanagan.

“Like a Good Shepherd going after a lost sheep, Jesus comes back for Thomas, and He explicitly *feeds the reason of Thomas*. It’s almost like he’s saying, ‘Touch me, Thomas. Examine me, you scientist.’ That’s what I hear when I read the words of the Lord saying to Thomas, ‘Put your finger

here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing” (Jn 20:27).

Fr. John took a small sip of his Scotch and water, and he then continued. “And what was Thomas’ response to Jesus’ willingness to be poked and probed by a scientific-like examination? He actually did Saint Peter’s ‘You are the Christ!’ declaration one better. The *Undoubting* Saint Thomas, upped the ante, you might say, declaring Jesus, a human being, standing before him with flesh and bones, to be ‘My Lord and my God!’” (Jn 20:28).

“That he did,” said the Cardinal, while nodding.

The Bishop asked, “Why do you believe that this gospel, as you said, is ‘purposefully designed’ for Divine Mercy Sunday?”

“God, the Creator of the reasonable human mind, was willing to *prove* His identity to the reason of that same mind - to the mind of a mere man, a creature. Well, how best can we describe our times, except to say that we’re living in an age in which humanity requires reason-based proof to support the things that they hold to be true. With this gospel, God essentially says to modern humanity, ‘It’s okay that you need that something *more* to believe in me, *because I’m up to the task!* You want reason-based truth, I’ve got that covered! I’ve got all the proof your heart could desire.’ And I’ve come to see, based upon my scientific training - once my eyes were opened to seeing it, that is - that this is entirely true. By that I mean that the more that science reveals about the nature of nature - that is, the nature of reality - the more that we find the type of unmistakable order and design in the patterns that we observe imbedded and ingrained into the universe.”

Bishop Wienke responded, “Of course, Jesus also said ‘Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe’” (Jn 20:29).

“True enough, Bishop. Those who believe in God *because the Bible tells them so* are indeed ‘blessed.’ They have been given a great gift, a pearl of great value – *ingrained wisdom*, you might say. But I still find a remarkable solace in Jesus’ treatment of a mind, a mind like that belonging to Thomas, one that was, it seems, inclined to be reason based – one that said, ‘Give me the proof.’ According to John’s gospel, Jesus did not ‘upbraid’ such a response. Instead, because he *loved* Thomas right where he was at, Thomas’ troubling statement ‘I will not believe’ was turned into one of the most powerful statements in the entire Holy Bible, ‘My Lord and my God!’ Then *that* becomes *additional* evidence upon which the ‘blessed’ rely, again, *simply because it’s now in the Bible*. Make no mistake about it, though, the ‘blessed’ of which Jesus speaks in that statement, those who have not seen but believe, they do nonetheless rely upon *evidence* in order to come to their faith. Their evidence is the *testimony* of those who saw, the *testimony* that is recorded in the Holy Bible. So the reason-based Thomas becomes one of the *sources* of the ingrained wisdom of the ‘blessed’, those who are inclined to be more faith-based people – those who believe because the Bible says so.”

Cardinal Flanagan inquired, “What would you say to those who would require you to acknowledge that faith is more important than reason?”

“I would say, ‘True enough.’ For instance, on Judgment Day, God does not grade us on our science. He grades us on our faith in Him, that is, our faith in Christ. Our *Catechism* says that it is by faith, and faith alone, that man ‘completely submits his intellect and his will to God’ (CCC 143). I believe that’s the *walking through the door part of the equation*. Of course, Jesus says, ‘I am the door of the sheep’ (Jn 10:7). But *reason* can bring us *to* that ‘door’ in the first instance. Once there, based upon faith, we step through the door.”

Bishop Wienke responded, “We sit here, of course, at the Shrine of Divine Mercy. A short time ago, I was at the side altar in the Chapel, and I kissed the relic of Saint Faustina before I came down here to the rector’s office. So I ask you this, what, if anything, can you point to in the *Diary* of Saint Faustina that you could say supports what you say here?”

“Sure,” said Fr. John as he got up, went to the bookcase, and returned with a copy of the Saint’s *Diary*, one that received a big stamp of approval by Pope St. John Paul II, who many believe was prophesied about in the *Diary*, where Jesus is quoted as saying of Poland: “I will exalt her in might and holiness. From her will come forth the spark that will prepare the world for My final coming” (*Diary*, 1732).

Fr. John thumbed through the *Diary* to find the correct page, and finding it, he said, “Here are the words that Jesus spoke to this millennium’s very first saint. It’s from paragraph 83 of the *Diary*.” With that, Fr. John read to the Shrine’s honored guests:

Write this: before I come as the Just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy. Before the day of justice arrives, there will be given to people a sign in the heavens of this sort:

All light in the heavens will be extinguished, and there will be great darkness over the whole earth. Then the sign of the cross will be seen in the sky, and from the openings where the hands and feet of the Savior were nailed will come forth great lights which will light up the earth for a period of time. This will take place shortly before the last day.

Fr. John then said, “To me, these words echo the sentiment of John’s *Undoubting* Thomas gospel.”

Cardinal Flanagan, “How so, Fr. John?”

“According to the Secretary of Divine Mercy, here Christ essentially said that He will pour out His Mercy *by pouring out proof*, proof that *all* will be able to *see* with their own eyes. A cross in the sky – the sign and symbol of Christ – a cross that is pierced by rays of light where the nail marks of a Roman crucifixion would be. It will be the most reason-based proof possible, multiplying by almost an infinity the reason provided to the human mind when the curtain was torn in the Temple on Good Friday afternoon, when Christ breathed His last breath on that day – or even when a single Apostle was given the proof above all proof ... the ability to probe and analyze, with his own eyes, *resurrected flesh*.”

The Bishop asked, “Would you say that the statement in paragraph 83 had the stamp of truth seared on to it when a young Polish nun was declared the first saint of the new millennium and Mercy Sunday was instituted by Pope John Paul the Great?”

“Exactly,” responded Fr. John to this leading question.

“I would say so, too,” interjected the Cardinal. “Saint Matthew himself quotes our Lord saying that the ‘the sun will be darkened’, and later in the next verse of Chapter 24 he quotes the Lord saying, ‘then will appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven’” (Mt 24:29-30).

“I sure love Saint Matthew’s gospel ... and those are gospel-truth words.” Referring to St. Matthew, Fr. John said, “That tax collector always displayed the beauty and the splendor of Christ’s truth.”

Bishop Wienke asked, “So would you say Matthew’s gospel is your favorite?”

“No, I’m actually more partial to John’s gospel. But I said what I did because of something that I’ve found myself thinking a lot about lately with regard to Saint Matthew. If you think about it for a moment, Christ called on a hated and scorned tax collector – a man accustomed to *counting*

money - and he called upon him to eventually write the opening book of the New Testament. Having the Mind of God, Jesus *knew* that in advance. And it was there that God took Matthew's *counting* skill and then He raised it to a whole new level. This time, right at the beginning of that New Testament, Matthew would *count* generations - the generations going from Abraham to Christ."

The Cardinal's eyebrows raised a bit at that comment, and he said, "Well, I think that this is actually a good segue for us."

"It sure is, Cardinal," replied Bishop Wienke, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Fr. John, I'd like to confer with my counsel here privately for a few moments, so I'll kindly ask you to please step outside, if you will."

"Certainly, Cardinal. In the U.S.A.," Fr. John quipped, "we all have the right to counsel." Taking up his glass, he said, "Cardinal, if you don't mind, though, I'll step outside, off the back porch, to sip my Scotch and take a look up at the night's stars. An old habit of an astrophysicist, I guess."

Fr. John opened the door of the rector's office, and closed it behind himself; then he walked through the great room and out the back door to the porch of the large residence building connected to the Shrine's chapel.

Stepping down from the porch and out to the back lawn, there he could see the stars brilliantly arrayed in the night sky. This was his regular routine, whether in winter, spring, summer or fall. When he would do this, Fr. John often thought of the words of Mark Twain that he had once read describing a riverboat captain on the Mississippi river.

That captain had lost his sense of the beauty of the mighty river, and instead, when he looked upon the river, he would always just see the technical data of his trade: how deep that pocket of water was over there;

how much farther before the river would bend; or where the rocks lay hidden beneath the water's surface. Fr. John would lament for that poor captain of the past who only saw the data, and no longer the beauty. He would often think to himself how very thankful he was that this had not happened to him. This particular astrophysicist was still always in awe of the night sky, perceiving it to be one of the best places possible to gaze upon the beauty of the figurative face of God.

But, of course, for this Marian priest, the first place where he found this beauty was always while celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the second was while he was kneeling before the Holy Eucharist during Adoration.

* * *

The Cardinal smiled at Bishop Wienke, saying, "So what do you think of our friend, Fr. John?"

"Just as we thought. He's perfect for the job. A man of well-grounded faith, and, at the same time, he fully appreciates the importance of human reason. That, of course, is a particularly *Catholic* way of looking at things - as Pope Benedict always displayed using St. Augustine's own teachings. The two dimensions of faith and reason must not be separated or placed in opposition, he would say. Rather, they must always go hand in hand."

Cardinal Flanagan responded, "Precisely! And that's just as John Paul the Great taught us as well." Doing another fine impersonation of the Polish pope's accent, the Cardinal said, "Faith and reason are the two wings that let us rise up high enough to see the full terrain of truth." Then the Cardinal continued in his own voice, "That's exactly the type of attitude that is needed for the analysis at hand. It seems that Fr. John's mind works the way we need. The recommendation that we received was wise. And the

insights that he can give us as a trained astrophysicist may well be important.”

“So it’s agreed, then. He’s our next man for the job. Cardinal, do you want me to call him back in?”

“Please do, Chuck,” said the Cardinal, as he sat back in his chair and finished his glass of Churchill’s favorite. He then pondered Fr. John’s comment about St. Matthew using his old tax-man skills to *count* the generations in God’s ancestry. He thought to himself, *That was a Holy-Spirit inspired moment.*

* * *

“Well, Fr. John, you passed *our* interview, now it’s our turn to see if we can pass *your’s*,” said Cardinal Flanagan with a nod.

“I’m intrigued, Your Eminence.”

“Fr. John, a few minutes ago you mentioned Saint Matthew *counting* the generations from Abraham to Christ. I was just thinking to myself about that statement. It intrigued me. I’m curious, have you ever heard an explanation for why Saint Matthew counted the generations in the way that he did right at the very opening of the New Testament?”

“Well, yes, I have. I originally learned about it by reading Dr. Scott Hahn’s book, *Understanding The Scriptures*. In Hebrew, when you sum up the letters in King David’s name – because Hebrew letters, like Roman numerals, had numerical values attached to the letters – you would get the number 14. The Hebrew consonants of David’s name are *daleth*, *vav*, and *daleth* again. This would equate to our letters, DVD. The letter *daleth* represented the number 4 in Hebrew, and the letter *vav* represented the number 6 in Hebrew. DVD, then, is 4 plus 6 plus 4, which is 14. So in Chapter 1, verse 17, when Saint Matthew repeats the number 14 three times

over, he is telling his Jewish readers, those who would actually know that David's number was 14 - and that was a fairly well-known fact back in the first century - that this Jesus, whose ancestry he is setting forth, has a strong connection to King David. In other words, by saying David, David, David in numbers, Saint Matthew is saying that Jesus is the long-awaited Son of David, the Messiah, the Christ, as he explicitly calls him."

Bishop Wienke responded, "You know, John, there aren't that many people who know that the New Testament begins with a Bible code of sorts. Do you know what word the Greeks used for that *summing up of letters* - that process of which you just spoke?"

"Sure. It's called *gematria*. It has a link to a word that every high schooler is familiar with - geometry."

The Cardinal inquired, "John, do you know where else in the New Testament there's an appearance of gematria?"

"Of course, Saint John's Revelation, Chapter 13, verse 18. That verse has seeped into the culture - it's known by almost everyone, be they Evangelical Christians or metal heads - "This calls for wisdom ... the number of the beast ... six hundred sixty-six."

Bishop Wieke asked, "John, do you know anything else about gematria?"

"Not really. Why do you ask, Bishop? Is that what you wanted to talk about? If it is, I guess, I'm not the fellow you're looking for."

"Don't be so hasty, Fr. John," replied the Cardinal. "We're not looking for an expert in gematria. We're actually just looking for a mind that has been trained in reason - in your case, the reason of science. And we're particularly interested in the fact that you've been trained to the doctorate level at MIT, no less."

“In that case, Cardinal, as I said before: I’m game.”

“Bishop Wienke, I’ll turn it over to you,” said the Cardinal.

“Fr. John, several months ago the Cardinal received a letter. I have a photocopy of it here, along with a photocopy of the envelope that it arrived in. We don’t know who the author of the letter is. It’s simply signed, *A Friend of the Church*. I’ll show it to you in a moment.”

“I take it that there’s some connection to gematria.”

“Yes, indeed,” continued the Bishop. “This gematria is not based upon the Hebrew that you spoke about a bit earlier. Rather, it’s based upon the English language, and the key to it is the number 6. A equals 6, B equal 12, C equals 18, and I’m sure you see the pattern here ... each succeeding letter increases by 6 until you get to Z which equals -”

“156,” interjected Fr. John.

“Precisely! Your math skills are quite impressive, John,” said the Cardinal.

“Elementary, my dear Watson ... I mean, Cardinal. And, of course, I mean, elementary-school arithmetic, Your Eminence.”

The Cardinal laughed.

The Bishop said, “John, using the alpha-numeric key that I’ve just given you, can you tell me what the letters in the name *Jesus* would be?”

Fr. John sat back in his chair, looked toward the ceiling, and did the calculation in his mind. About seven seconds later, he smiled and said, “444.”

The Bishop smiled and said, “What about the letters in the word *Cross*?”

Fr. John repeated that process, and this time, about ten seconds later, he smiled, with a much broader smile. “Wow! That’s interesting: 444.”

“I’ll save you from doing the math on these next two words. Both the words *Messiah* and *Gospel* are also equal to 444,” said the Bishop.

The Cardinal and the Bishop could see the wheels turning in Fr. John’s mind. He had a *how-can-that-be* inquisitive look on his face.

“Let’s show Fr. John the letter,” stated the Cardinal.

“Certainly,” said the Bishop. From a large plain manila envelope the Bishop pulled out a photocopy of the single-page letter, front and back, and a photocopy of the envelope that they’d been discussing. He then handed the two pieces of paper to Fr. John.

The priest looked intently at the letter in his hands. It began, “Dear Cardinal Flanagan,” but Fr. John’s eyes immediately skipped past the introductory words of the letter and they instantly focused on this:

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444

Fr. John puzzled over the letters CDXLIV for a moment, but seconds later, he realized that those letters were the Roman numerals for the number 444.

Fr. John looked up from the letter in his hands and looked at the Bishop and then at the Cardinal. “This is remarkable,” he said. “I take it that the math is correct ... or you wouldn’t be handing me this letter.”

The Cardinal said, “All the math in the letter is correct, John - and I suppose that you’re referring to the results at the top of the page?”

“Yes, I am, Cardinal.”

The Bishop asked, “What’s your initial response to those results on the top?”

“Have you ever heard of the concept of *number sense*?”

“It sounds like common sense, but just involving the use of numbers,” replied the Cardinal.

“That’s basically right, Cardinal,” said Fr. John, nodding. “Math educators these days are big on the concept of ‘number sense.’ They say that students with good number sense can readily recognize things like number patterns - and they can distil the importance of them without doing any precise computations. And, of course, math is thought of by almost all of the great mathematicians as *the science of patterns*. So the thing that jumps to my mind in looking at the 444 results at the top of the page is this - I ask myself: *What are the odds that such a thing would happen by pure chance?* And then I say to myself, if it’s not the result of chance, then that would mean that there’s some kind of intelligence and design behind it. But, of course, that’s just my initial reaction - further inquiry might lead me in a different direction.”

“Interesting. Please read the rest of the letter, John,” said Cardinal Flanagan.

Fr. John read the entire letter in complete silence. Then he looked at the photocopy of the letter’s envelope. The postmark circle read, “Syracuse, New York.” This was different from the location cited on the top of the letter, though, which was “Newton Falls, N.Y.”

Fr. John asked, “Where’s Newton Falls?”

Bishop Wienke responded, “It’s a couple hours drive north, and a bit east, of Syracuse – that is, from the place where the letter was mailed from.”

“John,” said the Cardinal, “for obvious reasons – as you can see from reading the whole letter – we were quite curious, to say the least, about the identity of the author. From my days back with the military, I know a retired NCIS agent, a top guy who now owns an investigative company. I trust him immensely. He’s an alum of my alma mater, the great Catholic institution at Steubenville. We had him discreetly examine the original letter.”

Fr. John leaned forward in his chair, “What did you find out?”

Cardinal Flanagan replied, shaking his head, “Absolutely nothing. There were no fingerprints on it. No DNA, including on the envelope – by that I mean, there was no saliva used to seal the letter. No stray hairs. No trace amounts of any particular substances. Nothing. Also, there is no real reason to think that the author was actually from Newton Falls, New York.”

Fr. John asked, “Why do you say that?”

Bishop Wienke responded, “Newton Falls is a small hamlet of about 400 people located in the Adirondack Park above Syracuse on the map. Its ZIP code happens to be 13666. The Cardinal’s old NCIS friend surmises that – in light of the letter’s message – the author used Newton Falls as a kind of code.”

“I see.” Fr. John was reluctant to ask this question, but he pressed forward anyway, “So where do I come in related to this letter?”

“Well, we’re recruiting a team – an analysis team, you might say. It’s a team to analyze this letter. And in honor of Churchill and his connection to the Bletchley Park code breakers – those like Alan Turing – you know,

the subject of that much-acclaimed movie *The Imitation Game* - we've given the team a name. It's called - for want of a better name - the 'Revelation Code Team.'"

Fr. John asked, "Have you thought of considering Fr. Anthony Abner - a Jesuit priest from California - for the team."

"We know him well. We *have* thought of him, and we spoke to him. It was Fr. Abner who recommended you to us. In fact, you were highly recommended by another team member too," the Cardinal said.

"Can I ask who that is?"

"John, here's how we've decided to proceed with this," Bishop Wienke interjected. "We want the team members to work separately for a time, so not to be influenced by any of the findings of the others. Then, if things go as planned, we'll get the team together - for a week or so - allowing the team members to share and critique each other's work and findings. After that, the Cardinal will take the steps that he feels are appropriate."

Cardinal Flanagan asked, "How do you feel about those rules of engagement, so to speak, Fr. John. Are you still interested?"

"I must say, having read the whole letter, I do have a bit of trepidation. But if you think that I can assist you, I would never say no."

"In that case," said the Bishop, "I need to ask you this ... have you ever had any type of ... let's say ... interaction with the demonic world?"

"Well, Bishop, now that you ask, I can say that my dreams of late have been littered with - well, what I can only describe as ... the demonic. I've been discussing this with my confessor."

“Fr. John, let me just say that these dreams don’t surprise us,” said Bishop Wienke. “It seems to be par for the course. We’ll leave it at that. Although we are instructing you not to communicate with anyone about the subject of your work over the next few months, we will have the rector assign an advisor to assist you, that being, Fr. Cherubim. He will be flying back from Poland within the next few days. He will be your spiritual Sherpa, if you fill, until we meet with you in New York City in August to get a full debriefing from you.”

“John, for now we do not want a written report,” said the Cardinal. “You can certainly use the internet to research online what you need. And the same goes with any library that you might choose. But there will be no written report of your work. If you want to bring note cards with you when you come to New York, though, that will be perfectly acceptable.”

“Understood,” said Fr. John.

The Cardinal smiled, “So will you accept this mission impossible, Fr. John?”

“I will.”

“Thank you, John. And please keep this in the forefront of your mind,” advised the Cardinal. “The thing that the Devil hates the most in this world is a happy, laughing Christian – one who laughs in the face of tribulation. That’s the strongest rebuke of Satan’s works. So if this inquiry gets you feeling down, somber, or even confused, do something that you enjoy. Go for a run. Do some star-gazing. Go fishing. In other words, have some fun! That’s a powerful weapon in the hands of a Christian who comes face-to-face with evil. Do you understand?”

“Yes, I do. Thank you for that advice, Cardinal.”

The Cardinal stood up, shook Fr. John's hand, and said, "That copy of the letter and of the envelope are for you to hold. By the way, we call that letter, the Revelation Code Letter. Keep it between us, and Fr. Cherubim."

"Then, in August," said the Bishop, "we'll meet up with you again. You can visit with your mom and siblings when you're back home."

"That sounds like a good plan, Bishop. My mom will be happy about that. I haven't seen her since Christmas."

"Well, we've got a busy day tomorrow," said the Bishop.

"Cardinal, I look forward to your homily tomorrow," said Fr. John.

"I still have to finish it, believe it or not," said the Cardinal.

The Irishman checked his father's pocket watch and announced, "It's exactly 12 midnight. Let's all turn in for the night. We have the Lord's work of Mercy to do tomorrow. Tomorrow we will be the instruments that the Lord uses - as imperfect as we are - to wipe clean thousands of souls."

Fr. John, interjected, "Yes, we will dispense an ocean of the Lord's divine mercy to the people of God. Those Catholic souls, including our own, will be as clean as they were when they emerged from their baptismal waters as mere babes."

The Cardinal replied, "The Lord is good to us!"

* * *

The next afternoon was splendid. There was a clear blue sky with an occasional billowing, white cloud providing cover from the sun's warmth - all of which combined to provide a perfect temperature. The outdoor Mercy Sunday Mass was attended by more than 19,000 Catholic pilgrims,

with Filipino-Americans making up the largest portion of the crowd, as usual.

The main celebrant, Cardinal Flanagan, was flanked by two dozen priests, solid and faithful men, both young and old, who concelebrated the liturgy with him. Fr. John and Bishop Wienke were among them. After a Marian deacon read the Gospel of John in both English and Spanish, when it was time for the Cardinal to deliver his homily, as he walked toward the ambo, the Cardinal stopped and he leaned over to Fr. John to whisper, “Let me know if you recognize anything that you hear.”

To Fr. John’s surprise, he heard Cardinal Flanagan makes some of the same points about *the reason of St. Thomas* that Fr. John had made the evening before. After he had done so, at the conclusion of the Mass, which was televised live on EWTN, the Cardinal asked Fr. John to stand up. He then said to the crowd, “Ladies and gentlemen, you need to know this. I’ve lifted some of my homily from the Shrine’s own Fr. John Adamczyk, God bless him. We had a long talk about this gospel of divine mercy last night - and I hope he doesn’t charge me royalty fees for what’s he’s heard in my homily. God bless all of these Marian priests at the Shrine. Let me ask all of them to stand and accept our warm, exceedingly grateful appreciation and love.”

Along with his fellow priests, Fr. John smiled at the crowd and waved. And looking out into the distance, way in the back of the crowd, near the Shrine, Fr. John saw Boston PD Sgt. Michael Ryan with his young son, Tommy, on his shoulders. He was standing next to his wife Carol and the rest of their kids. Fr. John gave the Boston family a thumbs-up. Fr. John deeply loved that family, and all of the families that came to the Shrine.

It was a glorious day on Eden Hill for God’s people that afternoon. When communion was fully dispensed, mercy had washed God’s people.

From the eyes of heaven, God's own looked as clean as mere babes from the baptismal water.

#

Chapter 4

Fr. Cherubim Returns

O Lord, I am thy servant; I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid.

Psalm 116:16

Raindrops pelted the glass of the Ford Fusion's windshield at a furious pace. As Brother Pio drove up the winding hill that led to the Shine, he strained to see through the fleeting space cleared by the car's wipers, thankful that the rain had not been nearly so heavy as he drove westward on I-90. Brother Pio was returning to Eden Hill with an honored guest: Fr. Klemens Cherubim. Just a few hours before, Brother Pio had picked up the white-bearded, elderly Marian priest from Boston's bustling Logan airport. Fr. Cherubim had flown in from his native Poland for what he expected would be one last "mission" to the United States.

Three days before, Fr. Cherubim had been at the Divine Mercy Sanctuary in Kraków, Poland, celebrating Mercy Sunday with tens of thousands of his fellow Poles. On the afternoon of that same day, he had learned from his superior of his present mission to Stockbridge, so he went to pray at the resting place of St. Faustina. Having been told of the nature of his mission, he asked her to pray that he'd have the strength needed for it. Fr. Cherubim was now 84 years old, and he was returning to the place where he had spent over a decade in years past.

At that time, Fr. Cherubim had met Fr. John while the astrophysicist was still discerning his vocation to the priesthood. It was Fr. Cherubim's approval that was instrumental in Fr. John's acceptance by the Marian community.

The elderly priest had a semi-secret nickname among the younger American priests - he was called *The Marian Yoda*. It was an honored name, one given with a great deal of respect to reflect the elderly priest's

deep wisdom. He was an insightful preacher of the Word, a gentle but still penetratingly perceptive confessor, and he was known among the Marians to be a mystic. Late at night, inside the Shrine's chapel, his fellow priests had often seen him in ecstasy before the Holy Eucharist in the Tabernacle, carrying on conversations with the Virgin Mary, the Archangel St. Michael, and even saints, like Padre Pio. These consolations were just that, though - *consolations* meant by the Lord to enable him to withstand the encounters that he also had with the demonic world of the fallen angels.

On this score, other priests at the Shrine had been awoken on more than one occasion by the sounds of guttural voices and crashing noises coming from inside of Fr. Cherubim's bedroom. They would find the old priest - fresh physical wounds to his face or even scratches on his arms - lying in his bed-clothes on the floor with broken pieces of a nightstand or a chair strewn about the room. To the priests that came to his aid, Fr. Cherubim would ever repeat the demand that Padre Pio made in similar situations: "Give me my weapon!" - a reference to his Holy Rosary.

Now stepping under the cover of a large umbrella, the elderly priest was led inside the Shrine's residence by Brother Pio. The Shrine's brother had taken his religious name, years before, at the suggestion of Fr. Cherubim. With a wink and a nod, Fr. Cherubim had told him that the great Italian saint, who had died in 1968, would have insisted on this. That was good enough for Brother Pio. What Fr. Cherubim didn't explicitly tell the brother, though, was that Padre Pio *had* in fact insisted on it - during one of Fr. Cherubim's many mystical encounters with him.

Fr. John was in the front foyer waiting for the Shrine's respected guest as he entered. In military terms, Fr. Cherubim would be like a highly-decorated, battle-tested Navy Seal Team Six member - since he was a real spiritual warrior within the Church. "Good afternoon, Fr. Cherubim! It's

sure great to see you again,” said Fr. John. The Shrine’s pet dog, Joshua, was bounding around at their feet, with his tail wagging in earnest.

“Ah, Fr. John, what a pleasure,” replied Fr. Cherubim, in that same type of Polish accent that Fr. John knew so well from his youth in Brooklyn. “And who is this fine furry friend?”

“This is our mutt, Joshua. We’re told that he’s a mixture of a little bit of everything.”

“A fine looking dog, and friendly, too!”

Taking the priest’s wet coat from his shoulders and hanging it on a peg near the door, Fr. John said, “I just put a pot of water on the stove. We’ll be preparing some tea for you, Father. It’s your favorite - Raspberry tea.”

“That sounds wonderful, young man!”

Fr. John led his guest to the door on the left, and through it into the great room of the Shrine’s residence. He motioned the guest forward and turned to whisper to Brother Pio, making a request of him. The two priests then sat on soft chairs from which they could see the rain pouring down over the huge hill in the distance. At that moment, Fr. John was thankful that this weather hadn’t met the Shrine’s 19,000 guests just a few days before.

“So how was your flight from Poland, Father?”

“Bumpy at times. But I was blessed to sit next to an old Polish-American grandmother from Chicago. She was returning from Mercy Sunday in Kraków - her first trip to that blessed event. We shared much about our Catholic faith during the flight. A very good and holy woman - with *twelve* grandchildren, no less! She asked me to pray for each and every

one of them, by name, right here at this Shrine. I have the list in my pocket, so the next Mass that I say will be for all of them.”

“Splendid,” said Fr. John with a smile.

Into the room walked Brother Pio carrying a tray with two cups of tea, and two very small pieces of pound cake on little plates. Fr. John had just cut these pieces of cake prior to greeting the Shrine’s guest at the door. Brother Pio placed these items on the table, and the two priests said in unison, “Thank you, Brother.” Brother Pio politely nodded and quietly left the room to allow the two priests an opportunity to talk in private.

Taking up the cup of tea, Fr. Cherubim said, “Fr. John, do you know the meaning of the Polish saying, ‘szczęście jest pomiędzy ustami i brzegiem kielicha?’”

“Surely, Father,” replied the younger priest. “It means, ‘happiness is between the lips and the rim of a cup’ - which in this case is a wonderful cup of Raspberry tea!” Fr. John smiled broadly, content that he had gotten that question right.

“Precisely, my young Polish friend. Your mother and father trained you well in our language - a language of love and mercy.”

After exchanging further pleasantries, the two men turned to the issue that was foremost on their minds. “So, Fr. John, I understand from my superior that you’ve been asked, based upon your scientific training, to take a look at a Bible code of sorts.”

“I have, Father. It’s a gematria code, one that mixes letters and numbers. Have you heard of this before?”

Fr. Cherubim responded, “I have, John. There was a Marian priest who I knew well. Years ago he lived here. His name was Father Robert Mancuso - may God rest his immortal soul. He knew well of this gematria,

as he had studied it for a long time. He would talk to me about it over meals. In fact, he once showed me how, back in the second century, St. Clement of Alexandria had used Greek gematria to interpret a section of the Book of Genesis. I think that he showed that to me so that I wouldn't think it to be a weird or an occult practice."

"I was doing some research over the past few days, and I too found where St. Clement had done that," said Fr. John eagerly. "I must say that knowing that a Father of the Church had analyzed the first book of the Bible with the use of gematria has been ... how do I put it? ... I guess I'd say ... it's provided me with a little bit of cover for the work that I've been called upon to do."

St. Clement of Alexandria was indeed a Father of the Church, one of the early teachers who instructed the young Church in the teachings of the Apostles. This early Greek theologian was likely born in Athens and lived from around 150 A.D. until 215 A.D. He headed a school at Alexandria for a time, and he taught Church doctrine by carefully sifting through Greek philosophical thought, and he adopted and used valuable parts of it in order to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Having not known much about this Father of the Church previously, Fr. John was impressed to learn that Pope Benedict XVI had declared that this man was a "saint", "a great theologian", and "one of the pioneers of the dialogue between faith and reason in the Christian tradition." In fact, on October 28, 2012, at the conclusion of the Synod for the New Evangelization, Pope Benedict XVI had quoted a prayer drafted by this saint, one that went this way: "Let us put away, then, let us put away all blindness to the truth, all ignorance: and removing the darkness that obscures our vision like fog before the eyes, let us contemplate the true God ..."

When he read this line from St. Clement, it had reverberated with Fr. John in a special way because it reminded him of something that he had learned during his training for the priesthood, something about St. Thomas Aquinas. A critical attribute of Aquinas was the fact that he was open and respectful to *all* other thinkers. So when Aquinas would focus his mental microscope in on a particular pagan philosopher or a Jewish rabbi, he wouldn't reject their thoughts out of hand simply because they hadn't known Christ in their own lives. Rather, he would cautiously and judiciously sift through their thoughts, and in doing so he had the type of patience such that he'd be willing to sift through a bag full of chaff in order to find a single grain of wheat. And as Fr. John saw it, if a thinker had *one* idea right out of ninety-nine that were flat wrong, Aquinas would still have the intellectual courage to recognize that one, single *right* idea, and he would then have the intellectual shrewdness to synthesize that one, single right idea into his own body of thought.

One scholar that Fr. John had read called this attribute in Aquinas, his "intellectual modesty." It was an attribute that allowed Aquinas to accept *true things as true things*, no matter who proposed them (and no matter how flawed were their other false ideas). In Aquinas' mind, the rest would sort itself out because, as he wrote masterfully in his *Summa Theologiae*: "The human intellect is measured by things so that man's thought is not true on its own account but is called true in virtue of its conformity with things." To Fr. John this meant that the true thoughts of others were particularly recognizable because they always conformed to other known true thoughts in general. It was like one piece of a puzzle that fit perfectly with the others; or one tumbler in a combination lock that, because it conformed to the "rightness" of the other tumblers, it allowed the lock to spring open. It was the same way with truth: that's how it gets "unlocked", so believed Fr. John, anyways.

And in his brief study of St. Clement over the past few days, Fr. John recognized that this Church Father also had this same Thomistic attribute. He too was a *sifter*, in the best sense of the word, and he began his sifting process right where he was at - in his own Greek culture. As Pope Benedict XVI had said of St. Clement: “For him, the Greek philosophical tradition, almost like the Law for the Jews, was a sphere of ‘revelation’; they were two streams which flowed ultimately to the *Logos* himself.”

And a *key* point was this: Fr. John had learned, in even just two days’ study, that in the Greek philosophical tradition, the use of gematria was found thick on the ground. And that’s why, quite frankly, in a chapter in his famous work, *Stromata*, one entitled, “The Mystical Meanings in the Proportions of Number, Geometrical Ratios, and Music,” St. Clement could freely use Greek gematria to interpret a passage about the patriarch Abraham that is found at Genesis 14:14.

... [I]n arithmetic we have the same Abraham. “For, hearing that Lot was taken captive, and having numbered his own servants, born in his house, 318 (τῆ)”, he defeats a very great number of the enemy. They say, then, that the character representing 300 is, as to shape, the type of the Lord’s sign, and that the *Iota* and the *Eta* indicate the Saviour’s name; that it was indicated, accordingly, that Abraham’s domestics were in salvation, who having fled to the Sign and the Name became lords of the captives, and of the very many unbelieving nations that followed them.

Fr. John’s research lead him to understand that this ancient passage from St. Clement’s *Stromata* only made sense once one grasped the fact that, in Greek, the letter *Tau* looks like a cross - like “the Lord’s sign”, as St. Clement referred to it - and, in Greek gematria, this letter equaled the number 300. Furthermore, the Greek letters *Iota* and the *Eta*, the first two

letters of Jesus' name in Greek, had gematria values of 10 and 8, respectively, totaling 318, the number from Genesis 14:14 that St. Clement was interpreting by use of Greek gematria.

Looking further into this saint's *bona fides*, Fr. John learned that St. Clement had been cited by Pope St. John Paul II no less than *five* times in his great work *Fides et Ratio*, as well as in the great pope's *Catechism*. Understanding this, Fr. John concluded that gematria could not be an evil if a Father of the Church used it to interpret the *Pentateuch*, was then declared a saint (as Pope Benedict XVI referred to him so purposefully and without question in 2012), and was regarded highly enough by John Paul the Great that he would cite to him in his own Doctor-of-the-Church-someday works. In fact, this meant one thing to Fr. John: to work with numbers – even numbers that are distinctly connected to letters in a gematria code – *was not verboten*.

As had been discussed just a few days prior with Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Weinke, the New Testament actually *began* and *ended* with an *implicit use of gematria*. This was at Matthew 1:17 and Revelation 13:18; and Fr. John found this to be particularly intriguing because the letter to the Cardinal that he had begun to study had made it clear that the number 1110 was at crucial number in the Bible code, for among other reasons, the existence of the following three results.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW = 1110

NEW TESTAMENT GOD = 1110

BOOK OF REVELATION = 1110

All of this led Fr. John to reach one firm conclusion in his analysis thus far: he could not reject gematria out of hand. It was worthy of a close analytical study, in the same type of way that he would study an idea in physics while he was at MIT or Caltech.

The rain continued to pour down outside the great room windows, and now there were even occasional bursts of lightning. This caused the mutt sitting between the two priests' feet to fret. It appeared to Fr. Cherubim that Joshua was afraid of sudden noises, so he leaned over to stroke the dog's head in an attempt to bring him comfort.

The elderly priest then looked at Fr. John and asked, "John, do you know about the Polish connection to the code breaking that helped win the war against the Nazis?"

"I had thought that the Enigma code breakers were the Brits at Bletchley Park," replied Fr. John, a bit puzzled.

"They are famous for that - that is true. But our own people were intimately involved in that affair. In fact, my own uncle, Uncle Ambrozy, while living in Warsaw after World War II, became close friends with a man named Marian Rejewski. Uncle Ambrozy didn't know it until the late 1960s, but this humble accountant was a master mathematician and cryptologist. He and two of his colleagues were instrumental in the original breaking of the Nazi's Enigma code machine. Rejewski and these two colleagues escaped from Poland after the Nazi invasion, and while in France, before the fall of that country, they met with Alan Turing in 1940. They provided him and his team with a great deal of intelligence about the Enigma code, and the Enigma machine used to transmit it. In fact, a few years prior, it was the Poles who gave the Brits six copies of an Enigma machine that they had been using to break the Nazis' code. The Brits were utterly astonished at what these Polish-mathematician code breakers had accomplished by combining these six Enigma machines together."

"I had no idea of that," responded Fr. John, astonished by this unusual piece of World War II trivia.

“So our people have a proud history of breaking codes to help win the biggest of wars – even against the biggest of enemies,” grinned Fr. Cherubim.

Fr. John then knew why the Marian Yoda had told him that story.

“But enough about this business for now, John. Please tell me how you’ve been doing here on Eden Hill over these last few years,” Fr. Cherubim inquired. As the rain continued to soak the green hills of Stockbridge, Massachusetts, the two priests chatted about their lives serving God and neighbor. As usual, their conversation drifted into a discussion of St. Faustina and the Marian mission on Eden Hill: to preach the Mercy of God to all comers.

* * *

A few hours had passed during which a savory pork-chop dinner had been eaten, and it was now 7 P.M. in the Chapel of the Shrine. Fr. John was praying Vespers with the other priests and religious from Eden Hill. Over these past years, it had become a comforting feeling for him to know that the Divine Office was said throughout the Catholic Church, from the pope, cardinals, and bishops, right on down to him as he sat and kneeled in the Chapel’s pew. He made it his practice to have his senses drink in the *sights* of the exquisite Chapel, as well as the *sounds* of the evening prayer. He always began the Vespers prayer by focusing in on The Divine Mercy image that hung above the Tabernacle.

Leading the prayer this night, the rector began with the Sign of the Cross, saying, “O God, come to my assistance,” and Fr. John and the others responded in union, “O Lord, make haste to help me.” The rector continued, “Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,” which was the beginning of the thought that the reply of the others finished:

“As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.”

As was his practice, as the evening prayers proceeded, Fr. John continued his focus on the bright painting of the Risen Lord. In The Divine Mercy image, Jesus was standing straight upright with His left hand near His heart and His right hand held up in the gesture of a peaceful invite. It was, as Fr. John always thought, the Risen Jesus of St. John’s Gospel. He did not stand ready to *upbraid* anyone; He stood ready to *forgive*. And the words painted on the bottom of the image – the words that the Son of God had dictated to St. Faustina, His own personal “secretary of divine mercy” – stated the demand that He desired be met for this forgiveness to freely flow: *Jesus I trust in you*.

Red and white emblazoned rays of light flowed out from the heart of the Savior, symbolizing His mercy, while at the same time they symbolized the primary Sacrament of the Church, Baptism, and those rays of light continued right out onto the hand-carved, gold-painted, wooden frame of the painting. They were like rays of the golden sun, the former astrophysicist would think to himself as he would pray, *Jesus I trust in you*. Fr. John would repeat this simple statement, over and over to himself. *Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you.*

As the prayer continued with singing, this night Fr. John turned his focus onto the painting of the Archangel St. Michael, hearing the words of the Psalmist sung: “Blessed are all they that fear the Lord: that walk in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labors of thy hands: blessed art thou, and it shall be well with thee” (Ps 128:1-2). As he heard these words, Fr. John was looking up above him to the left wall of the Chapel from where he kneeled facing the altar. There, painted on the wall high above the stained glass windows, was the leader of God’s heavenly hosts, the Archangel who responded to Lucifer’s fallen rebellion with the bellow in favor of the

Creator, “Who is like God?” – the words that define the angel’s very name, *Michael*.

As Fr. John looked to this painting of the Archangel holding the scales of justice in his hand, this night, because of the Revelation Code Letter that was tucked in the drawer in his upstairs room, he didn’t think of those scales as weighing souls during the Last Judgment. Rather, his mind drifted to St. John’s Apocalypse, to the words: “When the Lamb opened the third seal ... there before me was a black horse and its rider was holding a pair of scales in his hand ...” (Rev 6:5). *Could it really be that the black horse rider is a symbol ... scales to distribute food in a famine? And could it be that the beast’s cohorts had devised such a way ... a way to “mark” people ... that is, if they wished to eat under such dire circumstances? And if so, how would the Archangel St. Michael feed the people? What would he want us to do?*

Fr. John shook off these thoughts and turned to the other image of the Archangel, this one above the entry to the right side of the altar, the place set aside to honor the Pope of Mercy, John Paul the Great. As he did this, the Vespers cantor continued the evening prayer: “If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, who shall stand it. For with thee there is merciful forgiveness ... my soul hath hoped in the Lord” (Ps 130:3-5). As he took in the sight of this large carving of St. Michael, sword in hand, standing triumphantly on the neck of Satan, depicted as a serpent-like dragon, Fr. John prayed to St. Michael for assistance in the work that the Church had given him to do. *St. Michael, do not let me fail the Lord in this endeavor!*

Within seconds, Brother Pio took his place at the ambo of the Chapel to proclaim the reading from the Old Testament’s Book of Wisdom; Fr. John and the others listened: “Then shall the just stand with great constancy against those that have afflicted them, and taken away their labors” (Wis 5:1). Fr. John glanced once again at St. Michael holding the scales. *St.*

Michael, help me to see how the people of God can stand with great constancy in the face of affliction. Jesus statement, “life is more than food ...” (Lk 12:23) sprang to his mind at that moment. *This is truth*, he thought, *but food is important, too ...* food, water, clothing, shelter, all important as well.

Wanting to contemplate more pleasant thoughts, Fr. John gazed at the large hand-carved statues of the Apostles that were lined up above the main altar. To the left of the Lord’s Divine Mercy image (next to the Lord’s right hand, that is) was the place of highest honor, reserved for the first pope, St. Peter, the “rock” (Mt 16:18). And to the Lord’s left, in the place of the second highest honor, stood the disciple “whom Jesus loved,” St. John. He was depicted not as the elder statesman of the island of Patmos or the city of Ephesus, but as the youngster to whom Christ, at the foot of the Cross, entrusted the Virgin Mary, using the solemn and blessed words, words that were almost sacramental in form, “Behold, your mother!” (Jn 19:27). Although this youngster had run faster and arrived *first* at the tomb of the Resurrection, he dared not enter before Peter. Fr. John, along with all the Church, took that as a sign and a symbol: *follow* the Vicar of Christ, as did St. John the Evangelist.

The Vespers cantor then began to sing the words of the Virgin’s *Magnificat*, the celebrated words chronicled in St. Luke’s gospel: “My soul doth magnify the Lord. And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior” (Lk 1:46-47). As Fr. John considered the beautiful white statue of the Mother of the Church, the cantor continued to sing Mary’s song to the Lord, “behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed” (Lk 1:48). That was indeed true in the Catholic Church, it was true at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, and it was true in the heart and the mind of Fr. John Michael Adamczyk of Brooklyn, New York. Mary was beheld as *blessed* in these quarters because she was given the highest honor of the human race. She carried and gave birth to the

Lord God, making her the Mother of God, the Virgin Mother of Jesus Christ. Her immaculate womb was a walking paradise on earth - an Eden Paradise.

The Divine Office prayers for Vespers were coming to a close. As was his nightly custom, when he made the sign of the Cross, Fr. John looked at the painting that was highest on the wall, up beyond the altar. It was a painting that showed the Holy Trinity, in the shape of a “sacred triangle” of sorts, with the Holy Spirit at the top in the form of a dove, and Jesus Christ sitting at the right hand of the Holy Father, and along with the Father, He was holding a crown that was set to be placed on the Virgin Mary’s head. All of the sudden, in his mind’s eye, Fr. John saw the coded results from the letter that Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke had placed into his hands just a few days before. The results were reordered in his mind, though, and they looked just like this.

THE HOLY FATHER = 906		PATER NOSTER = 906
JESUS CHRIST = 906	or	JESUS CHRIST = 906
HOLY SPIRIT = 906		HOLY SPIRIT = 906
...		
IMMACULATE WOMB = 906		
...		
EUCCHARIST OF GOD = 906		
“BREAKING OF THE BREAD” = 906		
BLOOD OF THE LORD = 906		

All of this essentially symbolized - in letter-and-number form - the sacred scene that Fr. John saw in front of him: The Holy Trinity, the Mother of God, and the Tabernacle that held the Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ. *How could this be?*

Fr. John thought that he had an idea about that ... and it was more than just the fact that A=6, B=12, C=18...Z=156. But he wished to share his thoughts about this idea with his special mentor from Poland before he settled upon it. The sharing of his thoughts, in fact, would come after Vespers was complete.

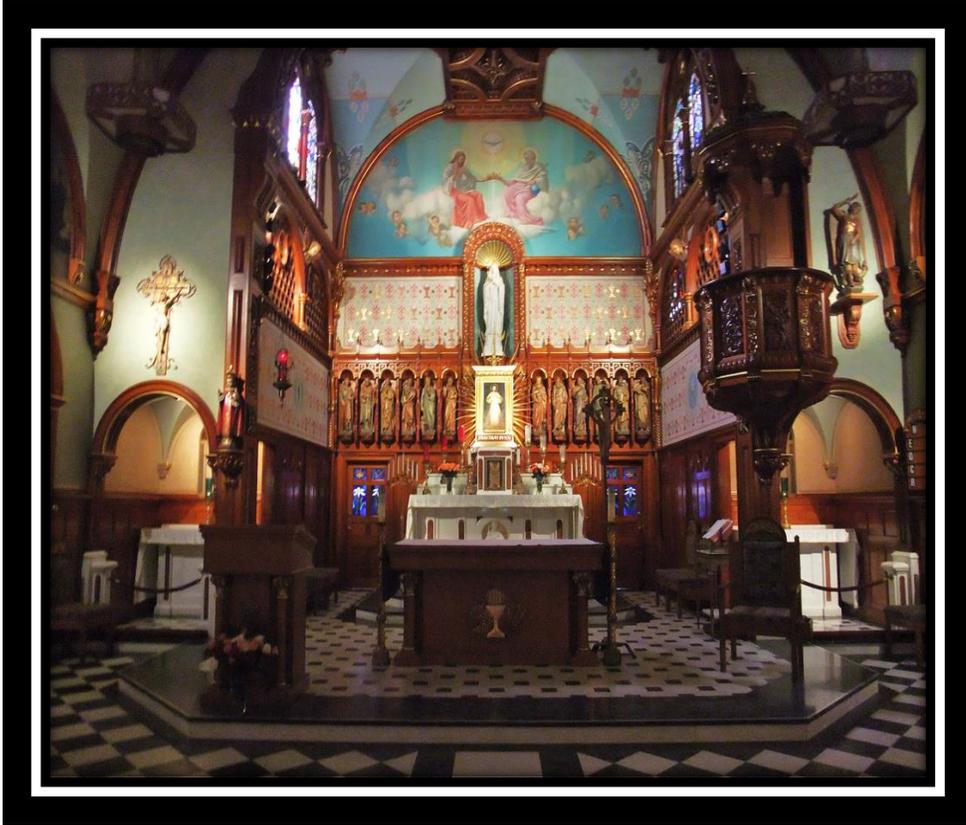
Looking to the pew to his left, beneath the painting of St. Michael, the one in which the Archangel was holding the scales, Fr. John could see the elderly priest's lips moving, almost imperceptibly, as he silently finished his own personal prayers. Fr. Cherubim's eyes remained fixed directly ahead of him upon the crucifix above the side altar, *The Little Flower of Lisieux's* altar, the altar that was dedicated to St. Therese.

The face of the Lord on that particular crucifix was mesmerizing for it showed the absolute brutal pain of the Passion. That piece of sacred art faithfully captured the utter agony of the Son of God, the Holy One who could see all of the pain and all the sin of the world that was being conquered on the beams to which He was pinned - including the pain and the sin that would come at the very end of time.

Fr. John knew well what Jesus Christ had said to St. Faustina regarding her role in connection with those times:

You will prepare the world for My final coming. ... Speak to the world about My mercy ... It is a sign for the end times. After it will come the Day of Justice. While there is still time, let them have recourse to the fountain of My mercy. ... Tell souls about this great mercy of Mine, because the awful day, the day of My justice, is near (*Diary* 429, 848 and 965).

At that moment, Fr. John thanked God that the Marian Yoda was back from Poland to help him along his way.



The National Shrine of Divine Mercy, Stockbridge, Massachusetts

* * *

After Vespers Fr. John went to the kitchen to brew some tea. He had arranged to sit down and meet with Fr. Cherubim in an anteroom off of the Shrine's great room. This time the two would share some chamomile tea and some Polish butter cookies with jam, Fr. John's favorite as a child growing up in Greenpoint. Placing these items on top of a tray, and a manila envelope between his arm and chest, Fr. John moved carefully toward the anteroom, making sure to keep the tray in perfect balance. He gently tapped the closed door with the toe of his shoe, hoping that the Shrine's guest was already inside.

At that instant he could hear Fr. Cherubim say from behind the door, "I'll be right there." The door opened and the elderly priest held the door open with left hand, while in his right hand he held his Holy Rosary.

“Thank you, Father,” said the younger priest.

“Well, Fr. John, thank you for this wonderful treat.”

“The tea is chamomile, and you’ll recognize the cookies, I’m sure.”

“Polish butter cookies with jam - my favorite as a boy!”

“Me too,” said Fr. John.

After settling into their chairs, the two priests got right down to business. As he was authorized to do by the Cardinal, Fr. John shared the letter with Fr. Cherubim. The elderly priest put on his reading glasses and he took a full five minutes to read through the letter, front and back, and then study the envelope, all in perfect silence.

“This is certainly interesting, John. It seems that there are two possibilities, and they happen to be the same two possibilities that undergird the debate raging, now and in times past, between the theists and the atheists. Order or chance? ‘That is the question’ - to mimic the Bard. In other words, which best describes what we see, whether that’s in nature - what we as Christians call *creation* - or whether that’s the mathematics that’s on that piece of paper. Order or chance?”

Fr. Cherubim knew that the mathematics contained in the letter was correct without doing the calculations himself; otherwise, he correctly surmised, he never would have been flown in from Poland to guide the younger priest. He continued, “John, in *Romans*, Saint Paul discussed what believers see in nature: ‘Ever since the creation of the world his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made’ (Rom 1:20). Because I happened to believe in God, the God of the Judo-Christian tradition, He who is sometimes called *the Grand Designer* of the universe, I suspect that the answer is this: The order that we see here is a result of a *design* of God.

But I don't want to be too hasty. Now that you've had this letter to dwell on for a few days, what are your preliminary conclusions on the matter?"

Fr. John described the picture that he had in his mind, just a short time before, at the end of Vespers. He described how he saw the Holy Trinity depicted above the Virgin Mary, and how the Tabernacle of God's Flesh, the Immaculate Womb, stood above the Tabernacle of God's Flesh - in the form of bread. He then pulled out a 3" x 5" index card, and on it was written the following coded results.

THE HOLY FATHER = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

HOLY SPIRIT = 906

VICAR OF CHRIST = 906

VATICAN CARDINALS = 906

ROMAN CATHOLICS = 906

Fr. Cherubim looked at the card. The bottom three results were not on the letter that he had just read, so he knew that they were the result of Fr. John's own ciphering. He drank them in for a long moment. The elderly priest then looked up and said, "That's truly remarkable, John."

"Father, do you remember once studying Plato and the Platonic Forms?"

"I do remember that, John."

"Well, Plato was heavily influenced by the Pythagoreans, having traveled to the school of the mathematical genius on several occasions to learn from his students after the great teacher had died. The most prominent idea of Pythagoras, of course, was that the entire universe, at

some fundamental level, is literally *composed of numbers*. The motto of the Pythagorean school was actually, *All is number!*"

"Yes, John, you are absolutely correct about the influence that Pythagoras had on Plato. And, of course, as the student of Socrates and the teacher of Aristotle, he was not only one of the most influential philosophers of all time, the great Plato was one of the most important *thinkers* in all of Western civilization. Perhaps Ralph Waldo Emerson said it best," said Fr. Cherubim, "'Plato is philosophy, and philosophy, Plato.' Of course, though, we Thomists love his student, too!"

"True. Some scholars say that Plato made one fundamental charge to the members of his famous Academy, that school near the garden groves of Athens. He charged them to find a *mathematical description* of the heavens and of the earth - yes, of the entire cosmos. And it was in examining numbers that the Greek philosophers found the most perfect things, what Western civilization has called ever since: 'Platonic Forms' or 'Platonic Ideas'. Remember that in *The Republic*, Plato asserted that the physical world is something of a shadow of the even more *real* eternal world, the world that Plato called the 'Realm of Forms', *a.k.a.*, the 'Realm of Ideas.' Thus, in *The Republic*, he gave us the 'Allegory of the Cave': the prisoners of this world see only the shadows on the wall of the cave, while the escapee gets to contemplate the reality of the true Forms."

"Yes, John, I do remember that wonderful story of Plato; go on," said the elderly priest, his memory still sharp as a tack.

"Scholars say that by the time that Plato got on into his senior years," Fr. John winked at the older priest, who returned the wink with a knowing grin and a twinkle in his eye, "having been influenced so long as he was by the Pythagorean belief in the importance of numbers, Plato reduced all of the Forms - all of the essential Ideas - to mathematical ones. So, we could say that Plato was a Pythagorean *par excellence*."

“Plato was a numbers man through and through,” responded Fr. Cherubim with a happy look on his face. “He believed that the numbers we use here on earth are a mere dim reflection of the numbers – the eternal numbers – found in heaven. And that’s why he charged his Academy to find the *mathematical description of the cosmos*, as you put it, John. Galileo himself was very much influenced by Plato’s fascination with numbers, something that Galileo learned from his musician father, Vincenzo.”

“Of course, that’s exactly right,” said Fr. John. “The Scientific Revolution ultimately picked up on Plato’s charge to his Academy to get the true *mathematical description* of the universe. And it did so in spades, particularly with Galileo, and then with Sir Isaac Newton. As Pope Benedict XVI said many times, Galileo believed that God gave us two books.”

“Yes, John, the book of the Bible *and* the book of nature.”

“Indeed,” said Fr. John, “and the pope would often say that Galileo was convinced – absolutely convinced – that *the book of Nature was written by the hand of God in the language of mathematics, and because of that fact, that made math a divine language of God*. And any historian of science worth their salt would have to say, without question, that science was built on the back of the idea that nature was written in the language of mathematics, that is, that it’s particularly susceptible to a *mathematical understanding*, more than any other type of understanding. In short, without mathematics, Galileo and Newton’s science would have been worthless. It wouldn’t have gotten off the ground. And even today, we only know what we do about the nature of our reality – about the basics of physics – based upon mathematics.”

Fr. Cherubim nodded in agreement, thinking to himself how the Big Bang Theory was, at its inception in the mind of Fr. Georges Lemaître, an

entirely mathematical feat, based upon, as it was, observations derived from reviewing Einstein's work, which was itself a mathematical affair of the mind.

Fr. John took Fr. Cherubim's silence as his cue to continue, so he began to ask his honored guest a question: "But what happened in between Plato, who lived more than 350 years before Christ, and Galileo, who lived during the Renaissance and died in - ?"

"- 1642, within a year of the birth of Newton," Fr. Cherubim interjected, just to let this younger priest know that the gears in his elderly mind were still working in fine order. "Well, John, to answer your question, from the Church's perspective, the two greatest Doctors of the Church lived and thought and wrote down their ideas about God and man during those '*in between times*'. I speak of course of St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas."

"That's precisely what I'm driving at," replied Fr. John with a muffled giggle. "And how did Augustine and Aquinas view those Platonic Forms, those eternal Ideas?"

After about three seconds, the light turned on in the Polish priest's mind and Fr. John saw on his mentor's face that it was indeed beaming brightly. Fr. Cherubim exclaimed, "Patterns! Eternal, everlasting patterns straight from the mind of God!"

"Exactly," said Fr. John with a broad smile bursting across his own face. "For Saint Augustine, the Platonic Forms - the Platonic Ideas - were ideas that originated in the Divine Mind, the Mind of God. And, as you said, the key point was that they were displayed by patterns, earthy patterns that reflected the heavenly patterns."

"And Saint Thomas," added the elderly priest, "wholeheartedly agreed! For him, the world was made by the hand of God, and not by a

blind roll of the cosmic dice, as is believed by the ‘Four Horsemen of Modern-day Atheism.’ And the *patterns* that came forth from *God’s hand* - the hand of *the Heavenly Geometer* - were those that marked out the very foundations of the world.”

“Yes,” said Fr. John. “For Aquinas, God had in his Divine Mind, from the beginning, the Form, with a capital ‘F’ - and you can think about it, as you just said, like the compass in the hand of *Christ the Geometer* - and He used that Form as *the eternal pattern* and He would make the *temporal patterns here on earth* conform to that heavenly pattern. They would be the image and likeness of the heavenly patterns.”

Fr. John reached into the envelope and pulled out another 3” x 5” index card, this one with a quote that he had found online that morning. It was from the late Ralph McInerny, a highly-distinguished professor at the University of Notre Dame, a renowned expert on the works of St. Thomas Aquinas. Although his book’s subtitle was designed to get a chuckle, it was a very well-respected book nonetheless - *A First Glance at St. Thomas Aquinas: A Handbook for Peeping Thomists*. Fr. John had seen Professor McInerny interviewed on EWTN, and from that interview he saw the bright light of the professor’s soul. Fr. John handed the card with the quote to his guest.

For Augustine, the Ideas are patterns in the divine mind according to which God creates. Thomas has little difficulty accepting this ... We must, he says, posit Ideas in the divine mind. ... And the application is clear. The world did not come about due to chance, but was made by God. God needed then to have in mind a form to the likeness of which the world was made. And this is the sense of Idea.

Fr. Cherubim had an ear-to-ear grin. He took a bite of one of the Polish butter cookies topped in jam and then he enjoyed a sip of his

chamomile tea. Fr. John joined him in the refreshments. The elderly priest then took up both index cards and looked at them side by side. He then took out a pen from his shirt pocket and wrote on the card.

The eternal Form in heaven ...

THE HOLY FATHER = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

HOLY SPIRIT = 906

The likeness of which the world was made on earth ...

VICAR OF CHRIST = 906

VATICAN CARDINALS = 906

ROMAN CATHOLICS = 906

Fr. John looked at the handwriting on the card. He laughed with joy and said, “Amen, Father! This is as good a proof that Plato could ever desire for his ‘Theory of the Forms’, and it comes in the precise format that he demanded of the members of his Academy ... to give him *a mathematical description of heaven and earth.*”

Fr. Cherubim injected, “And, John, it does so in a way that is *distinctively Christian*. To get back to Plato’s ‘Allegory of the Cave’, from the Christian biblical perspective, we Christians believe that there has been a mass prison break from the cave. We’re not stuck just looking at the images dancing on the wall of the cave. And that’s because, with *The Incarnation*, the world of the *eternal* forever broke into the *temporal* world of time and space. And we, as Christians, get to participate in that eternal world – in a full and very special way – every day at Holy Mass. *It’s there that the sphere of heaven and the sphere of earth are joined together.* So the place where Plato’s Forms exist and the place where the *likeness* of

those Forms exist are repeatedly coupled together like a mystical marriage, the one that St. Paul talked about. There's a *fusion* between the Divine and the human, one that's depicted on that index card in numbers. *It's really a mathematical description of the Church*, which is God's Heavenly Body here on earth."

Fr. John nodded in complete agreement, as the elderly priest gave voice to the budding thoughts in his own mind. "And Augustine would no doubt concur," said the younger priest, "that there is a *beauty* in that *mathematical description*. Here's a quote from the Bishop of Hippo that I thought you'd like to hear." Fr. John pulled one last 3" x 5" index card from the envelope, saying to his guest, "Have a sip of tea and listen to this, Father."

The Divine Wisdom is reflected in the numbers impressed on all things. . . . The construction of the physical and moral world alike is based on eternal numbers.

"These are the words of the greatest Church Father," said Fr. John before repeating with emphasis, "'*The Divine Wisdom is reflected in the numbers impressed on all things.*' The physical and the moral world are based on '*eternal numbers.*' Augustine actually wrote elsewhere, in an even more pointed way, Father, saying that '*numbers are the thoughts of God.*'"

"John, quite frankly, the intelligibility found on that earlier index card," said Fr. Cherubim, "the one that I just wrote on; that would be the clincher, I'm sure, for Aquinas as well. No dumb ox was he!" Fr. John smiled at that comment, for he knew well to what the elderly priest was alluding. It was the fact that some of Thomas' fellow students viewed him as 'slow' and taunted him with names. But Saint Albert the Great, Thomas' brilliant teacher, replied to their derision by saying, "You call him 'the dumb ox', but in his teaching he will one day produce such a bellowing that it will be heard throughout the world." That was a true prophecy.

Fr. John responded, “As Pope Benedict XVI taught us so well, Augustine and Aquinas both *fused faith with reason*. From thence forth, if not long before, including with teachers like St. Clement, the Catholic Tradition would soar on these *two* wings. Faith and reason. As I like to say, St. Thomas the Apostle, *the Apostle of Reason* – that science-minded fellow who demanded to actually probe the flesh of the Risen Christ – would always and forever have a spot at the Catholic table to discuss the things of God. Reason itself is recognized in the Catholic Church.”

With these last statements, Fr. Cherubim’s ears perked up and another light bulb flashed, this too as bright as day. He asked the younger priest for the letter to look at once again. He then focused on the part of the letter that purported to identify the *source* of the Bible code that they’d been discussing. According to the author of the letter, the gematria code was actually described by the Evangelist at Chapter 10 of his Apocalypse. There, while the elderly witness of Christ was exiled on the island of Patmos, the Archangel St. Gabriel handed St. John a mysterious item: “He had *a little scroll* open in his hand” (Rev 10:2). Fr. Cherubim focused in on these three findings.

PATMOS - GABRIEL - JOHN = 1110

“A LITTLE SCROLL” CODE = 1110

PATMOS GEMATRIA CODE = 1110

The elderly priest then looked up from the letter. “You just spoke of Saint Thomas as the Apostle of Reason. John, do you know where the skull of St. Thomas the Apostle is located today?”

Fr. John, who looked completely baffled by this odd inquiry, responded, “No, Fr. Cherubim. I don’t. Where is it?”

The elderly priest leaned forward and looked powerfully into Fr. John’s eyes and replied, “The *container* of his reason, we might call it, is

located on the island of Patmos in none other than the Holy Monastery of St. John the Theologian. I've been there, John. I've seen it for myself. In fact, when I was last here on Eden Hill, I placed a book in the rector's library. It had a photograph of Thomas' skull. Let me go and see if it's still there, John. I'll be right back."

As the elderly Polish priest left the room, Fr. John's jaw was still open wide as he sat in deep thought. *The skull of the Apostle of Reason - the actual "container" of the gray matter that performed his reason - was located on Patmos in the Aegean Sea near the mainland of Greece, thus near the place from which the thoughts about the Platonic Ideas spread, and in the actual place that St. John encountered a Bible code, one that was handed to him by an angel! God's number one messenger angel, in fact!*

A thought then flashed in Fr. John's mind, so he looked toward the ceiling and he immediately began to do some mental ciphering. After about 15 seconds, he exclaimed out loud to himself, "It can't be!" So he took one of the index cards, the one containing the quote from St. Augustine, and he flipped it over. He then began to furiously scribble down letters and numbers lengthwise onto that card. At that moment, Fr. Cherubim returned to the anteroom holding a book in his hands. For a moment, he looked raptly at Fr. John's ciphering - and now it was his mouth that was agape. The priest who had flown in from Poland earlier that day saw the following written lengthways down on that little index card.

$$T = 120$$

$$H = 48$$

$$O = 90$$

$$M = 78$$

$$A = 6$$

$$S' = 114$$

$$S = 114$$

$$K = 66$$

$$U = 126$$

$$L = 72$$

$$L = 72$$

$$906$$

THOMAS' SKULL = 906 !!!

The two priests just looked at each other in amazement and laughed together. “Marvelous”, exclaimed the younger priest.

“It’s intriguing to me that you ciphered that out in just the few moments that I stepped from the room, John. Have you ever heard of the saying of our people, ‘Nie dla wszystkich skrzypce grają.’”

“No, I haven’t heard of that saying, Father. What is the meaning?”

“It means, ‘The violin doesn’t play for everybody.’ This violin, this code, seems to play for you, though, Fr. John.” Fr. Cherubim then skimmed through the book that he held on his lap. He was looking for the exact right page. Finding it, he said, “Ah, here it is, John! This is exactly what I saw on Patmos back in the summer of 1966. It’s Thomas’ skull. As you can see, though, John, in order to protect it, the monks covered Thomas’ skull with gold.”

Looking at the photograph, Fr. John said, “That’s amazing, my friend. Fr. Cherubim, can I borrow this book tonight and look at it before I close my eyes for prayer?”

“Certainly, John. It’s now time, though, for these old bones of mine, to get some sleep. Otherwise, they won’t be able to hold up *my skull* when I say Mass tomorrow morning! Let’s get to bed now, young man!” As the

two priests left the anteroom of the Shrine, Fr. Cherubim placed his hand on Fr. John's right shoulder and said, "Good night, Fr. John."

Fr. John stopped, turned, and looked directly into the elderly priest's eyes. He grabbed the priest's hand with a firm but not too overpowering grip, and he said, "Fr. Cherubim, I thank you wholeheartedly for returning to Eden Hill to mentor me. I suspect that our superiors believe that your guidance will be very much needed. So from the depths of my heart, I thank you, Father."

"I go where the Church needs me, my son. And for now, that's at your side. And you know, young man, that's a good place to be."

The mutt Joshua was lying on the carpet of the great room waiting for Fr. John to pass by. As the two priests began to climb the stairs, Joshua turned to follow. It was the dog's custom to sleep at the foot of Fr. John's bed, an immense comfort to both.

* * *

Before he fell into a deep sleep that night, Fr. John was absorbed into the photograph of the Apostle of Reason's skull, and he thought to himself ... *God sure has some amazing ways of making Himself known!*

Then he prayed the same prayer that he always prayed as he drifted off to sleep. *Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you ...*



The Skull of St. Thomas the Apostle on the Island of Patmos

###

Chapter 5

The Battle Within and Without

*Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation,
no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.*

Psalm 91:9-10

A week had passed since Fr. Cherubim's arrival on Eden Hill. It was a Wednesday, and that meant that it was Fr. John's turn to celebrate the 2 P.M. Holy Mass at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy. This was the main sacrificial offering for the weekday pilgrims who had come from far and wide to the Shrine, as well as for the "regulars," the Stockbridge area locals who always sat in the same pews, day after day, come rain or shine, a common Catholic trait it seems.

Fr. John was putting on his vestments in the sacristy beneath the Chapel. He had just come downstairs after spending nearly an hour giving absolution in one of the two confessional booths at the back of the Shrine. Fr. John considered that to be his second greatest honor as a Catholic priest - to clean souls with God's great mercy. "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven" (Jn 20:23), said Jesus to the Apostles. In fact, before he settled into his post in the confessional booth that afternoon, as he kissed his priestly stole, Fr. John had thought of the words that Christ said to St. Faustina: "When you approach the confessional, know this, that I Myself am waiting there for you. I am only hidden by the priest, but I Myself act in your soul. Here the misery of the soul meets the God of mercy" (*Diary*, 1602). As he sat in the confessional booth waiting those few minutes for his first penitent, Fr. John had also thought of these three findings from the Revelation Code, ones that he had written onto an index card the night before.

JESUS: GOD OF MERCY = 1110

JESUS: GOD INCARNATE = 1110

JESUS: GOD OF ISRAEL = 1110

These results captivated him because they each were unquestionably true, yet more than that, they each succinctly summarized an eternal tenet of the Catholic faith.

After giving the many absolutions, Fr. John was about to carry out his first greatest honor as a priest of Christ. He was about to say Holy Mass - to enter into eternity with the angels and the saints - to actually, *in persona Christi*, cause Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity to come to be on the sacred altar of the Chapel. "Do this in remembrance of me" (Lk 22:19). He had in fact done this in remembrance of the Lord hundreds of times before, but the awe of it had not worn off for him. It had only grown greater within his heart.

Eucharistic adoration and the saying of the Holy Rosary had just finished in the Chapel, so it was almost time for the Mass to start. Adorned in his white Easter-season vestments, Fr. John walked up the aisle, he kneeled at the foot of the altar, and then he went up behind the altar. There he genuflected at the golden Monstrance containing Christ's Body, and then, taking the Holy Eucharist, he returned the Lord to the Tabernacle behind the altar. With that, Mass officially began. There was an opening hymn from the *St. Michael Hymnal* book, and Fr. John gave the opening prayer and then sat in the presider's chair.

This day's reading was from the Acts of the Apostles. Brother Pio read to the assembly about the Apostles being arrested and placed in prison after preaching of the Risen Jesus; but a miracle intervened, for "at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, 'Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this

Life.’ And when they heard this, they entered the temple at daybreak and taught” (Acts 5:19-21).

Fr. John was struck by these words, particularly due to the encounters that he had over the past week, that being, with the world of the divine, and unfortunately, with the world of the demons, too. This had all started on the same night that Fr. Cherubim and Fr. John had first talked about the Revelation Code Letter. Immediately after Fr. John had slipped from consciousness into those first few seconds of sleep, he had the most mystical experience of his life. In that instant, he could actually feel and hear a breath being breathed on him. And deep within him, he immediately knew what was happening: he literally experienced the breath of Jesus Christ on him while he lay in his bed on the verge of full sleep. And amazingly enough, he knew that breath had entered into him when he took his own breath. He awoke almost startled, but the words placed in his mind promptly settled him. They were words of St. John’s Gospel: “I send you.’ And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’” (Jn 20:22). Fr. John had an unseen encounter with his Savior’s own breath; and it mixed with his own.

The next morning Fr. John described the encounter to his new spiritual director, Fr. Cherubim. The pure-as-white-bearded priest asked, “Has anything like this ever happened to you before, John?”

“No, Father, never.”

“Then it has begun, my son. I tell you this from my own personal experience. You have received a great gift of the Lord. I anticipate that He has given you this as a consolation, one that is meant to prepare you for trials that will come. It is not possible to embark upon an endeavor such as you have without personal encounters with Satan and his own minions. You will be tested, John. But the Lord is now with you in an extra special way. And He has purposely let you know that.”

This was not a rash judgment reached by Fr. Cherubim, for he had his own heavenly encounter the evening before, and it completely confirmed what the younger priest had just told him. Fr. Cherubim's encounter was with St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, who had said to him: "Our Lady brought Fr. John back from a life drenched in sin for an important mission for her Son. He will speak the truth to the Church's shepherds, and it will happen this summer at St. Patrick's Cathedral. And know this too: this night the Lord is with him." After 50 years of these types of experiences, Fr. Cherubim knew full well how to "test the spirits to see whether they are of God" (1 Jn 4). And he knew that this was indeed a message from St. Padre Pio; it was not a message from the *other* side.

That next night the dreams of Fr. John took on a demonic flavor, something like he had never endured before. He was awoken from them by a crash that came from down the hall. From the foot of his bed, Joshua barked noisily when he heard the clatter. Fr. John shot up in bed, put his feet on the floor, quickly shook the upsetting dreams from his mind like a quarterback who had just shaken off a linebacker's blow. Then he hastily exited his room and moved down the hall toward Fr. Cherubim's guest bedroom with Joshua in tow. He arrived at the guestroom simultaneously with two other Marian priests. The three of them opened the door and found Fr. Cherubim face first on the floor. A small wooden nightstand had been knocked across the room.

The priests lifted their elderly friend to his feet and helped him to the side of his bed. They then picked up the nightstand and placed the priest's *Navarre Bible* back upon it. They noticed that the fall had caused a slight cut above Fr. Cherubim's left eye and some blood trickled down to his eyelid, which caused him to close that eye. At that point, the elderly Polish priest quietly asked to speak with Fr. John alone, so the two other priests left the room and closed the door, suspecting that they knew exactly what had just happened.

Holding a handkerchief to his closed eye, and looking at Fr. John from his right eye, Fr. Cherubim whispered, “John, the Evil One - ol’ Grappin, as the Cure of Ars used to call him - was in my room tonight. This night he made threats against you, John. I ignored him as I always do. When I yawned and rolled over, he tossed me from my bed - before St. Michael chased him off, that is. But do not be afraid, my son. Yet listen well to me on this: Do not speak to the Devil - ever! If you are ever confronted with him, just repeat the word *Jesus* and do that *in your mind* over and over. That Name contains all the power that you’ll ever need to prevail against Satan. Do you understand this, John?”

“I do, Father. I do understand.”

It was now several days later and Fr. John was not scarred at all. In fact, he had never felt more at home in his vocation. He was ready to do the Lord’s will. And right now that was celebrating Holy Mass at the Shrine. He stepped up to the ambo and read the gospel for the day, some of the most famous words in all of Holy Scripture: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him” (Jn 3:16-17).

After reading the gospel, Fr. John began his homily with a little bit of humor, as he was wont to do. “I know that it’s not football season, but let me ask you a football season type of question: Has anyone ever been watching a football game and seen a sign in the end-zone after the home team gets a touchdown,” he inquired, “the sign that reads *John 3:16*? If you have, raise your hands.” Almost the entire congregation raised their hands, with wide smiles as they looked about the church at those in the pews around them with their hands raised. “Well, my friends,” he said with a wry grin, “are you ready for some football?” Laughter broke out in that small Chapel, as Fr. John continued: “It’s as though there was a touchdown

for the Patriots this day, because in our gospel reading St. John holds up that sign for us today. He's just like that guy in the end-zone stands, and that sign says *John 3:16!* We, on the other hand, we wear the uniform of God's team on the field of play, so in order to be a united team, let's talk about *our* playbook for a few minutes. Let's talk about our team's *strategy* for these troubled times. From St. John, the Lord's beloved Apostle, we know that it all starts with 'the Word.' 'In the beginning was the Word', says the Word of God, and we know that God sent the Word 'into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.'"

The usually reserved nature of the Catholic flock actually responded with more than a few joyful "Amens!" that day. When they did, Fr. John thought to himself: *They sound like Baptists out there today, God bless them.* Fr. John preached the word of God in its finest form that afternoon.

And after that, on the altar that was next to him, he performed a miracle, one that is repeated around the world day after day in Catholic churches everywhere. He brought forth Christ's Body and Blood - the Word of God - on that altar, the unbloody sacrifice of the Mass which enters into the bloody sacrifice of the Cross. After saying the words, "Do this in remembrance of me," as he held the chalice high above his head, a mental image unintentionally flashed across his mind. They were findings that he had made with the Revelation Code during the preceding week.

JESUS' CROSS = 888

CHRIST'S MASS = 888

BREAD, WINE, WATER = 888

These findings had previously caused Fr. John to see a remarkable confluence of united ideas, mathematical ideas that seemed to him to naturally emanate from the Catholic Church's Eucharistic teaching. As a

priest of the Church, acting *in persona Christi*, it was really Christ's Mass, and each and every Mass entered into the precise time of the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross, transforming mere bread, wine and water into Jesus' own Body and Blood. This teaching of the Real Presence of the Lord was the teaching of the Catholic Church because the God-man Himself taught it in Chapter 6 of St. John's Gospel.

But Fr. John's mind did not linger long on these numbers. Instead, he celebrated the Mass as he always did, with images of the Last Supper, the Cross of Calvary, and the rolled away stone of the empty tomb in his mind, the comingling of images that jointly formed the Paschal Mystery. Then, after Mass, Fr. John led the pilgrims and the regulars in the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, later he blessed the faithful's religious articles, and then he assisted the churchgoers in the veneration of a first-class relic of St. Faustina. After that, he met some of the flock outside the Shine, and one of the regulars, Rebecca - the sister-in-law of Sgt. Mike Ryan of the Boston PD - was the first to greet him.

"Rebecca," Fr. John said as he greeted her with a warm handshake. "I noticed that you were able to stay for the Chaplet today. Your *Visiting Angel* nursing duties didn't cause you to hurry off to your afternoon appointment this day; why was that?"

"Well, Father, my afternoon patient, Mrs. Morgenstein, she is being visited by her daughter today, and they went to have lunch at the *Red Lion Inn* down the hill. So I have the afternoon off. And I'm glad for it, Father, because your homily got me ready for some heavenly prayers!"

"I think St. Faustina and the Lord must have smiled toward all of us today, Rebecca. Now if we can just get her to ask the Lord to send some goodness toward our Red Sox team this year," Fr. John said with a wink. Fr. John had fallen in love with Fenway and the Red Sox when he attended MIT in Boston for those several years.

“Maybe we need a guy to hold up a *John 3:16* sign on top of the Green Monster each time our big hitters get up to bat.”

Fr. John laughed and said, “Now you’re thinkin’!”

“Did you know that this year Mike and Carol and the kids went to the opening day at Fenway Park?”

“I didn’t know that. That was something that I always loved to do when I was at MIT. I never missed an opening day game in all the years that I lived in Boston, even if I had to get standing room only tickets.”

“Then you know exactly how Carol, Mike and the kids feel; they love their Red Sox team, Father.”

“I sure do know how they feel. Please give my best to them, Rebecca. They are my favorite Boston family. And that’s sayin’ something.”

“I will, Father.”

“May God bless you, Rebecca.”

Fr. John greeted some more of the pilgrims before getting ready for ninety minutes of studying that he was preparing to do before supper. He was going to be delving more deeply into an ancient work of St. Irenaeus – his famous *Against Heresies*. St. Irenaeus was a student of St. Polycarp, and St. Polycarp was a student of St. John the Evangelist, and, of course, St. John the Evangelist was a student of the greatest Teacher of all, Jesus Christ, called the “Teacher of Truth” in the *Catechism* (CCC 1548). So Fr. John knew that there was pure wisdom to be found in the words of the great Father of the Church, St. Irenaeus.

But there was something in particular about St. Irenaeus that Fr. John was intent on studying that afternoon. It was the saint’s full-throated attack, in several chapters of his work, on the *Gnostics’* use of gematria; yet at the

same time, in another chapter of the saint's work, he wrote about "the number of the name of Antichrist", a chapter in which St. Irenaeus had actually ciphered out three different names *using Greek gematria* to demonstrate that different names in that letter-number system could in fact equal 666.

This intrigued Fr. John, for he wanted to understand exactly how St. Irenaeus did all of this, and then came to be referred to by Pope Benedict XVI in the 21st century as "the champion in the fight against heresies" and as the "first great Church theologian who created systematic theology." It seemed that St. Irenaeus was indeed an interesting man: yet another Father of the Church who actually knew about and used gematria in his own writings; but, in his case, this was not without a fierce criticism of how others had used it in their own teachings. Fr. John thought to himself: *This should be an interesting afternoon of study and thought.*

* * *

Earlier that afternoon, at precisely the time when the Holy Rosary was being said at the Shrine, while Fr. John was at work inside the confessional booth, Sgt. Mike Ryan was sitting in an amphitheater-style room in the Boston Police Headquarters at One Schroeder Plaza in Boston. He was about to receive a much-anticipated briefing. For just a moment, before the briefing was about to start, his mind drifted to the two Boston brothers after whom the Headquarters was named. Both police officers had made the ultimate sacrifice for their community; they were killed in the line of duty. Walter Schroeder was shot and killed in 1970 while responding to a bank robbery; three years later, his brother John was shot and killed when he surprised men robbing a pawn shop. Not only was the Police Headquarters named after these two hero-cop brothers, but each year the Department issued the Schroeder Brothers Memorial Medal as the highest award given to Boston PD's finest.

In his own life, Sgt. Mike Ryan knew of that kind of bravery. He had seen it up close, particularly in the faces of the five Marines who he personally saw die during the Second Battle of Fallujah in Iraq. For the sake of his wife Carol and their kids, he hoped that he could escape that kind of fate. But he was ready for it nonetheless - if he needed to face it. And knowing that evil could always be lurking behind the next door he knocked on, or past the next corner his patrol car rounded, Mike would always say the St. Michael prayer with his wife Carol and the kids before he left the house. It was a family tradition, since St. Michael was the patron saint of both police officers and members of the military. Sgt. Ryan would silently think the same thought nearly every time he prayed this prayer: *Man can pull the trigger that launches a bullet, but God can decide where it lands.*

The briefing began. “Ladies and gentlemen, you have been called here today because we want you to be on high alert,” said the leader of the Boston PD Division of the FBI Joint Terrorism Task Force. He was flanked by his FBI and Department of Homeland Security counterparts. Each would take turns providing different aspects of the briefing to the members of the District D-4 task force. The D-4 was the division of the Boston PD that was responsible for the area surrounding Fenway Park, as well as the Back Bay and the South End areas of Boston. “The chatter of the overseas terrorists seems to be centering on sporting events, museums, movie theaters, and the like. So called ‘soft targets’ where families gather,” the Boston PD Captain continued. “For that reason - among other things that we’ll be doing - we’ll be putting more officers at Fenway Park for this entire baseball season. And that’s why you’re here today. You’ll be at the point of the spear on that mission.”

Later in the briefing, the FBI Special Agent who headed the Task Force spoke: “Automatic weapons and backpack-style explosives are the main weapons of choice that we anticipate these particular radical Islamic

terrorists will attempt to use. And all Boston PD officers on Fenway patrol are going to be connected via special ear-piece communication to the BRIC.” The Special Agent spoke of the Boston Regional Intelligence Center, a Department of Homeland Security-backed hub. Its main job was to share information between various federal and local agencies, those like the Boston PD.

When a senior official from DHS’s Office of Intelligence & Analysis took the podium, she focused on the technology at the other end of those ear-pieces, of exactly what would be at the disposal of the officers on the beat around the ballpark: “As you know, there are cameras all around Fenway Park. We now have the most up-to-date facial recognition technology that there is. That data will be monitored at the BRIC. And any hits will be instantly sent to the officer closest to the target. And in case you’re wondering just how they’ll know which officer that is, it’s because your communication system is GPS-tracked,” said the DHS official. “So if you take a restroom break, we’ll know it at the BRIC,” she joked. “More importantly, though, ladies and gentlemen, if there are any terrorist events happening anywhere around the country - or even around the globe - you’ll be informed in real time as the information comes into the BRIC. And it comes in lightning fast. Quite often the terrorists like to strike in unison, or near unison. So that kind of intel could be extremely useful.”

After the 45-minute briefing concluded, Sgt. Ryan got into his Chevy PD cruiser with his partner, Officer Leroy Biggs. Like Sgt. Ryan, Officer Biggs was former military, but he spent his four years as a Gunner’s Mate in the U.S. Navy. As a Petty Officer, Biggs worked on guided-missile launching systems onboard the *USS Lake Champlain* (CG-57), a *Ticonderoga*-class *Aegis* guided-missile cruiser. Growing up, his African-American family lived in Roxbury, a place that Biggs proudly referred to as the heart of Black culture in Boston, the main reason why he moved back to that part of Boston with his own young family. He lived just three blocks

from his parents' home, the home where he was raised by his father and mother who owned their own bakery close by in Roxbury.

Mike turned to his partner and said, "So what'd you think about that, Biggs?"

"That's some serious stuff, Sarge. Those terrorists are evil through and through, and I wouldn't put it above them to try to take out as many people as possible at Boston's secular cathedral - Fenway Park. In the sick mind of a terrorist, it would be the perfect hit job."

"And it will be our job to protect that cathedral so that families like yours and mine will be safe there," replied Mike with a deadly serious look in his eyes. But then Mike's eyes softened, "And speaking of your family, Biggs, how's May and the kid doin'?"

"All's well on the home front, Sarge. My beautiful wife and my little boy are doing great. This weekend Jalen started walkin' across the family room floor. My in-laws were over for Sunday dinner and they got a perfect video of it on their i-Phone. It was up on Facebook as soon as they got home that night. We got comments from family all around the city, and even from around the country. Heck, within an hour, my younger brother onboard the *USS Ronald Reagan* had posted his props for Jalen's fancy footwork!"

"That's great," Mike laughed, as he drove past Engine Co. No 3 of the Boston Fire Department and the pulled into his parking spot at the PD's South End Station on Harrison Avenue.

The partners had just made the seven-minute drive to stop into the D-4 to use the locker room. They were changing back into their civilian clothing because, for the rest of the day, they would be at the Boston PD Firing Range on Moon Island using the Jedburgh Target System for target practice. Since their military days, both Ryan and Biggs were expert shots,

so it was always a duel to see who could get the tightest groupings for each set of targets. They shot hundreds of rounds for two straight hours that afternoon. And this day it was Mike Ryan's turn to come up on top, which was a good thing for him, too, because Biggs had beaten him on their previous two trips to Moon Island.

Ninety minutes later, Mike walked through the front door of his home and right into the loving arms and lips of his wife Carol. "I love you, babe," he said before he greeted all of their kids with a kiss to the forehead. Now Mike was not a terror-fighting Boston PD officer; he was just dad. And that's one thing that he loved to be.

* * *

It was now midnight back at the Shrine on Eden Hill. After the evening's Divine Office, Fr. John spent three hours in deep study focusing exclusively upon St. Irenaeus' work *Against Heresies*. There was a stunning insight, though, that had occurred to Fr. John during that evening's prayer; and it would cause him to drive into Boston the next week. He was going to be using the enormous resources of the Harvard and MIT libraries. He had a contact from the Harvard Divinity School that he was going to use, an emeritus professor, who he knew would give him access to all of Harvard's vast archives. And since Fr. John had several of his old professors still teaching at MIT, that would make access to its libraries a cinch. Oddly enough, Fr. John would be researching purely scientific issues during that trip - ones that had religious connections only in the most cosmic of ways.

After about twenty minutes of prayer, Fr. John began to drift off into sleep. Once again, however, as soon as he crossed that fuzzy line from being awake to being asleep, Fr. John once again felt a breath, one that startled him into consciousness. This time, though, it was a severely cold feeling that imposed itself upon him. He instinctively concluded in his thoughts that this time he had not experienced the Lord's presence at all ...

rather, it was ... before he could complete the thought, Fr. John experienced an inner locution, one that he had never experienced before. He knew that it was the Devil's own voice *inside of his mind*: "Priest, do you think that you can overcome my plans?!"

As instructed by Fr. Cherubim, Fr. John did not answer him a word. He instead repeated the word *Jesus* over and over in his mind until he was certain that he was alone in his room - except for the mutt Joshua who was located at the foot of his bed. Then he began to pray again, *Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you.*

This was to be another fitful night of fiercely demonic dreams. Within and inside of those dreams, though, Fr. John repeatedly found himself to be praying the St. Michael prayer, which would cause him to wake up with his heart practically pounding out of his chest. Again, he would pray. *Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you. Jesus I trust in you.* And he would eventually drift off into sleep again. This process repeated itself three times until 5 A.M.

At that time, Fr. John got up and went for a run down the hill and around the quaint New England town of Stockbridge, the one made famous in James Taylor's song "Sweet Baby James." As often occurred, the words of that charming song started to play in the mind of Fr. John as he continued on his 5.5 mile run out to the Norman Rockwell Museum and back. *The first of December was covered with snow, and so was the turnpike from Stockbridge to Boston.* For some reason or another, Fr. John always subconsciously thought of the Virgin Mary when that part of the song played in his mind. But he didn't know why.

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Chapter 6

A Trip from Stockbridge to Boston

Praise the Lord, all nations! Extol him, all peoples! For great is his steadfast love toward us; and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.

Praise the Lord!

Psalm 117: 1-2

It was a Friday morning in the second week of May. More than two weeks had passed since the Cardinal had tasked Fr. John with the job of looking into the letter that was inside of the briefcase on the empty front seat next to him. That morning Fr. John was driving eastward on the I-90 Massachusetts Turnpike from Stockbridge to Boston.

Fr. John had been working steadily throughout the days and sometimes late into the nights. But he did not let his prayer life suffer. In fact, he made sure that he took extra time to pray each day. This was something that Fr. Cherubim had advised - insisted upon might be a more accurate description. "While you are in the midst of this special task, John, increase the time that you pray the Rosary," said Fr. Cherubim. "Pray all 20 mysteries of the Rosary each day in the Shrine. Do so while gazing upon the exposed Blessed Sacrament or upon the Tabernacle. When you pray, you may think about the task that the Cardinal has entrusted to you, but do that only for some of the mysteries. And when you pray the Sorrowful mysteries, contemplate only the Lord's Passion."

Fr. John had strictly followed this advice. He interspersed four periods throughout each day to pray the Rosary. During these periods, he asked the Virgin Mother to pray to her Son for him in order that he might obtain the wisdom that he needed to understand what God wanted him to know, so that he might faithfully complete his task for the Cardinal and the Church.

This day, on the drive to Boston, Fr. John was praying the brown wooden Rosary that he held in his right hand. In fact, during the two-hour trip, he was able to complete all 20 mysteries.

When he had arrived inside the city limits, Fr. John made a hands-free call on his cell phone to Carol and Mike's house.

Carol had her youngest son, eight-month old Peter, on her hip. She had just cleaned him up after his late-morning feeding, and she was getting ready to tuck him in for a nap. Carol answered the phone in her most pleasant voice, despite the fact that she was exhausted from a nearly sleepless night with her four-year old, Tommy, who had a low-grade fever during the night. Thankfully, though, he was feeling just fine in the morning, catching up on some much-needed sleep on the family room couch.

"Hi, this is the Ryan residence."

"Carol, it's Fr. John. How are ya'?"

"I'm doing fine, Father. And how are you?"

"Everything is fine, Carol. I'm calling because I've just driven in from Stockbridge and I'll be in Boston on some Church business until Monday. I was hoping, though, to be able to see you and Mike and the kids while I'm in town."

"That sounds fantastic. Mike and the kids will be elated, too. Can you come by for an early cook-out dinner tomorrow, Father?"

"That does sound great, Carol. I'd love to!"

"Mike's partner and his wife and kids are going to meet us on the beach near the Curley Community Center for some burgers and hot dogs.

Then Mike and his partner are going to Fenway for a night game. Please say you'll come, and that you'll go to the game with them."

"Oh, Carol, as wonderful as a game at Fenway sounds, I don't want to impose."

"Not at all, Father. We have an extra ticket because my dad was going to go, but I just got off the phone with him 15 minutes ago, and he needs to go to New Hampshire to help a friend with a project at his parish in Manchester. So your timing is perfect!"

"In that case, my favorite Boston family *and* a Red Sox game! You bet I'm interested! God is really smiling on me on this trip!"

"Great. Do you have GPS on your phone?"

"Yes, I do."

"Okay, Father, use it to find your way to the Curley Community Center. We'll be on what they're calling 'Southie Beach,' a nod towards Miami's South Beach. Just look for the flag pole to the left of the Community Center. That's where we'll be. You can usually find a parking spot on Columbia Road, just a stone's throw away."

"Terrific, Carol. What time should I stop by tomorrow?"

"Come by around 5:00 o'clock tomorrow night, Father, we'll eat and then and you guys can head over to the game, which starts at 7:00 o'clock. Does that work for you, Father?"

"It's perfect. I'll see you and the family then."

"Wonderful, Father."

"And I look forward to meeting Mike's partner and his family."

“They’re great Protestant people – you’ll love them, Father. And I wish you success on whatever has brought you here to Boston.”

“Thank you very much, Carol. I’ll see you tomorrow at 5 o’clock. I’m sure looking forward to it.”

Fr. John was beaming in anticipation of the next evening. Good people *and* his favorite baseball team. *Nothing could be better*, he thought to himself.

Shortly after he pressed the button on the steering wheel to end the phone call, Fr. John pulled into a parking lot near MIT. He then walked the four blocks to the Hayden Library, a place where he had spent hundreds and hundreds of hours as an MIT student. At the front desk, Fr. John picked up a special “all access” type of library pass, one that would allow him all the privileges that he’d enjoy if he were on the faculty. This was a special arraignment made by an old friend on the faculty, someone who was presently on a two week mini-sabbatical lecturing at CERN in Geneva, the most famous particle physics laboratory in the world.

Fr. John was going to be researching matters that involved astronomy and astrophysics at the Hayden Library, updating his knowledge regarding a very specific subject area of his former field, one that he had studied intently years prior. But he knew that, as with all sciences, there could be a great deal of additional research that he might uncover, fresh material that could have developed since his days as a practicing astrophysicist, information that could be well beyond what he’d find from researching on the internet. So he set aside two full days to learn what he could at MIT’s best science library.

Then this little refresher course would take Fr. John to the Wolbach Library at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics in Cambridge. There, another friend, this one from the Harvard Divinity School, had

arranged for a similar “all access” type pass to one of the world’s premier collections of books, journals, conference material, and dissertations in the fields of astronomy and astrophysics. Fr. John would be spending all day Monday accessing that library’s impressive fount of scientific knowledge. Again, the subject area that he wished to study at Harvard was the same particular area of cosmic study that he’d be studying at MIT. Fr. John felt that if he missed any new developments in his review of MIT’s vast collections on Friday and Saturday, he’d likely find it at Harvard on Monday, and then he’d return to the Shrine for Monday evening Vespers.

So, dressed in his Roman Catholic black shirt, black pants, and priestly white-collar, Fr. John drew more than a few second-looks from MIT’s students as he began to go through the stacks of books and the scientific journals at MIT’s Hayden Library. But once Fr. John had collected a pile of material, he settled into a chair at a table in a corner of the library, taking notes on several pads of yellow legal paper, ones that he had loaded into his briefcase before his trip. He repeated this process several times throughout the day and into the night, stopping to refuel on only a box of granola bars and bottled water that he had taken with him in a small backpack. The library stayed open until midnight, and Fr. John was one of the last to leave just before the doors shut.

The next morning, Fr. John concelebrated a 7:15 A.M. Saturday morning Mass a little less than two miles from MIT. It was at the Our Lady of Victories Catholic Church on Isabella Street, the parish where Fr. John had slept that night. The Marists priest-pastor of the lovely parish had, over the preceding ten years, taken bus-loads of his flock on Divine Mercy Sunday pilgrimages to the Shrine. So the rector of the Shrine in Stockbridge was easily able to arrange Our Lady of Victories rectory as a resting place for Fr. John, a place to lay his head while in Boston.

And this was indeed a special Mass because it was May 13th, a day for the world-wide Church to remember the first appearance of the Virgin Mary to the three little “seer” children at Fatima, Portugal in 1917 - exactly 100 years prior, exactly to the day. During his homily, the pastor spoke with great reverence and tenderness about the significance of the centennial of Mary’s appearance at Fatima, and how, exactly 64 years later, the Virgin protected Pope John Paul II when he was shot in St. Peter’s Square on May 13, 1981. As the sainted pope said later, “one hand fired, and another guided the bullet.” Pope John Paul II was totally convinced that the Blessed Mother was the reason that he survived that assassination attempt, the reason that the deadly bullet had just missed his main abdominal artery by the merest fraction of an inch. The doctors had confirmed that if his artery had been struck, Rome’s beloved bishop would have bled out in the Popemobile before he reached the hospital.

After Mass and a quick breakfast of black coffee, fried eggs and toast, Fr. John was back at work at MIT when the library doors opened at 8:30 A.M. This time, though, in anticipation of going to the cookout on the beach and the ball game later that night, Fr. John wore his civvies to the library - a pair of blue jeans and a Red Sox tee-shirt, one with the retired Big Papi’s 34 on the back. He had actually taken this shirt to wear during a familiar run that he had planned to take. He was going to run from Jamaica Pond Park, down toward Fenway, across the Charles River on the Harvard Bridge, then back over the Charles on the Longfellow Bridge in order to return to his starting place. This had always been his favorite route to run when he lived in Boston. But based upon his new plans for Saturday night, he put his Big Papi tee-shirt to a different, more exciting use.

Dressed in this casual attire, Fr. John drew less looks from the MIT students who were going about their own studies in the Hayden Library that morning, many still a bit groggy from some late-night partying. Fr. John worked eight straight hours, taking time only to refresh himself with bottled

water, choosing a mini-fast of sorts in recognition of the Virgin's admonition to the Fatima "seers" to fast in reparation for sinners. He gathered material from the stacks, received the ready assistance from some of the helpful MIT librarians, and he took many more pages of notes.

Although a small portion of the material in the books and studies that he was finding was new and different, the basic outline of the subject area hadn't changed so drastically such that Fr. John felt overwhelmed by it. He knew that his knowledge base remained solid, but it was now refreshed and honed with some newer research. He was confident of that. Yet, after taking the Sabbath off to rest, read the Bible, and pray, he would still plan to spend a full day at Harvard's prestigious science library on Monday, just to make sure that he wasn't missing something.

Now, though, it was 4:30 P.M., so it was time to leave for some fun with friends at the beach.

* * *

"Fr. John, over here," shouted Carol to her guest. "Here we are!"

Fr. John saw Carol and Mike and the kids waving to him with buoyant smiles on their faces. The early evening breeze by the ocean was warm and the air was sun-drenched - a perfect day to be at Southie Beach. "Hello, my friends," said the Marian priest as he waved in reply, walking through the sand.

Fr. John hailed his old friends, and then he met some new ones. Mike made the introductions. "Fr. John, this here is my partner, Leroy Biggs. Everybody just calls him Biggs. He likes to think it's his muscles that give him that nickname, but we all know it's because of his ego. And this is his beautiful wife, May. As you can see, the fact that he got May to marry him is what gives him his big ego."

“It’s my pleasure, Leroy,” said Fr. John, as Biggs pumped his hand with enormous power, looking directly into the priest’s eyes. “And May, it’s very nice to meet you as well. Carol has spoken so highly of you and your family.”

“And Mike and Carol have told us so much about you,” said May. “And it’s all good things, Father.”

“I’ve heard wonderful things about you, too. And, May, who’s this handsome boy in your arms?”

“This is our son, Jalen. He’s 12-months old and started walkin’ recently.”

After exchanging warm greeting with the rest of the kids, Fr. John pitched in helping Mike and Biggs grill up some hamburgers and hotdogs. And once dinner had finished, Carol and May took all of the young ones for a walk by the water, while the three men sat on some aluminum beach chairs, their feet in the sand and each of their right hands wrapped around a can of *Budweiser*.

“So, gentlemen, what’s new at the Boston PD?”

“Well, Father, we’re gearin’ up for a busy summer,” replied Mike. “Biggs and I were recently briefed by the FBI and Homeland Security folks on some possible terrorist attacks that could be planned for the City, so when we go to Fenway tonight, don’t be surprised if you see the Boston PD out in greater force than usual.”

“Will the two of you be putting in some extra time at Fenway this summer, too?”

Biggs replied, “We sure will. And I think that you’ll find this interesting, Father. It’s actually the technology that we’ll have access to that will be our best friend.”

Fr. John asked, “What do you mean?”

“Well, Fenway is now surrounded by cameras,” said Biggs. “And those cameras are connected up to a central computer database with facial-recognition software. If the database hits on any known terrorists in the crowd, the cop closest to him will be immediately notified by an ear piece. It’s some pretty cool stuff.”

“That does sound interesting,” replied Fr. John.

“I was thinkin’ the other day how amazing it is, Father,” said Mike. “The Good Lord has marked his property – us human beings, that is – in some incredible ways. First, it was with fingerprints – a cop’s dream because no two people in the world have the exact same set of fingerprints. The first crime buster. Then it was with DNA, a marker that identifies us in a singular way, each one different from the other. That has solved more crimes, *after the fact*, than we could ever have imagined fifty years ago when fingerprints were the only game in town. But now we have facial-recognition technology that can help us solve crimes *before* they happen. So, from across the street, a camera connected to a computer can identify one human being from another in an astonishing way.”

“That *is* amazing,” said the priest.

“You know, Mike, you’re on to something with that,” said Biggs. “I was stationed at the Pentagon for the nine months before I got out of the Navy. They used biometrics for entry into some of the most secure areas. You’d place your ID card in a machine and, as you looked straight ahead, another machine would scan your iris while you placed your right hand on a screen. That machine not only did a digital fingerprint read, but it also did a biometric scan of the palm, too. All of these were positive markers that definitively identified you as a friendly or an intruder.”

“When I was in the Marines, we also used iris scans in Afghanistan,” said Mike. “We had these handheld devices and we’d put it up to the face of an Afghani, and without even touching them, you’d be able to reach back into an FBI database in the U.S. of A. We identified slews of terrorists that way.”

“And that’s *God’s mark* that allowed for it,” said Biggs, nodding towards his new friend.

That simple statement struck Fr. John with all the force of a freight train, since it held deep implications with regard to a vital issue that had been occupying his mind. He immediately thought about the various ways that one human being is in fact *marked by God*. Fingerprints. DNA. Retina. Iris. All the result of how *God* created that person while they were still in the womb. Verses from the Holy Bible flooded his mind: “*For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful...*” (Ps 139:13-14). “*This is what the LORD says - your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the LORD, the Maker of all things ...*” (Is 44:24). “*Before I formed you in the womb I knew you ...*” (Jer 1:5). These were all among the spontaneous thoughts deep within Fr. John’s mind, and they are summed up with these words: *God marks His people in various and wonderful ways!* As Christ Himself said, “*And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered*” (Mt 10:30). *God knows us because He created us, and in ways that are distinctive and unrepeatable. No human being is identified in the same way as another, and that’s because God marked us - identified us - that way, in the same exact way that His own Son was marked - with fingerprints, DNA, and retina - all distinctive and unrepeatable.*

At this moment, Carol and May returned with the kids. “You boys better get goin’ if you want to get to Fenway in time for the first pitch,” insisted Carol.

“You’re exactly right about that, my love,” replied Mike. And with that the three men stood up and began to gather their things.

Carol said, “We’ll take care of everything, as long as you put the grill in the car. That way we can sit here with the kids for a bit and enjoy the beach until sunset.”

“Sounds perfect,” said Biggs. The two men kissed their wives and then accompanied Fr. John to his car. Twenty minutes later they were parking in a lot off of Boylston Street and walking over to Fenway.

Fr. John loved that old ball park. And from his days at MIT, he knew every inch of it, right down to the intricacies of the left-field scoreboard and how it actually featured the Morse code spelling out of the initials of Tom and Jean Yawkey, the most beloved former owners of Boston’s ball club.

The Red Sox were playing Chicago that night. The game was tied 6 to 6 in the bottom of the ninth, when up to the plate stepped the Red Sox’s slugger, known to all of Boston by his nickname, *Big John*. It was an appropriate name for John Alvaro, a native of the Dominican Republic, since he had forearms like Big Jim Rice and biceps like tree trunks. With one out and nobody on, Big John took a 2-2 inside fastball and sent it sailing toward the Green Monster. As Fr. John followed the ball’s trajectory from his center field seat, he looked over and saw a sign being held by a guy in the first row atop the left field’s Green Monster wall. It read *Big John 3:16*. The game-winning homerun ball sailed just over his head – just over the sign.

As the crowd erupted at the 7 to 6 victory over Chicago, after a few seconds of exhilaration and some high-fives with Biggs, Mike noticed that

Fr. John was looking at the sign holder with rapt interest. He smiled. “I saw that season ticket holder interviewed on NESN yesterday. Do you know why he holds up that sign, Father?”, Mike asked his friend and confessor.

“Not really. But I think I got an idea as to why.”

“Well, it’s got a double meaning, Father. The first meaning is the obvious one, probably what you’re thinkin’ now. The guy is a born-again Christian and he’s tryin’ to spread the word. But there’s a second meaning, too, one that’s a bit more humorous - and a bit more precise. He only holds that sign up when our cleanup hitter, Big John Alvaro, is at bat. And it’s because he’s looking for Big John to hit the ball exactly 316 feet since where he sits on top of the Green Monster it is exactly 315 feet from home plate. So if Big John hits the ball exactly 316 feet, not only is it a homerun, but that ball becomes a souvenir baseball that lands right in his lap! Believe it or not, he’s got two of them off of Big John so far this year.”

Fr. John laughed a hardy laugh and said only one word in reply, “Beautiful!” Then he looked at the scoreboard behind him to watch a replay of Big John’s home run. There, on the huge screen, the priest watched the ball sail over the *Big John 3:16* sign. For some reason, he also took conscious note of the time on the clock seen in the replay. It was exactly 10:13 P.M.

* * *

The next day, after concelebrating Sunday Mass with the pastor of Our Lady of Victories Church, Fr. John rested in the study of the rectory by reading the entire Gospel of Mark, as well as Pope Benedict XVI’s *Jesus of Nazareth*. The latter work had always been something that was on his list to read, and now that he had finally done so, he was deeply impressed by

the insights of the former Bishop of Rome, including those on the opening page:

In every age, man's questioning has focused not only on his ultimate origin; almost more than the obscurity of his beginnings, what preoccupies him is the hiddenness of the future that awaits him. Man wants to tear aside the curtain; he wants to know what is going to happen, so that he can avoid perdition and set out toward salvation.

After finishing the last page of that book, and judging it to be a modern-day masterpiece, Fr. John went from the rectory on Isabella Street and into the Church to pray and contemplate the Lord within the Holy Tabernacle. Benedict's opening words hung heavy on his heart that night. The pope had properly insisted, he thought, that the man of God wants "to lift the veil of the future", not for mere purposes of human curiosity, but as a means to know "the path he has to take to avoid coming to grief" - that is, *to know the path that he must take in order to reach God*. That actually summed up what had been occupying Fr. John's mind during the entirety of his recent studies in Boston.

The next day, after celebrating Monday morning Mass for about two dozen of the parish's regulars, Fr. John spent eight straight hours researching at Harvard's Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Then, having completed the work that he had set out to do in Boston, Fr. John drove back to Stockbridge, taking the opportunity offered by that two-hour drive to listen to a public radio broadcast devoted solely to the music of Johann Sabastian Bach.

Fr. John was exhausted when he arrived back on Eden Hill, just in time for the evening prayers of the Divine Office. The reading that night was from the *first* pope: "Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him,

firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world” (1 Pet 5:8-9). Words to *live* by, he thought to himself, and words to *die* by, too.

#

Chapter 7

Back Home to Brooklyn

*I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go;
I will counsel you with my eye upon you.*

Psalm 32:8

Fr. John was behind the wheel of the Marian's Ford Taurus driving down the Taconic Parkway in New York State, about 100 miles north of his destination, which was the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn. It was Friday, August 11, 2017. While Fr. John should have been focused on the meeting that he would have with the Cardinal and the Bishop the following afternoon, his mind was actually replaying the farewell conversation that had taken place a short time earlier in the great room at Eden Hill's National Shrine of Divine Mercy.

Since his last mission to the United States was now finished, Fr. Cherubim was about to return to his native Poland. Fr. Cherubim had his \$1,220 *Aer Lingus* tickets for his flight from Boston to Warsaw, the best price that Brother Pio could find online. When Brother Pio purchased the airline ticket a couple days before, though, he thought to himself that it was peculiar that the "national airline" of *Ireland*, of all places, would have the best price for a flight to *Poland*, to the place where the original Divine Mercy Image was painted. But Brother Pio was not accustomed to refusing a bargain, especially since he was trained as he was in recognizing the free-gift offering of overwhelming richness that constituted the divine mercy promise. Bargains - spiritual and otherwise - thought Brother Pio, often came in unusual and unexpected forms and from unusual and unexpected places.

The conversation from the previous hour that Fr. John was replaying again and again in his head began with him asking his Polish mentor a

pointed, penetrating question, one that had been lingering in the back of his mind for months. “Father, I’ve been wondering about something,” asked Fr. John. “Since your arrival here from Poland back in April, I’ve sensed that you were not at all surprised by what you’ve learned here, nor were you surprised that I’ve found myself in the middle of this task. Am I wrong about that?”

Fr. Cherubim smiled and replied, “No, you are not wrong, John. I was not surprised one bit.”

“Why is that?”

“Well, John, do you remember when I first met you, way back when you were still discerning your calling to the priesthood?”

“Yes, I do, Father. It was right here on Eden Hill.”

“Yes, it was John. Well, during the early morning hours after that first meeting – it must have been around 2 in the morning that next day – I had a visitor, you might say. The Lord’s Mother paid me a visit in a dream, as she sometimes does. Her message to me was quite simple. She said, ‘My Son, the Christ, has plans for John. Welcome him into the Marians.’ That happened many years ago.

“But then on Mercy Sunday morning several months ago, while I was back in Poland, right before I awoke, I had another dream. It was the Blessed Virgin once again. And once again, her message to me was quite simple. She said, ‘You have one last mission to complete for my Son before He calls you home.’ John, it was later that same day that I received the call to pack my bags for the United States. It appears to me that the Lord’s Mother loves you, John. Very much. As do I.”

Fr. John pondered those words for a long moment before he came forward with a response. He looked right into the elderly priest's eyes, and he said, "I love you too, my friend. Deeply - within my heart."

"Thank you, John. Now let me ask you something ... something off the beaten path a bit, you might say. Other than the poet Virgil, who was Dante's guide in *The Divine Comedy*?"

"Hmm ... why, it was Beatrice, Father."

"And who was Beatrice?"

"She was Dante's lost love; she had died quite young - in her twenties, I recollect."

"Yes. You are right about that. Now, John, was she an honest and trustworthy guide?"

"Of course! Why do you ask that, Father?"

"I just wanted to make sure that you know your Dante - that's all."

Then Fr. Cherubim grabbed Fr. John's arms firmly just below the shoulders, he shook him a slight bit, and he returned a look directly into the younger priest's eyes: "Don't forget, Fr. John. In this situation, *you propose*. Then the main Shepherds of the Catholic Church, they will sift through your words like wheat, not in the way that Satan wished to sift the Apostles like wheat (Lk 22:31); not at all. But, rather, to carefully sift through your words to determine what is worthy and wise in your words - and what is not. *That means that the leaders of the Church, they dispose*. So speak your mind - fully, carefully, and completely. That's my parting advice to you. God bless you, Fr. John. As they say, my friend, I'll see you on the other side of the veil." The two men hugged in a manly embrace.

Fr. John's eyes became watery as he remembered his elderly friend. At that same moment, Fr. Cherubim was already in a vehicle heading east on the Massachusetts Turnpike, heading toward Logan Airport in Boston, while Fr. John was heading south toward New York City on the Taconic Parkway. The next time that Fr. Cherubim would lay his head on a pillow for some much needed sleep, it would be in his hometown of Warsaw, Poland.

After exchanging some small talk with Fr. Cherubim about the weather in Boston and Warsaw, Br. Pio switched on the car radio. It was tuned to his favorite contemporary Christian radio station known for its uplifting music - music that came with a message, one that was fundamentally about *Jesus, His Father*, and the breath of the *Holy Spirit* that is constantly being exchanged between them.

As though in unison, about 55 miles apart, going in an entirely different direction, Fr. John turned to that very same radio station at that very same moment. The lyrics to Francesca Battistelli's charming song, *Holy Spirit*, were playing, and they went like this:

*Holy Spirit, You are welcome here
Come flood this place and fill the atmosphere
Your glory, God, is what our hearts long for
To be overcome by Your presence, Lord,
Your presence, Lord.*

Fr. John softly tapped the steering wheel with his hands as though he were gently playing a drum to the beat of that soul-piercing song.

It drew his mind back to his school-kid days in music class at St. Stan's in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn. His gritty, gray-haired music teacher, the 77-year old Sister Clarence Mary Clement, would have the entire class playing various instruments, singing a song that she had written

in her younger days, which, at that time, was several decades prior. The title of that song was a simple one: “*Jesus, The New Song.*” It always appeared to John that his elderly teacher would mysteriously beam as she told her seventh-graders that her song was inspired by a relative from long ago. Fr. John recalled that the class of young boys and girls never sounded *so beautifully in-tune* as when they played that particular song. It was as though they were out on the playground playing their favorite game on a warm, spring-time day. In that game, the kids would all stand in a big circle and they would use their hands to bat a huge big blue ball into the air, one that looked like a blue tennis ball. The non-competitive objective of that game: to keep the ball aloft for as long as possible without letting it hit the ground. That memory made Fr. John smile.

At 3 P.M., the hour of God’s Mercy, Fr. John switched from the car radio to a CD that he had purchased the previous year at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy’s Gift Shop. It was the Chaplet of Divine Mercy in Song. Fr. John sang along his prayer asking for God’s Mercy to flow out on all of humanity. He began that prayer just as he always did, with these words – words spoken from his heart: “Pour out Your Divine Mercy, Lord; pour out Your Divine Mercy over all peoples throughout the whole world.”

* * *

A little less than three hours after leaving Eden Hill, Fr. John arrived at his destination: his childhood home at 587 Humboldt Street in Brooklyn, New York. His home – now occupied by his mom and his older sister Humilia and her husband Jim, along with their three kids – was a three-story building. There were three steps leading to the front porch. That porch and the house were painted Shamrock green, accented with a much darker shade of Deep Forest green, one that was used to color the trim surrounding the front door and all twelve of the windows that faced the street.

Fr. John's childhood home was directly across the street from the St. Stanislaus Kostka Catholic Church, one with a red-brick rectory located directly next to the Church. That Parish, first established in 1896, was run by the Polish Vincentian Fathers, primarily to serve the needs of the ongoing flow of Polish immigrants into the New York City area. This bilingual Parish served the steady stream of humanity that continually arrived in Greenpoint from all parts of Poland, even into the 21st century.

In his youth, Fr. John would walk across the street to serve as an altar boy. John's older sister Humilia would often tease him about that particular night when, during bedtime, she caught the eight-year old boy, who was in the third-grade, with the covers pulled up just below his chin. He had done this to disguise the fact that he was already fully dressed in his grade school uniform, slacks, shirt, and clip-on blue neck tie. He had gone to bed this way thinking that he would be like a fireman, able to roll right out of bed and out the door - only he wouldn't be going to put out a fire ... he would be going to *light a fire*, one that he would use to light the candles on the altar for the 7 A.M. morning Mass celebrated by Fr. Lech Wysiecki, a priest beloved by all the people of Greenpoint.

Fr. Wysiecki would often reminisce with his young altar boys about the most distinguished visitor that had ever visited his Parish: John Paul the Great. In September of 1969, at a 7 A.M. morning Mass much like those that John had served many times, Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, the then-Archbishop of Kraków, and the future Pope Saint John Paul II, concelebrated Mass at St. Stan's with Fr. Wysiecki. John's mom, Marjan was a reader of the Word at that morning daily Mass, while her future husband, Gabriel, since he was the son of the lead *Kolektorzy*, he got to meet this special churchman who had been elevated to Cardinal by Pope Paul VI just two years earlier. The future pope spent a total of six hours at the Parish, blessing the very baptismal font where John and each of his older siblings would later be baptized in the years after Gabriel and Marjan

married in 1976, the year Gabriel was discharged from the U.S. Navy after a four-year tour, one that included wartime service in the Mekong Delta as a Gunner's Mate First Class manning a .50 caliber machine gun on a U.S. Navy Swift Boat.

After John Paul II became the Holy Pontiff, the area in front of the church was rechristened as Pope John Paul II Square. That Square was later visited by another prestigious visitor to the Parish. The one-time Chairman of the Polish Solidarity Movement, and the then-current President of Poland, Lech Walesa, was the second most famous guest to come to St. Stan's. Together with his long-time bride, Danuta, and several of their eight children, President Walesa came to the Parish for morning Mass on the day before Ash Wednesday in March 1991. The young John, while standing next to his father, got to shake the famous Polish President's hand. That accomplishment brought to him great esteem among his classmates later that day. His teacher, Sister Martha Majerczyk, made sure that all of her students knew that this was truly an important visitor to Greenpoint.

Sister Majerczyk told the whole class that on a visit to Poland, Pope John Paul II had told the Solidarity leader - and all the Polish people - that the right to join together as a people to preserve the fruits of the sweat of their brow was a God-given right. "This right is not given to us by the state," said the Polish Pontiff. "It is a right given by the Creator." That was Fr. John's only memory of what Sister Majerczyk had taught him during that entire year. He knew that there had to be more that he had learned, but remarkably enough, it was only those very grown-up sorts of words that his young mind retained as a clear and distinct memory of that school year.

Upon his arrival after his drive down the Taconic Parkway from Eden Hill, Fr. John was not able to locate his 64 year-old mom at home. He immediately thought that she might be located at St. Stan's across the street,

perhaps tending to the flowers on the altar, as she would often do. So across the street Fr. John went, he entered the middle of the three sets of doors to the Church, climbing each of the four steps. And there he found his mother. She was kneeling before the Our Lady of Fatima Sculpture, one that was just about full size at five feet tall, with the three seer children kneeling piously before their Blessed Mother.

Fr. John genuflected toward the Tabernacle, and he then walked quietly up the left-side aisle, careful not to disturb his mother who was deep in prayer, all alone in the Church. He tip-toed behind her and gently kissed her on the right side where her neck and cheek met, wakening her to his presence.

“Hi mama,” he whispered in her ear.

“My son! God’s blessings upon you, my love,” said his mom joyfully.

“I just got in and I thought that I might find you here. How’s Our Lady? I hope that you’ve been asking her to help me!”

“Certainly, I have, son,” she said. “You know that I always do. Every day. Again and again - on my Rosary beads.”

“I know, mama.”

“And I’m after your father every day, too. Each day I say, ‘Gabriel, have you talked to Mary about each of our four children, and all of our grandchildren yet?’ I think that your dad in heaven might find me to be a complete nag! But the way I look at it, son, after 40 years of marriage, why should I stop pestering him now?” She laughed out loud and Fr. John joined her in genuine amusement. He realized that he was truly delighted to be at home with his mom.

“Were you tending to the altar and the flowers, mom?”

“Yes, son. I was getting the Church ready for the 5:00 P.M. Friday evening Mass.”

“Well, the Church looks wonderful, as usual.”

It was now 4:45 P.M., and the first of the old ladies and the old men were arriving for the Mass, ready to say their Rosaries. Prayer warriors for their kids and grandkids. Yes, battle cries were about to go up from the pews - indeed, all around the world. That’s why God created Catholic grandparents - to be prayer warriors all!

“I’m ready to go home now, son. I went to Mass this morning. We should begin to get ready to go out to dinner with your brothers and your sister tonight. I made reservations at the Karczma Restaurant on Greenpoint Avenue. I’m getting the Hunters Stew, of course. My favorite.”

As they began to exit the Church, Fr. John noticed a childhood friend on the other side of the Church; it was Nick De Rosa, a Captain in the FDNY, stationed at Ladder 128 on Greenpoint Avenue. Nick was there with his mom, kneeling in prayer, and, as he glanced up, he caught sight of Fr. John and his mom.

Together with Brendan Templeton, who had moved up north to the State Capital, eventually becoming the City of Albany’s Chief of Police, Nick and John were three running mates who roamed the streets of Greenpoint mostly untouched throughout their youth, like three little lions. They always had each other’s backs, despite the fact that Nick was Italian, Brendan was Scottish, and John was a Pole.

There was, for instance, the time that John was being bullied by three muscle heads at the McCarren Park pool. Nick and Brendan were playing a game of pick-up basketball a few hundred yards away, but when they got wind of what was happening, they were there lickety-split, and with them as back up, the three friends dropped the muscle heads with a flurry of body

blows, left jabs, right crosses, and drop-em'-to-the-ground left hooks. After that show of force, no Greenpoint bully ever bothered the three friends again. They were known to be battle tested, and battle ready at all times.

Fr. John and his mom approached his friend and his mom. “Hi Nick,” said Fr. John with a hushed voice.

His friend responded with a knowing grin, in a full-throated tone, “John, my friend, what are you doin’ in town?” As he said this, he stood up and gave his friend a slap on the back and he pumped his hand in a forceful shake. He then greeted Fr. John’s mom, and reintroduced his own mom. From days gone by, though, everyone already knew each other.

“Well, Nick, I’m here to see my mom today, plus I’ve got some Church business to attend to in the City, starting tomorrow, that is.” Fr. John and Nick then reminisced briefly about the good ol’ days.

At that point, Nick offered an invitation to his old friend: “Hey, John, Brendan Templeton is in town and I’m going to meet him out for a couple beers at the Keg & Lantern on Nassau Avenue. It will be at 9 o’clock tonight. Please join us for a pint or two, won’t you?”

“I wouldn’t miss it, Nick. And I’ll make it two pints. I’ll see you and Brenden there at 9 o’clock. Tell Brenden that I look forward to seeing him.”

Nick looked behind Fr. John and said, “You can tell Brendan yourself. He’s standing right behind you.” Fr. John turned around, and sure enough, there was he was, Brendan Templeton, the City of Albany’s Chief of Police. He too was also with his mom. More reintroductions took place, and plans for drinking some beer were confirmed. Then, after some more words were spoken about days gone by when these three men were just kids, they parted ways with plans to meet later for some beers.

Fr. John then walked his mom across the street to her long-time home. His sister and his brother-in-law, as well as his niece and two nephews, had since returned home from the grocery store. The kids greeted Fr. John with kisses and cries of “Father Uncle,” a moniker begun by Humilia and Jim’s child, Maggie, about a year ago. It became a nickname that spread like wildfire through the rest of the nieces and nephews. Whenever Fr. John would return home, cries of “Father Uncle” would fill 587 Humboldt Street.

* * *

The Karczma Restaurant on Greenpoint Avenue was Mrs. Adamczyk’s favorite, partly because the extra-friendly wait staff wore traditional Polish garb, and they spoke the native tongue, at least good enough to take everyone’s orders and chat up some small talk. She also loved their traditional Pickle Soup, their Pierogis, their Hunter’s Stew cooked with Red Wine, and their famous Karczma’s Crepes for desert. Fr. John’s mom would feed her grandkids snacks from the leftovers for days after those meals. This was a monthly outing for her, made even more special this time, because she would have all four of her children with her.

On this night, Mrs. Adamczyk’s family took up a large table in the center of the restaurant, as well as two booths along the wall that were now occupied by nine of the grandkids, those old enough to feed themselves. There were eight adults at the center table, as well as two of the grand kids who were still in high-chairs. The adults around the table were Mrs. Adamczyk, Fr. John, his brothers David and Phillip, and his sister Humilia, as well as their respective spouses, Mary, Cathy, and Jim. Quaint paintings of Poland hung on the wall. But that was not all: one of the paintings was a reprint of The Divine Mercy Image, the one brought to the world by the Polish nun, St. Faustina. The Polish owner of the restaurant was a devout Catholic and a lover of the divine mercy message, the second favorite saint

of the owner's Italian wife. The softest spot in her heart remained for the "mystic monk" Padre Pio, the hulk of a modern-day saint from her native Italy.

Fr. John's oldest sibling, David, was at one end of the center table in the restaurant. He and his lovely wife Mary had been married for 20 years, and they had six kids - three boys and three girls. David was a solid, rock-rib conservative Republican, a rare thing in the Brooklyn DA's Office; but because he was good at putting murderers in prison, his party affiliation didn't much matter to the upper brass in the DA's Office. This was especially so because he had the firm backing of every single NYPD cop that he had ever worked a murder case with as the homicide bureau chief, the position that David held for the past decade. And there were hundreds of those cops who had worked directly with David, as well as scores more cops who knew and loved him only based on his reputation.

David had three suits, all the exact same color: dark blue. It was a color that he chose in honor of the Virgin Mother. The colors of his neckties, on the other hand, were a bit more variable: they ranged from a lighter shade of plain red to a darker shade of plain red. His black shoes were always perfectly spit-shined polished. And he always loved to wear the same old, dark-gray Wool Fedora Hat, one that had cost Mary \$9.99 the year that she gave birth to their first children, the twins, Augustine and Monica. That was Mary's gift because, as she told him in a lovely note, "My love, dads should have Fedoras, and in the summer, they should always enjoy an occasional Gin and Tonic." He followed her advice on both scores.

To get battle ready for work each day, a task that David saw partly as outright spiritual warfare, he attended 7 A.M. Mass at St. Stan's every morning before work. Mary, a stay-at-home, hard-working *working mom*, whose mission in life had been raising her kids and caring for her husband,

was getting ready to send their twins off to college that month. They were both going to attend Christendom College in Front Royal, Virginia. The twins had their hearts set on Christendom after attending a week-long summer program, one that they had just loved because the faculty and students were simply *their kind of people*. In fact, when David picked them up from the summer program week, both said in near unison, “I just fell in love with the place, dad.” So now Mary was hoping that each of her six kids would attend either Christendom or the Franciscan University of Steubenville in Ohio. But already her ninth grader, Clare, had her heart set on Notre Dame, a fact that troubled David and Mary a bit because of the honorary awards that Notre Dame had bestowed on pro-abortion politicians.

Humilia and Jim’s three kids were all under ten years old, so college was a far-distant, future event for them. They each attended St. Stan’s elementary school, and the main priority of the two boys, Tommy and Peter, ages 9 and 8, was playing basketball for the school’s “Screamin’ Eagles” team – the same team that David and John both played for when they were youngsters. As for six-year old Maggie, she had a special place in Fr. John’s heart; it was all because she was a budding scientist. Fr. John encouraged her with story after story about the Catholic scientists who had contributed to the advancement of the scientific method. There were many, so the list could go on and on each trip home.

Fr. John’s brother, Philip, and his wife Cathy, on the other hand, well, they were definitely different. Both were on their second marriages, and they’d been married to each other for five years now. They each had one child from their first marriage, but together they had two additional kids, a six-year old boy named Ben, and an eight-month old girl named Samantha. As the press secretary for the current liberal Democratic New York City mayor, Philip had met and married Cathy, a spokesperson for NARAL in New York City, while he had worked on the campaign of the current

mayor's predecessor. Both Philip and Cathy were staunch advocates of late-term abortion "rights", as well as an Anthony-Kennedy-type-one-size-fits-all-gay-marriage-in-all-fifty-states-rainbow world view. And it was precisely these views that always opened the door - or, perhaps, one might more accurately say, kicked the door open - to a fierce and fulsome debate in the Adamczyk family home. David, John, Humilia and their mom gladly took up the Catholic Church's teaching on these two important social issues, wanting to be counted as sheep on Judgment Day, rather than as goats or wolves.

But on this night - on this *peaceful* night - at a family get-together at a home-town family restaurant, there was no time to concentrate on what divided the family; this was a time to rejoice in each other's company - flesh rejoicing in the presence of the same family flesh, and blood rejoicing in the presence of the same family blood.

Fr. John had taken up his position at the other end of the center table, directly opposite from his older brother David. It was a position of spiritual leadership over his family, even though he was the youngest of the four children. When the food had arrived, the older brother spoke up first. "Everyone, I'd like you all to listen," said David. "Please listen to my kid brother, the youngest of our lot. He is known to some of you as 'Father Uncle,' but to me, he is now known simply as 'Father John,' my little brother in Christ. Little brother, please lead *your* family in prayer."

"Thank you, big brother. Let us pray." The other patrons of the restaurant promptly put down their forks and bowed their heads as well. "Father in Heaven, we thank you for this meal, a *family* meal with our mother, Marjan, known to her grandkids as *Babcia*. Together with her husband, Gabriel, our beloved father, may he rest in God's peace, she raised a family, one of loving baptized children of God. That is not a small task for our day and age. Holy Father in heaven, we thank you for her, and

for everything that she has done for each of us, for her wise and loving charity. And so we pray in the words of *her* Church and therefore *our* Church: Bless us Oh Lord, and these thy gifts, which we are about to receive, from thy bounty, through Christ, Our Lord. Amen.”

What followed was a *family* meal. It was characterized by a single word: love.

* * *

Coming down Greenpoint’s Manhattan Avenue, on their way back home from the restaurant, David and Mary dropped Fr. John off a few minutes away at the Keg & Lantern on Nassau Avenue. Chief Brendan Templeton and Nick De Rosa were already there waiting at a picnic table out back, half way into their *Guinness* pints. When Fr. John joined them, the three men talked briefly about college sports, but the topic quickly turned to the work of a fellow Marian priest at Eden Hill, Fr. Michael E. Gaitley, MIC - in particular, his Marian Consecration entitled *33 Days to Morning Glory*.

As a tough guy with Scottish roots, Chief Templeton was rocked out of his socks when he encountered, during the very first day’s reading, something not at all typical of what one might find in the usual Catholic prayer booklet. What grabbed the Chief by the lapels was a description of the Brittany roots of St. Louis de Montfort, one of Pope St. John Paul II’s most beloved of saints. Here’s what Fr. Gaitley had written in a prayer booklet about Mary:

From ancient times, Celtic warriors have struck terror in the hearts of their enemies. If you’ve ever seen the movie *Braveheart*, you know what I mean. Think of the fearless figure of Sir William Wallace ... and his crazy crew of Scottish Highlanders who take on an English enemy many times their

size. This shows something of the Celtic fighting spirit, but the real life version is even more intense.

Once wearing nothing but blue battle paint, real Celtic warriors would work themselves into a blood-thirsty frenzy, rush into combat screaming their heads off, and wildly slash, bash, and slice away at their enemies with huge, two-handed swords. These fierce fighting men, despite their lack of discipline, armor, and order, were extremely effective in battle because of their unmatched passion and ferocity. Throughout history, nobody has wanted to mess with the crazy Celtic warriors.

St. Louis's dad, Jean Grignon, must have been descended from these wild-men warriors, for nobody wanted to mess with him either. In fact, he was known for having the most fiery temper in all of Brittany. As one author puts it, "He was a volcano frequently erupting." St. Louis, on the other hand, was as gentle as a lamb, right? Wrong. He confessed that his temper was just as bad as his father's. But Louis channeled his fiery passion not to threats and violence but to laboring for the greater Glory of God - well, except for the time he knocked out a couple of drunks who wouldn't stop heckling him while he preached.

That was Albany Chief of Police Branden Templeton's kind of priest, and FDNY Captain Nicholas De Rosa's as well. After discussing Fr. Gaitley's marvelous description of the great saint of Marian consecration, Chief Templeton launched straight off into two hot-button topics that were on his conservative, no-nonsense mind: gun rights and the death penalty. The description crafted by Fr. Gaitley had an important connection to what he and Nick wanted to discuss with their childhood friend, at least it did to them.

Both Chief Templeton and Captain De Rosa took a long drink from their pint glasses, finished them, and politely ordered a second round from the attractive red-haired waitress. Then the Chief began, “John, our Founding Fathers viewed the Second Amendment as a self-defense mechanism against three different types of evil: evil men, evil mobs, and an evil government.

“The first are a fact of life for each and every age. In other words, no age escapes the evil man, be he the rapist or the robber, the murderer or the thief. A Glock is an equalizer against this type of evil man. My 5’2”, 112-pound beautiful wife, Angelia ... she can take down a 6’3”, 350 pound potential rapist with the Glock that she carries in her purse. That’s why I’ve taken her to the shooting range every single month that we’ve been married – over 10 years. It’s because I love her and I want her to be protected.”

Nick piped in, “And Brendan convinced me to do the same thing several years back. So not only are Beth and I now life-long members of the NRA, but we also go to the shooting range every month, too; we go to the Seneca Sporting Range, thanks to Brandon’s good guidance, then Beth and I grab a beer, usually right here.”

“John, we don’t have a difficulty understanding that first type of evil,” said Chief Templeton. “But the second two types of evil that I mentioned – the evil mob and the evil government – as history has proven, they are not something that each age has to contend with, so we can become foggy and complacent about the potential for harm related to those two evils. Because of that fact, John – and I speak particularly to you here because Nick has already heard my spiel on this before – we can become flat-out ignorant of their potential devastating impact. Yet these two types of evils have the potential to rise up in any age. And as free-born citizens, we must be able to combat them. It is a necessity. Why do I say that?”

Chief Templeton reached into the pocket of his blue blazer, one with gold buttons, and he pulled out some carefully folded pieces of paper. He then said, “I brought these two photocopied pages from the *Catechism* with me. When you meet a priest and want to discuss a mixture of religion and politics, ya’ better have some ammunition, right Padre?”

Fr. John and Nick chuckled, and then Fr. John quipped, “Brendan, when you grabbed that paper from your pocket, I saw that gun on your belt, and I know that you came here with more than paper as ammunition.”

The Chief replied, “I sure did. And let me assure you both, for every room that I walk into, I have a plan for killing every single person in that room.” Fr. John and Nick looked at each other slightly perplexed. The Chief pressed forward past the perplexed looks of his friends and said, “And that includes just last month when I accompanied the City of Albany’s Mayor into the New York Governor’s Office at the Capitol!”

The three of them burst out laughing. But knowing Branden the way they did, Fr. John and Nick knew that he was actually as serious as a heart attack when he said it. But they didn’t know what was in the mind of the Albany Chief of Police, and why this former U.S. Marine thought that way.

It was because he greatly admired a U.S. Marine General that he had once served under in Iraq, General James N. Mattis, a Commander of CENTCOM, and a top guy at NATO, too, that is, before he became the U.S. Secretary of Defense. He was known for saying things like, “Be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet.” In fact, that was a statement that Brandan taught *every* cop who patrolled the streets of the City of Albany. The Chief regularly made roaming inspections, and he would often ask, “What’s your battle plan today, officer?” And if that beat cop didn’t respond with that exact statement, he or she knew that there would be a price to pay, if only that they’d have to suffer the look on the

Chief's face - a price that, in and of itself, would be, for most, too high to pay.

Chief Templeton had been impressed with General Mattis' quotes, ones that he found in doing some research on him on the internet. To Iraqi leaders, General Mattis once said, "I come in peace. I didn't bring artillery. But I'm pleading with you, with tears in my eyes: If you fuck with me, I'll kill you all." To Marines in San Diego, he said, "You go into Afghanistan, you got guys who slap women around for five years because they didn't wear a veil. You know, guys like that ain't got no manhood left anyway. So it's a hell of a lot of fun to shoot them. Actually it's quite fun to fight them, you know. It's a hell of a hoot. It's fun to shoot some people. I'll be right up there with you. I like brawling."

When Chief Templeton read Fr. Gaitley's Marian prayer booklet, he could see that General Mattis was a type of Sir William Wallace of his day, and that's what drew Chief Templeton toward both Fr. Gaitley's Marian prayer booklet and General Mattis' warrior mentality, especially since the Marine leader was also known to be a good Christian man among his military men, one who stuck to an old-fashioned warrior code.

As a Lance Corporal in the First Battalion, Fourth Marine Regiment, a young Braden Templeton had met Mattis in an abandoned pistol factory in Al Hillah, one that was about 60 miles south of Baghdad. That chance meeting made quite an impression on the young Marine's mind, one that was moon-crater deep.

Chief Templeton continued, "I'm going to give these heavily marked-up pages to you because I want somebody inside the Church to think through these things very carefully. And since you were one of my best friends growing up, and because I still consider you to be a good friend, I want you to be that person. Maybe you'll be in a position to make a difference about these things one day. Maybe you'll have the chance to talk

to a guy who wears a red hat about this kind of stuff. Regardless, these are things on my heart, and I want them to be on your heart, too. So here goes, my friend. Buckle up.”

Fr. John could see the earnestness with which his childhood friend spoke, so he was just as intent in his reply, “Please speak your mind openly, Branden. I’ll listen very closely to you.”

Chief Templeton took a long drink from the second pint of *Guinness*, and then he began. “First of all, let me start with this, something that’s not written on those two pieces of paper, but it’s something that’s up here,” said the Chief, as he bounced his index finger off of his temple a few times. “I’m convinced that our Good Lord flat-out underscored the lawfulness and the legitimacy of the right to self-defense when, in the Gospel of Luke - the gospel of Mercy - of all places, He directly told His Apostles: ‘Let him who has no sword sell his mantle and buy one’” (Luke 22:36). After quoting that scripture passage from memory, Chief Templeton asked a question, “Was that just a metaphor that Jesus used? I personally don’t think so.”

Fr. John asked, “I’m interested in why you say that, Brandan?”

Chief Templeton pressed forward, “Because of these two pages from my *Catechism*. Paragraph 2264 says this: ‘Someone who defends his life is not guilty of murder even if he is forced to deal his aggressor a lethal blow’. And it then goes on to state, right in the next paragraph, ‘Legitimate defense can be not only a right but a grave duty for one who is responsible for the lives of others. The defense of the common good requires that an unjust aggressor be rendered unable to cause harm.’ These points were underlined on the paper, and Chief Templeton emphasized them with the tone and inflection of his voice, and then he continued to read: “For this reason, those who legitimately hold authority also have the right to use arms to repel aggressors against the civil community entrusted to their responsibility.”

Fr. John interjected, “How would you sum up those passages?”

Chief Templeton replied, “When the circumstances are right, to *not* kill someone is a *moral wrong*.”

Nick took this opportunity to underscore a point that had been brewing in his mind since the year before when Branden and he had this same type of conversation over beers at Branden’s home in Albany. “John, do you remember the scene in the movie *Saving Private Ryan*, the scene where they spare the life of the Nazi in the machine gun nest, the same Nazi who had just killed their medic, then later that same Nazi killed the American Jew G.I. by slowly stabbing him in the heart?”

“Yeah. That was a very disturbing scene, Nick.”

The FDNY Captain responded, “I think that the Jewish Mr. Spielberg might have meant it to be, John. Perhaps it was because it was like a microcosm of the West’s delay in responding to the entire Holocaust. But here’s the point that I want to make, John. That same Nazi in the movie – the one whose life was spared at the machine gun nest – he also shot the hero of the movie right in the chest, Captain Miller, Tom Hank’s character, that is, before the P-51 Tank Busters planes, the planes that Hank’s character called the ‘Angels on our Shoulders,’ came swooping in to finish off the Nazis’ stand on the bridge. Do you remember that part of the movie, too?”

“I do, Nick,” responded John to his friend who had risen to the rank of Sargent in the U.S. Marine Corps before completing his tour of duty in Afghanistan and returning home to Brooklyn to join the FDNY.

“Well, John, the type of evil we’re talkin’ about here, the two-headed evil of an evil mob, another word for complete civil unrest, and an evil government – well, that would demand that when you take that kind of Nazi into custody, *he must be immediately shot and killed*. In other words, the

strict justice of the death penalty has to be swiftly imposed. And then the troops can more readily move on to the next battle. That's a key point - a harsh one, but a true one, John. And it's one that needs to be understood by people inside of the Church - people like you."

"So, in other words," Nick continued, "Fr. John, he who is of the Marian priests on Eden Hill, there is a time in God's great Providence for full-fledged Mercy. And thank God for that, because we sure need it! But there can also be a time in God's great Providence to execute the full-fledged Justice of the Maker, by types like the Old Testament's Joshua."

Chief Templeton tagged teamed the point, "John, I like to watch EWTN. And not too long back, I saw a rerun of a Napa Institute talk given by Cardinal Christoph Schönborn, the archbishop of Vienna, a key writer of John Paul's *Catechism*. There he talked about how Pope John Paul II had really wanted the *Catechism* to get rid of the Church's teaching regarding the approval of the death penalty. That Holy Pontiff had apparently thought that a clear, simple, consistent pro-life message would be a better way to advance the Church's opposition to the outrageous evil of abortion. But, as described by Cardinal Schönborn in that talk, at least as I understood it, the Holy Spirit, operating in and through the other bishops involved, actually prevented this from happening."

Fr. John was absorbed in what his friend was saying.

"So the Church's teaching still allows for the death penalty," emphasized Chief Templeton. "That teaching is on the second page here, at paragraph 2267. True, it does indeed hem in the death penalty a good deal, saying that it should be 'very rare, if not practically non-existent,' but the *Catechism* makes it very clear that the limitation of that statement applies to the *now of 'today'*; in other words, it applies to a time when prisons can do the job of permanently housing criminals to prevent them from harming others. But this is the fundamental point I want to make to

you: in a different day, a day when the evil of the mob and the evil of the government run rampant, that qualifier, that limiter, the words that hem in the death penalty, they would be eviscerated along with the statement that the need for a death penalty would be 'rare.' At that point, there's essentially a reset that must occur. Then this part of the *Catechism*, this part here," said Chief Templeton pointed to the page with grave enthusiasm, "then this part above gets full-throated once again." The Chief continued, "It will be like we're living in an age 1,000 years ago, and, at that point, this statement rules the day, and I quote: 'the traditional teaching of the Church does not exclude recourse to the death penalty, if this is the only possible way of effectively defending human lives against the unjust aggressor.' That becomes the rule - the overriding rule."

Fr. John followed exactly what Chief Templeton and Nick were saying about this, and it actually fit perfectly into his own thinking on other subject matters, ones that he had planned to raise with the Cardinal and the Bishop. Indeed, it fit like a hand into a brother's hand, so much so that Fr. John wondered - ever so briefly - if his childhood friends had been told about his recent work for the Cardinal and Bishop.

Chief Templeton then added, "At that point, the statement of four-star U.S. Marine General James Mattis, the Sec-Def, essentially comes into play. I met him in Iraq once. He said something like this to us, and it was something that he would often say to his troops. He said, 'There are some assholes in the world that just need to be shot. There are hunters and there are victims. By your discipline, cunning, obedience and alertness, you will decide if you are a hunter or a victim.' At some point, this may be the general operating instructions for our entire Nation, or even for the entire world. That's *sheepdog* principles, John, not *sheep* principles.

"Do you know the difference, John? Remember that day when we were young back at the McCarren Park pool, and those three meat-head

idiots were manhandling you - until Nick and I arrived. And then *we* - the *three* of us, *you* included - *we dropped those punks*. Well, John, there may be a time in the future when boys no older than we were at that time, they will confront situations with Second Amendment-protected guns in their hands, situations in which they will have to say to the three punks in front of them, 'Join God now or meet Him now!' As General Mattis would sometimes say to his troops, 'There is only one 'retirement plan' for terrorists.'"

It was now Nick's turn to tag-team with his friend, trying to get this "sheepdog" principle driven home into Fr. John's good-Catholic-sheep mind. "Under that principle, John, the Nazi in the *Saving Private Ryan* scenario would have to be killed *at the machine gun nest* directly after the U.S. medic was killed, and not later, after he goes on to kill more and more troops. Do you understand the point we're trying to make to you, John? It's the swift and certain justice of the death penalty - one that's imposed by God's warriors in the midst of a complete breakdown of civil society. The death penalty imposed right there on the battlefield."

Fr. John replied straightforwardly, "I do indeed understand you, my friends. But I'll be honest with you, though; this is all something that I'll have to turn over and over in my mind for some time before I can fully discern the wisdom of it. That's just the way my mind works these things out. And, guys, that's simply because these are frankly not the type of things that the priests back at the Shrine generally think about. Nor did the scientists that I hung out with prior to that at MIT or Caltech; they didn't talk about these types of things either. But I do see the heft at the heart of what you're communicating to me. To put it in Pope Francis type terms, 'I'll go home tonight with the smell of the *sheepdog* all over me!'"

The three childhood friends burst out laughing, and Nick quickly quipped, "I bet Pope Francis would think that to be quite a pungent aroma!"

But although he might want to grab one of my FDNY firehoses to wash you off, please, John, please, keep some of that scent with you as you do your work for the Church.”

But then Nick got a bit more serious, “Your work is important, John. But a warrior’s mentality is also important. The Church is going to have to carefully set forth an intelligent just-war code of conduct, one that isn’t guilty of a *failure of imagination* because it limits its outlook to the previous war. In other words, the Church must ‘battle plan’ the full strategy of the final war too – the final confrontation, as Pope John Paul II called it.”

Nick continued, “John, the reason for that is plain and simple: men must not shirk their duty to take care of women and children. And men going about that duty need to know that when they fight for their women and their children, they are on solid moral footing – footing declared firm by he who holds the keys to bind heaven, by the Church. Otherwise, without steady warriors, who will be left to fight the final round, and if there are no warriors around at that point in time to defend those who are weaker, what bad moral decision might the weaker folks make before time completely runs out? And if those bad moral decisions are made by the weaker folks, who might the Lord hold even more accountable, if not those stronger folks who had the whole picture in front of them, but did nothing to protect the weaker ones? Warriors will need to bring the war to the Enemy, and they’ll need to do it full-force. But the morale of those warriors is crucial, and the greatest morale booster for a warrior comes from knowing that he kills with a clean conscience, and he does so for the common good of women and children that they personally know. That’s a difference maker! In fact, that’s what made Sir William Wallace so powerfully effective in battle. And the Church cannot crush that warrior spirit – the warrior spirit needed for the final confrontation. If it did so, that would be a tragedy.”

Branden nodded in agreement and looked intently into John's eyes. His own eyes were watery and pained, but he pressed forward anyways. "Pope Francis is God's Great Mercy Pope for a time meant for God's Great Mercy. That's definitely now, John." Yet pointing his finger directly into the chest of Fr. John, in a way that was meant to produce some mild physical pain, Branden continued, "But we'll need priests who understand that there will be a time - a time selected by God's Divine Providence alone - when God's Justice will have to be delivered by the sheepdogs of the entire Christian Church, even some who might still be Protestant stragglers at that point, God bless them. And understand this well, my wonderful priest friend, for *that* time, there can be no priest that ends up the way that St. Maximilian Kolbe ended up. There can be no priest that allows a needle of poison to be injected into them by a Nazi-like guard."

Fr. John's face recoiled at the thought that shot through his mind.

Brendan was, of course, recounting how the death of St. Maximilian Kolbe came about, after the sainted priest had willingly volunteered to take the place of a fellow prisoner at the Nazi's Auschwitz Death Camp, all because that other prisoner was a husband and a father to several children. The Nazi guards eventually grew tired after two weeks of the future saint being in a starvation chamber, all along singing hymns and saying the Rosary to his beloved Mary, and then, when he grew too weak to even speak, whispering his prayers to God. At that point, a heartless Nazi guard injected a poisonous acid substance into Fr. Kolbe's arm, that is, after the saint had first blessed the guard. Fr. Kolbe, a Roman Catholic priest, was one of more than 1,000,000 souls who were murdered at Auschwitz, with more than 9 in 10 of them being Jewish souls.

"John, the great man Maximilian Kolbe was arrested by the Gestapo on February 17, 1941, and he died in the Auschwitz Death Camp, about 40 miles from where St. Fautina had encountered Christ - where she's now

laid to rest. St. Kolbe died six months after his arrest; he died on August 14th. That Feast Day is in just three days, my friend. If you're still in Greenpoint on that day, may I be so bold as to suggest that you please find some time and go and kneel before the beautiful likeness of that saint in St. Stan's, the one that's incorporated into the mural on the altar."

Fr. John knew exactly what mural Brandan was referring to - and it was a beautiful sight, a painting of many of the Polish saints, including St. Faustina, all standing beneath the Blessed Virgin Mother.

Branden continued, "At that time, ask St. Kolbe one thing when you pray there. And, by the way, this is no criticism of him, because *in his day* he certainly did the right thing. But ask that great saint whether, in the days that may come to us in the future, ask him if it's the will of Christ that a priest of God take an injection from a Nazi-like beast. Or ask him whether it's the will of Christ that when the Gestapo of that future day comes to the priest's door, he finds that priest with an AR-15 in his hands - ready for bodies to drop to the ground - be they either the one belonging to that priest ready to fight, or the ones belonging to the Nazi-like terrorists at the door. Ask that of the saint and then listen to your heart for an answer, John."

In that split second, a mental image formed in the mind of Fr. John; he imagined himself at the door of the Church on Eden Hill - *with an AR-15 in his hands ready to confront the lethal injectors at the door.*

Brandan and Nick had knowing looks on their faces, and they looked away to let their friend have a moment to think. Then, after that brief moment passed, Branden smiled a gentle smile at his friend, and he said, "Keep that under your hat until one day you get to talk to one of the big-shot red hats of the Church ... or until you wear one of those big-shot red hats yourself, John."

Fr. John laughed, shaking his head dramatically at the plain-fact improbability of that last comment ever coming true. He knew that the only red hat that he would ever wear had a big white “B” on the front of it, and it proudly stood for the *Boston Red Sox*.

To break the tension of that moment a bit, though, Nick spoke up in his best Brooklyn-Italian sort of accent, “But enough about this bid’ness stuff, Johnnie boy. How r’ your Sox doin’ in deez’ dawg days of August? I sure know how r’ Yanks r’ doin’! Shitty!”

The three friends spent the next 20 minutes finishing their second pints, talking some sports and some politics, and reminiscing about the days when they roamed Greenpoint like three little lions. Those were good ol’ days, they each thought to themselves, before parting ways that warm summer night.

* * *

At home, after spending an hour or so reflecting on some readings about Joshua in the Old Testament, Fr. John settled into the same bed that he had slept in when he was just a boy. As he lay there, though, he concluded that the idea of St. Maximillian Kolbe with an AR-15 in hand would have to remain top secret in his own mind – at least for now. Fr. John concluded that a Catholic Cardinal, even one who had at one time been the Bishop of the entire U.S. Military Forces, might find that idea a bit too much to absorb. So he would keep it under his own red cap – his Boston Red Sox cap, that is, the same one that he had worn to Fenway Park back on May 13th.

Content with that thought, Fr. John was asleep within ten minutes, in no small part due to the two pints of *Guinness* that he has consumed that night, all the while enjoying the company of his old friends – and learning some new, unusual “sheepdog” things.

* * *

After concelebrating the 7 A.M. Mass at St. Stan's, Fr. John ate a splendid Maple-syrup smothered, blueberry pancake breakfast with his mom, his sister Humilia, and with her three kids, all of whom had proudly witnessed their "Father Uncle" on the altar just a short time before.

Two hours later, after mentally preparing himself for his meeting at the Cardinal's Residence at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Fr. John drove the Marian's Ford Taurus over the Brooklyn Bridge and on to Manhattan Island.

As his tires exited the bridge and landed on Manhattan Island, something strange occurred: Fr. John immediately thought about the very first priest that had ever set foot on that island, St. Isaac Jogues. He considered it to be a very uncharacteristic thought to have on that occasion, while simply repeating something that he had done so many times before, but never with that thought occurring to him at those times.

This was so even though Fr. John knew all about St. Isaac Jogues, from way back when he was just a young boy. Every year his pop, Gabriel, would load the family into their car for a three-day, mini-vacation, meandering their way north up the Taconic Parkway, then eventually up the Northway into Lake George Village in the New York Adirondack Mountains. The family stayed each year at the same inexpensive motel, one that was within walking distance of the famous Million Dollar Beach, the one at the farthest point to the south of the 32-mile long lake. And it was about 300 hundred yards back from the sands of that beach, tucked into a secluded wooded area, that the family would take an afternoon walk each day, ice cream cones in hand. They would walk directly to a statue of St. Isaac Jogues, and there they'd linger for a short while, at which point they'd return to the beach for some water-splashing fun that would last for the remainder of the afternoon.

But on every one of those afternoon walks as a kid, Fr. John would gaze up at that statue and he'd marvel at the nifty pluck of Isaac Jogues. His daring valor was manifest right there on the statue itself, made plain just by looking at the hands of the great saint. On his right hand, for instance, the saint was missing a portion of his index finger, as well as a portion of his thumb. But as Gabriel once jokingly noted to his young son, this was not the result of some silly cooking mishap. Rather, it was the result of purposefully inflicted and painfully endured torture - torment that was manfully suffered by a manly saint - a point of fact that was underscored by Gabriel to John.

St. Isaac Jogues was captured and mutilated by the Mohawk Indians after he had brought Christ's light to some of the American Indians tribes in upstate New York, helping to plant the seed of the *Word* that eventually grew into great Christian wheat, people such as St. Kateri Tekakwitha, known as the Lily of the Mohawks. The brutalizers of Fr. Jogues thought that by cutting off some of his digits, they could prevent the priest from calling down the "spirits" during the Holy Mass. They were wrong, of course. After he escaped and returned to Brittany in 1643, Pope Urban VII personally gave Fr. Jogues special permission to say the Catholic Mass, irrespective of the mutilation that had been meted out to his hands. Then, after getting this special permission, the powerful man returned to the Americas to finish his original mission, ultimately being martyred in 1646, and then being declared a saint by the Church in 1930, one of the North American Martyrs.

Oddly enough, it had been many years since Fr. John had thought about St. Isaac Jogues. But as soon as he was "wheels down" on Manhattan Island to brief the Cardinal and the Bishop, the black-and-white photo of that saint's statue - the one that he had first seen so many years before, the one that was so aged by the many years gone by - had flooded back into his memory.



St. Isaac Jogues Statue at Lake George, New York

Chapter 8

The Torch to Light the Way

*Even before a word is on my tongue, lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether.
Thou dost beset me behind and before, and layest thy hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
it is high, I cannot attain it.*

Psalm 139:4-6

Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke sat opposite Fr. John across a large oak conference room table with a glass-top cover. The chairs were brown leather and the room was well lit. There were three coffee mugs bearing the image of St. Patrick's Cathedral. Each one was filled to the brim with black coffee.

The Cardinal smiled broadly at his guest. "Well, welcome back home to the Big Apple, John. I trust you had a good night with the family."

"I did indeed, Your Eminence. Thank you."

"Before we begin, I wanted to thank you for taking up this mission for us," said the Cardinal. "Your willingness to do so is very much appreciated by the Bishop and I. We wanted a man who we could trust, and one with a science background such as yours, and you fit the bill perfectly."

"You're quite welcome, Cardinal. It's always my pleasure to serve the Church in any way that I'm asked. I've taken up this task as though Mary herself has asked me to do it for her Son. She says to me, as she has said to all of her adopted children throughout the ages, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Mary pulled me out of a quick sand of mortal sin and she brought me back to her Son, back to a path to eternal life. Any way that I can repay that debt is a pure joy for me."

“Yes, Mary always points the way, and it’s always back to our Lord, thank God,” replied the Cardinal. “Let’s begin, then, with some prayer.” The Cardinal led the three in the *Our Father*, the *Hail Mary*, and the *Glory Be*.

Once the prayers were complete, Bishop Wienke then cleared his throat and posed a question to their guest. “Fr. John, after several months of looking into the concept of gematria, how do you view that concept now?”

Fr. John replied, “Gematria is fundamentally mathematical. And this is simply because arithmetic is fundamentally mathematical, and the way that gematria works, as you know, is by *adding* letter values. When we have numbers – particularly numbers added together, as is done in gematria – we have the *sine qua non* of mathematics. Indeed, James Clerk Maxwell, the famous mathematical physicist, once stated that ‘the four rules of arithmetic may be regarded as the complete equipment of the mathematician.’”

“But gematria is also the very essence of mathematics,” continued Fr. John, “precisely because mathematics is forever and always concerned with revealing *patterns – hidden patterns in the world*. In fact, searching out hidden patterns in the world is at the very heart of mathematics. Math is frankly known world-wide as the ‘pattern science’ because math is particularly well suited for describing patterns in the world, hidden patterns that don’t change, hidden patterns that, one might say, are immutable.”

Fr. John continued with a question, “And what allows us to recognize these hidden patterns, but our human intellects? And this is quite interesting because the word *intellect* has a special meaning. It literally means *to read deeply into something – to go below the surface of a thing*. It’s the power to go *inside* of something and grasp the *essence* of that thing, to grasp the nettle of a thing. And the great thinkers like Aristotle and St.

Thomas Aquinas, they understood that the way that best describes *how* human beings use their human intellects is by use of abstraction. And this too is quite interesting because abstraction is a word that itself literally means *to lift something out*. *So, using the tool of abstraction, the intellect goes below the surface of things and it lifts the essence of those things out - it lifts out the intelligibility of things*. And that's the heart of what mathematics does. It uses the tool of human-reason abstraction to strip away the surface details and get at the hidden patterns below the surface."

Fr. John took a sip of the black coffee in front of him and then he continued. "Yet gematria is more than just mathematical. It's also very much biblical. Let's not forget, as we discussed in April, that St. Matthew repeated the *number* 14 - David's Hebrew language number - three times over to point to Christ. And St. John then used the *number* 666, which he wrote out using the Greek language, to point to the one he called 'beast.'

"So gematria is all about math, and because of my background in science, math is something that I'm quite comfortable with. Numbers swim in my bloodstream, so to speak, because mathematics is the language of physics. And, as a priest of Christ, so do the Bible's words, the sacred language of Scripture. In my mind, there is a comfortable marriage between these two languages."

The Bishop interjected, "Fr. John, you've just spoken of St. John's explicit use of gematria at Revelation 13, verse 18. Do you have any thoughts on how the Church should understand and interpret that verse today?"

Fr. John replied, "I think of it in terms of getting the correct calibration."

The Bishop responded, "What do you mean by that, John?"

“When we think about getting the correct calibration for properly interpreting Revelation 13:18, we have three ‘dials’ to *tune* so as to make sure that our calibration is true. With the first ‘dial,’ we must determine which language to set it on. In other words, which is the correct language? Is it a language of the Lord, that is, is it Aramaic or Hebrew? Or is it the language that the Book of Revelation was written in, which, of course, was the Greek language? It appears that St. Irenaeus believed that it was the Greek language that would reveal the meaning of that verse. But was he wrong about that? Is it rather the language of the Church, that is, the language of Latin? Or can it be Italian, Spanish, French, Russian, German, Polish, Mandarin, or Arabic? The list could go on, of course. I’m sure that you get the picture.”

The Cardinal asked, “Or is it the English language, John?”

Fr. John responded with a question, “Setting aside this Revelation Code Letter for a moment, what’s one trait about the English language that makes it a special candidate for being the *correct* language that we seek to reveal the Revelation 13, verse 18 meaning?”

After waiting a moment, Fr. John proposed an answer to his own question. “I believe that it would be the fact that the English language is spoken in more than 100 different countries – that’s more countries than *any other language*. Arabic is the second closest – it’s spoken in 60 countries. French is spoken in just over 50 countries, followed by Chinese in 33 countries and Spanish in 31 countries.”

“Of course,” Bishop Wienke interjected, “the various languages of the Chinese peoples are spoken by more than a billion souls, and Spanish is the language that is the second most prominent.”

Fr. John replied, “True, indeed, but most sources assert that *English is actually the most widely-spoken language worldwide* when we combine

native English speakers with non-native English speakers. More than that, though, English is the language of science, aviation, shipping, computing, diplomacy, and, most importantly, business, finance, and commerce. One could say that these are the subject areas that essentially run and rule the world. That characteristic, I contend, makes English a prime suspect, so to speak.”

“But even if we were to just assume that English is the right language,” continued Fr. John, “and you’ll see why I say that in a moment, there’s still technically a second ‘dial’ that we’d have to calibrate. Who’s to say what *period* of English we must look to for the key to understanding Revelation 13:18? In other words, is it Early English, Middle English, or the Modern English language? And this actually matters *a great deal* because the English alphabet has changed in important ways over the last 1,500 years, and even small changes in an alphabet can have a dramatic impact in gematria values, that is, between getting it right and getting it wrong, so to speak.”

The Cardinal asked, “If we were to assume that it’s Modern English, what’s the third ‘dial’ that you speak of?”

“The third dial we need to know in order to calibrate in Revelation 13:18 correctly is the gematria values to assign to each letter of the Modern-English alphabet? Does A equal 1 or does it equal 6 or 7, or any other number? And if A does equal 6, as is asserted in the letter that was mailed to you, who’s to say that B wouldn’t equal 3, instead of 12, and that C wouldn’t equal 9 instead of 18?”

“That’s quite a morass you’ve envisioned, Fr. John, if gematria has *any* worth to begin with,” responded Bishop Wienke, a bit more sharply than he had intended.

Cardinal Flanagan asked, “John, how do you resolve that morass, in your own mind, that is?”

“For me, it’s *simple*,” said Fr. John, pausing purposefully for effect. “And I actually mean that to be taken quite *literally*. *Simplicity is the key*. Remember who we’re dealing with, after all. We’re dealing with an Advocate, not an Enemy, when we speak of St. John’s Bible words. So when it comes to interpreting that crucial piece of Scripture written by St. John, the Holy Spirit, we can say with certainty, is going to be on our side. It’s not going to be something that’s too hard to figure out.”

Fr. John continued, “It seems to me, then, that the way to know whether a Bible math code of gematria is ‘dialed in’ correctly – that is, whether or not it’s perfectly calibrated – is to first determine whether it produces a strikingly intelligible mathematical description of God and His Church, one that makes your jaw drop and leaves your mouth hanging agape. Anything less should be deemed counterfeit. When it’s genuine, when it’s properly calibrated, you will recognize its intelligibility. It will be impossible to miss.”

The Cardinal interjected, “Please explain that point to us further, John.”

Fr. John responded, “Sure. We start with this premise. God is intelligent, and He created the world out of nothing – *ex nihilo*. Because of this, God’s creation is necessarily imbued with order, design, and pattern. These are in fact all signs of *intelligibility*. When we human beings see these signs, we are essentially recognizing the fingerprints of God because it is He who actually *spoke* the world into existence.”

After pausing for a moment to take another sip of the black coffee, Fr. John continued. “I believe that we should use this *intelligibility test* as the first test of the genuineness of any type of God code. Because God is the God of *Logos*, that is, of ordered, harmonious design and pattern – and not of confusion and chaos – we can expect to find those very things when we focus the lens of gematria on God and on His Church. It will reveal

something special, something spectacular, in fact. So we must first point this gematria code at God and at His Church, and not be concerned at first with the end time things of the Evil One. In other words, we must calibrate the code by focusing it in on the Christ, not on the Antichrist. If it reveals the Christ, then we know that it's genuine, and not counterfeit. It's then that we'll know that we've got the correctly calibrated code, and it's *that code* that will correctly reveal the Antichrist when the time comes, as well as his plans."

Cardinal Flanagan responded, "It seems, then, that the author of the letter understands this. I say this because, although his is a message that deals with dread, he first focuses on the Trinity. Is that how you understand the author's intent?" The Cardinal was recalling these results from the letter.

THE HOLY FATHER = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

HOLY SPIRIT = 906

"Yes, it does seem that way," said Fr. John. "But I suggest that issue is really immaterial for our purposes. In my opinion, our job is *not* to interpret his or her thought process, or to gauge his or her credibility. The Church - at your level, in conjunction with your brethren bishops - will be able to judge it properly, and that's because you've been granted the role of advising the Pope, that is, if you deem it worthy to advise him of this at all. And then, the Holy Pontiff has been granted the binding and the loosening authority of God. That's where it really matters. And that's why I say that the author of the letter is actually irrelevant. He may be insane and off his meds, for all we know. But, then again, even a broken clock gets the time right - exactly twice - each day."

Somewhat perplexed, Bishop Wienke asked, “Do you really believe that the author is a wacko or that he has a malevolent intent?”

“Bishop, I don’t advocate that – not at all,” replied Fr. John in earnest. “I simply say that it doesn’t matter one way or the other. I can imagine a scenario in which Satan’s own would send that letter for their own purposes. But I can also imagine a scenario in which the author of that letter has fought against daily demons for a decade in order to be able to come to write that letter. Because either scenario could be true, what matters is what the Church authority decides. Whether the author is a prophet, or whether he or she is providing good or bad advice, those questions are to be set aside. What matters is the validity of the Bible code, and that’s to be decided by the Church.

“And this is not a cause for the slightest bit of anxiety or concern because this is one of those matters that God will ensure that the Church gets right. Even if it takes time,” Fr. John continued.

And pressing on with unreserved seriousness in his eyes, Fr. John said, “Quite frankly, for similar reasons, it really doesn’t matter what I’ve concluded either. But because you’ve asked for me to look into this matter, I’ll give you my best conclusions, and, quite frankly, at times, my best conjectures and reasoned guesses – and there definitely will be some of both – even if I don’t explicitly identify them as such as we discuss these matters.”

“Fair enough, John,” said the Cardinal.

Bishop Wienke addressed the Cardinal with a polite tone, saying, “Cardinal, if I may.” The Bishop then turned to the younger priest, and with a tone that was slightly ratcheted up in the manner of a cross-examination, he stated, “Fr. John, you’ve attempted to shut down the relevance of whether or not the author of the letter has a malevolent intent.

I can appreciate your reasoning on that point. And that's all well and good, but others above you, and above us, may want to get inside the head of the author, so to speak. And, as a lawyer, we're always dealing with credibility assessments. So I want you to tell us, based upon your analysis of this letter, have you drawn any conclusions about the author?"

The Bishop continued, "Please just imagine yourself in a jury deliberation room at this point. Image that you've just witnessed the author's testimony from the witness stand. And now, please, Fr. John, just share your thoughts about the author's credibility with us, your fellow jurors. Can you do that imaginary exercise for us?"

"I can say this, Bishop," replied Fr. John. "I think, at least, that the author has made an attempt to announce the end times in a similar kind of way that St. Matthew announced Jesus as the Christ, the Son of David."

The Bishop asked, "What do you mean?"

Fr. John replied, "As we discussed a few moments ago, St. Matthew, at the very beginning of the New Testament, heralds Jesus as the heir to David by repeating the Hebrew gematria number of David - 14 - a perfect three times to signal to his readers that Jesus is the prophesied about Son of David. But St. Matthew does this in a hidden way, specifically by using gematria."

The Cardinal asked, "Does the author of the letter use a hidden gematria, one that's not explicitly spelled out on that letter?"

"Yes," responded Fr. John. "There's no reason whatsoever, in my mind, at least, to think that the author is even from New York State. You mentioned to me in April that you believed that the letter had 'Newton Falls, New York' written at the top of it because of that town's ZIP code of 13666. I agree. But the author also has ensured that the number 666

appears in a hidden way two more times, in addition to where it does on the letter explicitly. Here's how."

Fr. John turned to the back of the stack of index cards that were in his briefcase on the chair next to him, he found the one that he sought, and then he slid it across the table to where the Cardinal and Bishop were sitting opposite him.

SYRACUSE = 666

NEW YORK = 666

Newton Falls, NY: ZIP code 13666

"By mailing the letter from 'Syracuse, New York,' the author ensured that the envelope received that postmark. And by simply printing 'Newton Falls, NY' as the return address on the envelope and on the letter, the author has ensured that 666 is repeated three times over, without ever writing out those numbers even one time for us to see. So, in this hidden kind of way, it seems that the author is asserting that the time of 666 is approaching. In a way, it's similar to St. Matthew's announcement of the Christ, but this author is announcing, in a kind of coded way, the Antichrist's coming."

The Cardinal looked a bit troubled and asked, "John, is there anything else about the places connected to the mailing that you took note of?"

"Interestingly enough, when I punched *Newton Falls to Syracuse* into my GPS, the drive time showed exactly 2 hours and 22 minutes. I mention this only because the interval between 444, 666, 888 and 1110 is precisely 222. Whether that too was intentional, I don't know. Of course, 444 is the number of Jesus, and 666 is the number of the 'beast', and 888 and 1110 are numbers that the letter make clear are numbers of this code." Fr. John

held up the letter and pointed to the results in the code that the author used to show an internal confirmation.

REVELATION CODE = 888

THREE-EIGHTS CODE = 906

NINE-ZERO-SIX CODE = 1110

Fr. John then continued, “Here, of course, are examples of the author’s use of the numbers 888, 906 and 1110, numbers used as a type of internal confirmation system.”

Bishop Wienke asked, “Does the fact that the author of the letter used the hidden gematria-coded message you’ve described, the one about the places where the envelope was mailed from, does that cause you any concern? In other words, I really want to know your take on the author?”

Fr. John replied, “Well, Bishop, since you insist, I’ll give you my *opinion* - and that’s all it is. I think he’s one of us. By that I simply mean, I think that he loves the Lord Jesus Christ and the Roman Catholic Church with all of his heart. That’s what my gut-level intuition tells me. I think that he has a genuine concern about the signs of our times, which are not good. And if I may *add* one other thing, excuse the pun, I also think that he’s fascinated - absolutely fascinated - by the way that God has ordered things the way that He has, so as to reveal His design - his pattern - in a very simple kind of way. I think that shines through in that letter.”

The Cardinal looked at Bishop Wienke and said, “Let’s step back a bit, John, and let’s talk about the whole concept of gematria. If I we’re to quietly bring up the concept with some of my brethren in Rome, what would you suggest I say if they begin to shoot down the idea - if they, for instance, cite St. Irenaeus’ all-out attack on gematria in parts of his work *Against Heresies*?”

Fr. John replied, “I’d respond this way. First, I’d call to mind the fact that St. Matthew began the New Testament, under the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit, by a simple use of a Hebrew gematria. Matthew was a coder, Your Eminence. We’ve discussed that, of course. Next, I’d remind them that St. John used gematria at the conclusion of the New Testament. So John was a coder, too. I’d make that plain, and then I’d show them these two results.” Fr. John pushed an index card across the table with two results that had been on the letter that was mailed to the Cardinal.

GOSPEL OF MATTHEW = 1110

BOOK OF REVELATION = 1110

“After showing them these two results, I’d then ask them a simple question,” Fr. John continued. “Is it possible that these two *saints*, the only two of the four evangelists that were actually *Apostles* of Christ, would use or make an indirect reference to gematria, if it was inherently evil?”

Allowing a moment to let that question sink in, Fr. John continued, “The answer to that question is an obvious and unequivocal, ‘No!’ So once you’ve established that gematria can be used by holy men of God, reinforce that idea by noting that St. Clement of Alexandria used gematria in his famous work, *Stromata*. It’s in Book VI, Chapter 11 of that work. And what do we know about this saint? We know that John Paul the Great has quoted this saint in different parts of his own work, as has the brilliant Benedict XVI. So St. Clement’s *bona fides* are true and current.”

The Cardinal interjected, “It raised more than a couple eyebrows among my brethren when Pope Benedict quoted St. Clement so extensively at the conclusion of the Synod for the New Evangelization in 2012. But that brilliant man did do so.”

Fr. John continued, “Yes, he did, and I’d focus on that point. But lastly, there is this. Although St. Irenaeus attacked the Gnostics’ uses of

gematria, he did so *because they were Gnostics*, because they were teaching things that were completely unhinged from the Scriptures. I've written down a quote from St. Irenaeus ... if you give me just a moment." Fr. John flipped through his cards in his briefcase until he found the one that he was looking for. "Ah, here it is," he said. "It's from *Against Heresies*, Book II, Chapter 25." Fr. John then read this quote to his superiors:

"...[T]hey ought to adapt the numbers themselves, and those things which have been formed, to the true theory lying before them. For system does not spring out of numbers, but numbers from a system; nor does God derive His being from things made, but things made from God. For all things originate from one and the same God."

Fr. John continued, "I think that this evidences St. Irenaeus' problem with the Gnostics use of gematria. Their theology was, in part, mindlessly springing out of numbers. But I think that you can make a strong, legitimate case that these numbers, that is, this code that we're dealing with, it springs out of a theology that is derived from the *Catechism*. *It's not the basis of that theology, but rather it reveals signs that spring out of that theology.*"

Fr. John then slid a card to his hosts, the one that Fr. Cherubim had written on that first night that he had flown in from Poland. Fr. Cherubim, of course, had later squeezed an additional finding into the middle of the card that was meant to help symbolize the *joining* of the two realms of heaven and earth, which was accomplished by *The Incarnation*.

The eternal Form in heaven ...

THE HOLY FATHER = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

HOLY SPIRIT = 906

The likeness of which the world was made on earth ...

THE INCARNATION = 906

VICAR OF CHRIST = 906

VATICAN CARDINALS = 906

ROMAN CATHOLICS = 906

Fr. John then spent the next ten minutes discussing Plato's "Theory of the Forms" and the demand that Plato had made of the members of his Academy to give him *a mathematical description of heaven and earth*. He also discussed Fr. Cherubim's thoughts on Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" and how, from the Christian biblical perspective, there had actually been a mass prison break from the cave. With *The Incarnation*, the world of the *eternal* forever broke into the *temporal* world of time and space. In fact, the Sacred Liturgy of the Mass, which is now always going on somewhere in the world, *had forever joined together the sphere of heaven and the sphere of earth*.

Fr. John then concluded all of these thoughts by stating, "What is written on that card is really a mathematical description of the Church, which is God's Heavenly Body here on earth. That's not a *Gnostic* world view that you are holding there. That's profoundly Roman Catholic. The numbers spring from the Truth and describe it in such a way that it could not be just a coincidence caused by the chaos of chance. That's a harmoniously-designed mathematical proof of God's existence - at least by

a preponderance of the evidence,” Fr. John said with a wink in the direction of the lawyer-Bishop, drawing a smile from the prelate.

Cardinal Flanagan smiled too as he looked intently at the card in his hand. “This is good, John. This is good. Do you have anything more that you would say to any naysayers who might point to St. Irenaeus?”

“I sure do. I’d say to them that St. Irenaeus himself did gematria. He did it in *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 30. Now, if I may, let me tell you a story about that.

“One night, back at the Shrine, I was studying St. Irenaeus’ work, studying how he thought the Antichrist’s name would be able to be ciphered out using Greek gematria values. Of course, this was hundreds of years before the English language even began to come into existence, so he couldn’t possibly have even thought that English would be a more likely language to use, that is, unless he were to have been blessed with divine inspiration to let him know about a not-yet-existent language. But let’s set that point aside for now. St. Irenaeus actually ciphered out the name ‘Evanthas,’ and he noted that it would equal 666 in Greek gematria. I doubled checked his work using the Greek gematria values for the letters in that name, and his math was exactly right. In fact, it was exactly right for the three different names that he cited in that chapter of *Against Heresies*. But *Evanthas* was the first 666 name that he cited to in his chapter about the Antichrist.”

“Upon reading that chapter, I had a thought,” Fr. John continued. “And my thought was this: If the code that we’re working with here - the A equals 6 and B equals 12 code - if that is the true and genuine code, then God will see to it that the name *Evanthas* will *pop out* in this English language Bible code. In other words, I thought to myself, if our code is rightly-calibrated, we’ll see it in that very first name cited by St. Irenaeus. That was my thought.”

The Cardinal asked, “Was there something about that name, John?”

“Well, Cardinal, I worked with that name, and in about 60 seconds, I found this,” said Fr. John as he grabbed another index card. “At the top is the quote from St. Irenaeus’s Chapter 30. And the letters to the left side of the Bible code result are, of course, the Roman numerals for 666.” Fr. John pushed the card across the table.

“...the name Evanthas (EYANΘΑΣ) contains the required number...”

St. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Book V, Chapter 30.

DCLXVI OF EVANTHAS = 1110

“It’s almost like God answered a prayer that I had – one to either confirm or deny the calibration of our *English* language Bible code. Here we have a student of a student of St. John himself discussing ‘the number of the name of Antichrist’, those are his words, not mine, and out pops this confirmation. When I say that, though, I certainly don’t mean to claim that Evanthas is going to be the name of the Antichrist. It was just a confirmation to me that the code in *English* is the correct code to reveal the name of the Antichrist when the time comes.”

The Cardinal replied, “I understand your point, John.”

“Cardinal,” said Fr. John, “when I was a grad student at MIT, there was a wonderful elderly particle physicist; her name was Ellen Dukas. She had actually met Einstein when she studied at Princeton. She used to talk to me about the intelligibility that can be found in nature, and how finding the clues to that intelligibility can lead us to scientific truth. ‘Follow the coincidences,’ she would often say, ‘for when you get enough of them, you’ll have a theory, and then when you get enough more, you’ll have a proof.’ Your Eminence, I’m convinced that the result that you have in your hands is one of those clues.”

Fr. John continued, “So in response to any gematria naysayers that you may run into in Rome, advise them that even St. Irenaeus went to the trouble of performing gematria, and he dutifully came up with three different names that equaled 666 in Greek gematria. And if he came up with three such names, he must have performed gematria calculations for more names than that, wouldn’t you expect?”

“I say all of this for one reason,” continued Fr. John, “to show that *Saint* Irenaeus, who was the student of *Saint* Polycarp, who was the student of *Saint* John himself, did gematria.” As Fr. John said this, he stressed the word *saint* each time that he had said the word in such a way that it took him about two seconds to complete the pronunciation of it each time.

“So *Saint* Irenaeus was a coder, too,” said Fr. John. Then he slid another card over to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

CODE OF ... MATTHEW / JOHN = 1110

BIBLE CODE OF ... HEBREW / GREEK = 1110

WORDS / ARITHMETIC = 1110

Fr. John then said, “What is the code that both Matthew and John shared? *Gematria*. The first used it in *Hebrew* in the Holy Bible, and the second used it in *Greek* in the Holy Bible, but both used gematria, summing up *words* with *arithmetic*.”

With his voice softened considerably from the cross-examiner tone that he had taken up earlier, Bishop Wienke stated: “John, you have scientific training. I’m not asking you now about any of the specifics of the letter, we can get into that later, but I’d like to know if your scientific training impacts how you view the whole concept of gematria.”

Fr. John smiled a wide smile. He then took a sip of his black coffee and replied, “Bishop, I’ve thought about that a good deal since you and the

Cardinal were at the Shrine in April. My training as a scientist actually does impact the way that I look at gematria because science, and particularly physics, is fundamentally mathematical. That's the coin of the realm of science and physics. As I mentioned earlier, gematria is fundamentally mathematical, too, because the way that gematria works is with math's most simple essence, addition. But it's also mathematical, as I also mentioned, because another essence of math deals with its searching out and its discovery of hidden patterns. That's what this Bible code does, too - it searches out, discovers, and then compares hidden-patterned results."

Fr. John continued, "From Galileo to Newton to Einstein, an overwhelming sense has emerged that the hidden patterns imbedded into the cosmos are intelligible, and they are intelligible in a mathematical way. So the *Logos* created the universe, and when we focus the lens of mathematics on His creation, we see immutable patterns take form.

"After these several months of study of gematria, I now believe that it's essentially *a mathematical examination of language*, of what exists beneath language, of what exists in 'the mathematical DNA of language,' so to speak. So gematria is *a science of language*. This point is important to stress for what I'm about to discuss. But first let me share this result with you, and I'll mention three things as a prelude to our wider discussion." Fr. John looked in his briefcase and then slid another index card across the table.

A SCIENCE OF LANGUAGE = 888

Fr. John took another drink of his black coffee and continued. "Think about this for a minute. How do our brains produce language? *This is key*. To begin with, our brains store, and then manipulate information, *in patterns of electrical activation*. Neurons fire electrical impulses in patterns. And that's precisely how language forms in the human mind - in the human intellect. That's what the science of

neurolinguistics teaches us. Well, when we dig into the *product* of these patterns of electrical activation in the brain, we find that the product – in this case, the English language – also contains patterns. But they are patterns that we can only dig out with mathematics.” Fr. John then pointed to the top portion of his copy of the Revelation Code Letter.

THE HOLY FATHER = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

HOLY SPIRIT = 906

He then continued, “There does seem to be something about the human condition that leads to these patterns. We don’t know *exactly* what it is, but we now know it’s there. Perhaps we Christians, though, can begin to imagine that it’s a result of, or it’s caused by, our Maker, and Him creating our brains in such a way that they quite naturally sing back to Him – in a mathematical way.”

Fr. John looked for an index card in his briefcase. When he found it he said, “In his book *The Mind’s Road to God*, St. Bonaventure, commenting on St. Augustine, said something quite interesting.” Then Fr. John read the following to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

“Augustine shows this in his book *On the True Religion* and in the sixth book *On Music*, wherein he assigns the differences of the numbers as they mount step by step from sensible things to the Maker of all things, so that God may be seen in all.

“For he says that numbers are in bodies and especially in sounds and words, and he calls these ‘sonorous.’ . . .

“Since, therefore, all things are beautiful and in some way delightful, and beauty and delight do not exist apart from proportion, and proportion is primarily in number, it needs

must be that all things are rhythmical (*numerosa*). And for this reason *number is the outstanding exemplar in the mind of the Maker, and in things it is the outstanding trace leading to wisdom*. Since this is most evident to all and closest to God, it leads most directly to God . . .”

St. Bonaventure, *Itinerarium Mentis ad Deum*, Chap. 2, ¶ 10.

Fr. John then put down the index card and continued, “I find it fascinating that we have two doctors of the Church, and one is commenting on the other’s statement that ‘numbers are in bodies and especially in sounds and words’, and then he goes on to say that ‘number is the outstanding exemplar in the mind of the Maker’. Well, we are coming to see that number is in the words that emanate from our brains and it points back to the Maker.”

“There does seem to be something of a mystery there,” said the Cardinal.

The Bishop responded, “Mystery is the right word, indeed.”

Fr. John smiled, not completely sure whether the Cardinal and the Bishop saw the significance that he saw, but he pressed on nonetheless. “There’s a second thing about this gematria code that grabs the scientist within me by the lapels, and that’s the *beauty* of its mathematics, because beauty is really a concept that is a guiding force to physicists and mathematicians alike.”

“For instance, let me mention Frank Wilczek, a joint winner of the Nobel prize in Physics in 2004,” continued Fr. John. “When he describes *how* he and his partners used mathematical calculations to confront the scientific problem that they were trying to solve, his language turns into the language of a winsome poet. He says that they were trying to use the most *beautiful* of mathematics – that *beauty* was their guiding compass. And, in

short, the equations of the strong interaction in physics were in fact *beautiful*. This Nobel laureate scientist believes, as many do, that the physical realities of the world – from its tiniest components to the grandest components – are best revealed by a deep structure that is itself the embodiment of beauty. *In other words, in science and mathematics, beauty points to truth.*”

The Cardinal asked, “But *why* is that so?”

Fr. John replied, “Well, Your Eminence, in mathematics, which, again, is the coin of the realm of science and physics, beauty is an extremely important feature. Mathematicians always speak in terms of the beautiful – they are always looking for beauty in their equations. Although mathematicians recognize that beauty is a difficult thing to define, it *is* readily recognizable when you see it. That’s exactly what mathematicians say. When a mathematical proof combines elegance, simplicity, form, and structure, and when it also unites things that were previously not understood to be connected, then it not only comprises beauty, but truth as well.” Having said that, Fr. John once again pointed to the top of the Revelation Code Letter.

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444

“These results are *beautiful* to my mathematical eyes,” said Fr. John.

The Bishop pressed Fr. John, “Again, John, *why* do you say that?”

“Well, stated differently, unlike experimental science where the truth of a proposition is tested by experiment, a mathematician’s work is best tested by another criterion altogether. And that criterion is best described

as beauty, which, again, mathematicians far and wide would agree can be found in simplicity, elegance, and a unification of divergent thoughts. These qualities tell the mathematician that he or she is on the right track, that his or her math is true. Again, in mathematics, beauty is a *sign* of the true.” With that, Fr. John presented another index card.

BEAUTY = 444

Fr. John continued, “To me, all of these mathematical results are a proof, a mathematical proof, and it’s one that is striking. It unites the most fundamental words connected to JESUS, with fundamental words of the *manner* and *means* by which those religious words are connected, ENGLISH and GEMATRIA, and then it puts a bow of beauty on the entire equation, sealing it with an almost unimaginable simplicity, an elegant result, that being, the one connected to the Roman numeral for 444.

“In fact, this bow of beauty is so particularly elegant because, using Roman numerals in this code, you have to count all the way from 1 to 444 until the letters comprising the numerals actually equal 444. It doesn’t happen for *any* of the other numerals from 1 through 443. I’ve done the counting in this code myself to see if it’s true; and it is. To my mathematical mind, the fact that it doesn’t happen *until you get all the way up to 444* - until you get to a numeral that actually equals itself in this code - is a sublime and simple beauty. Indeed, in Roman numerals, you have to count from 1 all the way up to 444 before you get *any* number that actually equals itself in this code. That tips the mathematical mind significantly away from the conclusion of happenstance and significantly towards a conclusion of a *clear sign* - one evidencing a pattern, an in-built signal to the mathematical mind, one that is *beautiful*.”

The Cardinal nodded in agreement and said, “And to my religious mind it’s even more beautiful because it’s all connected to *the* Pattern, that is, to the *Logos*, to Jesus Himself.”

“Agreed,” said the Bishop.

Fr. John continued, “The third thing that I wanted to mention as a prelude to our wider discussion is something that Pope John Paul the Great wrote in 1988 about theology and science, and that is this.” Taking an index card from his briefcase, Fr. John read aloud the following:

“Theology will have to call on the findings of science to one degree or another as it pursues its primary concern for the human person, the reaches of freedom, the possibilities of Christian community, the nature of belief and the intelligibility of nature and history. The vitality and significance of theology for humanity will in a profound way be reflected in its ability to incorporate these findings.”

“To me,” continued Fr. John, “this is the expression of the idea that science can in fact be a guide to a sound theology. The two can in fact be *complimentary*.”

“John,” said the Cardinal, “although that particular quote from JP II wasn’t on our radar screen when we selected you for this mission, we did seek you out because of your scientific training, so when it comes to gematria, are there other observations that you make as a scientist?”

Fr. John replied, “Yes, using this idea of gematria as being a mathematical science of language, and using it as a backdrop for our discussion, now let’s think about Galileo for a moment. To do that, though, we have to actually go back to Aristotle. That great philosopher believed what seemed obvious enough: heavy objects fall faster than light ones. For instance, we know that if we drop a feather and a hammer from the same height, the hammer will reach the ground first. But along comes Galileo, and with his mathematical mind, he proposed something that was

completely counter intuitive. He asserted that, in absence of air resistance, all objects would fall at exactly the same rate.

“He reached this conclusion based upon mathematical thought. Legend has it that Galileo dropped balls of different weight from the Leaning Tower of Pisa to provide observational support for his mathematical conclusions. And we know for certain that Galileo carefully designed inclined planes in order to slow the movement of different sized balls so that he could precisely measure the movement of the balls compared to the time that it took for their movement.

“Galileo took all of that mathematical data and he reached a counter intuitive conclusion. A feather and a hammer would fall at the same rate. Interestingly enough, that conclusion was completely confirmed in 1971 by an Apollo 15 astronaut, David Scott. Yes, *on the moon*, he performed a test that proved that Galileo was exactly right. He dropped a feather and a hammer, and due to the lack of air resistance, both hit the moon’s surface at the same exact time,” said Fr. John with a smile. “You can watch that test on *YouTube* today. In fact, I have that loaded up on my i-Phone right now. Let’s check it out. It takes less than a minute.”

Both Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke recalled seeing that demonstration on TV when they were much younger, so they were both actually delighted at the audio-visual aid to Fr. John’s presentation. Fr. John then clicked the following *tinyurl* on his i-Phone and the three men watched the footage together: <http://tinyurl.com/GalileoWasCorrect>.

And after seeing this, both the Cardinal and the Bishop smiled at the memory of it from their younger days.

Fr. John continued, “So Galileo did something that was unique, something that was thought to be impossible up to that date. He actually used mathematics in a way that no one thought it could be used. He used

it to describe *motion* in the world. Believing that mathematics was the language of nature and thus a language of God because God created nature, he thought that math could be used in new and different ways to describe reality - in this case the reality of moving objects.

“And it’s important to note that there is a line that can be traced here. It actually started before Christ’s birth in Bethlehem. That line actually goes all the way back to Pythagoras and to his motto, *All is number*, expressing his school of thought’s central belief - that the cosmos was mathematically designed in an intelligible way.”

Fr. John continued, “Plato, of course, believed that, too. In fact, mathematical patterns became the foundation of the Platonic Ideas, the ones we’ve just discussed. Then along comes Galileo and he breathes life back into that very line of thought.” Fr. John quickly found the card that he was looking for and read it slowly to the Cardinal and Bishop. It was a famous statement of Galileo.

Philosophy is written in this all-encompassing book that is constantly open before our eyes, that is the universe; but it cannot be understood unless one first learns to understand the language and knows the characters in which it is written. It is written in mathematical language ...

“Galileo concluded that if we don’t know this language of mathematics, we are doomed to wander ‘around pointlessly in a dark labyrinth.’”

Cardinal Flanagan said, “That’s an interesting thought - an interesting turn of the phrase, John. So Galileo believed that we must use the torch of mathematics to find our way out of the dark labyrinths of life.”

Fr. John replied, “Exactly. And then along comes Sir Isaac Newton, born within a year of when Galileo dies. He took up Galileo’s belief that the world could be decoded and described mathematically. He even comes

up with an entirely new kind of mathematics to advance his scientific thoughts. Of course, I'm talking about calculus. And he used that new mathematics to grand effect, *proving things with it* - things like the nature of gravity - things that amazed the scientific world."

Fr. John continued, "Now think of Newton's work for a moment. Newton's thoughts started in his mind, they were then turned into numbers and symbols drawn on paper, and then, with those numbers and symbols drawn on paper, Newton comes to describe realities in the world. Mathematics comes to provide proof of the way things really are. Again, math becomes the torch, as you said, Cardinal, to light the way, which reminds me of the poet Alexander Pope's epitaph for Newton.

'NATURE and Nature's Laws lay hid in Night:

God said, 'Let Newton be!' and all was light."

Bishop Wienke interjected, "Of course, the light is Christ, not Newton."

"And the Bible-believing Newton would certainly agree," quickly retorted Fr. John. "Did you know, Bishop, that Newton actually spent much more time writing about God and Holy Scriptures than he ever did writing about science?"

"No, I didn't."

"It's a proven fact. Like the baptized Galileo, the baptized Newton believed 100 percent in the reality of God." To underscore this point, Fr. John then quoted from memory what Newton had inserted into the second edition of his most famous work, *Principia*:

This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.

Fr. John then continued, “Newton believed that the world operated according to mathematical laws. And, you know what? Science has proven his belief to be true, time and time again in the centuries since. For instance, take the Scottish mathematical physicist James Clerk Maxwell, a pious, committed Christian man, and a brilliant scientist. I mentioned him earlier. He showed that light was an electromagnetic wave. He did this, though, in an entirely mathematical way, a way that wasn’t observationally proven to be true until after he died, when, in 1888, the German scientist Heinrich Hertz proved the existence of these electromagnetic waves by developing experimental evidence of them. And in doing so, he lead the way for Marconi to develop the wireless radio that revolutionized human communication.”

The Cardinal interjected, “Now we live in a global village, able to know about things that happen on the other side of the world in as long as it would take for us to know what just happened three huts down the path 10,000 years ago.”

Fr. John nodded in complete agreement. “Absolutely, Cardinal, you’re right. And math was again the torch lighting the way to all of this. More than that, though, gentlemen, math quite frankly *predicted things*. For example, we all think of Albert Einstein as the greatest scientist ever, but of course that wasn’t always so for the unknown clerk who once worked unassumingly in a Swiss patent office. He comes up with the theory of special relativity in 1905, then, in 1916, he comes up with his theory of general relativity. This too was done with numbers and symbols scrawled on paper. But they predicted things, scientific things.

“Take this, for instance. Sir Arthur Eddington performed the first basic test of Albert Einstein’s general theory of relativity. That test occurred on May 29, 1919 during a six-minute total eclipse of the sun. And it was performed on the Island of Príncipe off the west coast of Africa. Keep in

mind that among other things, Einstein's general relativity predicted that light would not travel in a perfectly straight line. Newton had predicted this as well. He predicted that due to gravity, light would bend. But Einstein's theory predicted that light would bend at double the rate predicted by the great Newton. So when Sir Eddington returned to England and later announced that his data from Príncipe precisely confirmed Einstein's predictions, Einstein instantly became a household name. He quickly supplanted ol' Sir Isaac, in the minds of many, as history's greatest scientist.

“Think about it in these terms: Why was Einstein on the front page of newspapers from around the world? Basically, it's because his math, written on a piece of paper, showed exactly what would be *proven to be true* on the Island of Príncipe a few years later. It was proof for a whole new way of looking at reality. Now check this out?” Fr. John slid this index card across the conference table.

EINSTEIN - PRINCIPE = 1110

Bishop Wienke interjected, “I admit that it's curious, but why not just write it off to coincidence? Why impute any meaning to it?”

Fr. John took in a deep breath to collect his thoughts and then he responded, “That's a good question, Bishop. Let me try to answer it this way. There was a Nobel prize-winning physicist and mathematician named Eugene Wigner. He wrote a very influential paper back in 1960. It was called ‘The Unreasonable Effectiveness of Mathematics in the Natural Sciences.’ He wrote something in that very famous paper that's quite important to consider. He wrote that ‘mathematical concepts turn up in entirely unexpected connections.’ I thought of that paper when I found this next result that I'll show you. And I'm sure that you can understand exactly why it would hold significance to a Marian priest living at the National Shrine of Divine Mercy.” Fr. John pushed an index card across the table that had this result on it.

FAUSTINA - SOPOCKO = 1110

Fr. John continued, “Of course, Blessed Fr. Michał Sopoćko was St. Faustina’s most important confessor and spiritual director. It was he who first instructed St. Faustina to keep her *Diary*, and the Lord specifically told St. Faustina that he was a ‘priest after My own Heart’ (*Diary*, 1256). Incidentally, this canonized-saint-to-be – that’s something I’m convinced of based upon Christ’s comment about him – he was actually born on All Saint’s Day in 1888. And we know from the *Diary* that Mary appeared to St. Faustina many times.” Fr. John pushed another index card across the table.

MARY - FAUSTINA = 888

BIBLE CODE - FAUSTINA = 888

DIARY - FAUSTINA = 888

“Now think of this in light of something that the Nobel laureate Eugene Wigner asserted in that 1960 paper about the mathematics that we find in our scientific observations of nature. He said that it’s ‘something bordering on the mysterious and that there is no rational explanation for it.’ Those were his words about math’s ability to describe the nature of reality, and we see that concept come to life in the results on those two cards.”

Cardinal Flanagan responded, “Those results are certainly mysterious.”

“Let me add one other mysterious result for you to consider,” said Fr. John. “It concerns the famous Black Madonna, Our Lady of Czestochowa. The history behind that image is rich indeed, as is its connection to Poland, the homeland of St. Faustina and St. John Paul II. A copy of that image hangs at the back of the Shrine up on Eden Hill. I sometimes glance at it as I read out the gospel or as I preach my homily.

Well, look at this.” Across the conference table went another index card, this one read as follows.

MARY - BLACK MADONNA = 888

“This too is mysterious,” said the Cardinal.

“That means that there is a mathematical connection – a numeric-relational equivalence – between these two concepts,” said Fr. John as he pushed another card across the table.

BLACK MADONNA = FAUSTINA

“To a Marian priest at Eden Hill, this is packed with great meaning, beyond what I can completely unpack here today. Suffice it to say that St. Faustina is an end of time instrument of Christ, a co-worker of Mary, who is the one – the Mother of God – who crushes the head of the serpent.”

“Perhaps, though, this is the most mysterious part,” continued Fr. John. “For human beings that existed 150 years ago, trying to understand the distant past was actually quite on par in the degree of difficulty that we human beings would have today when confronted with the task of trying to understand the future. And when I refer to the distant past, I’m talking about going back long, long, long before there was any testimonial data to examine, testimonial data like Moses’ writings in the *Pentateuch*. But human beings 150 years ago, back in the day of Darwin, they started to begin to get at that pre-history time, the time eons before Moses. They were beginning to examine fossilized material that was beginning to shed light on what life was like on earth millions and millions of years prior.

“But Darwin’s understanding could not penetrate beyond the data of what the earth could provide to him. Even if Darwin had known what we know now about the zircon from Australia’s Jack Hills, how it could be used to date that rock to 4.4 billion years ago, he could not have pinpointed that

the universe came into being 13.8 billion years ago. How were *we* able to do that? Einstein and a Belgian-born Catholic priest named Fr. Georges Lemaître.

“Of course, as you know, this was not just any Catholic priest. He was a Catholic priest who was trained in astronomy at my alma mater, MIT. Fr. Lemaître took Einstein’s theory of relativity, he carefully did the math, and then he concluded that our universe was expanding. Not only was this conclusion contrary to the conclusion reached by every physicist from Newton to Einstein, but it appears to have rankled the world’s most famous scientist a bit, because when Einstein learned of what Fr. Lemaître was doing with his work, he called the Catholic priest out. He said, ‘Your calculations are correct, but your grasp of physics is abominable.’ Can you imagine how disheartening that must have been? But with your background in the military in mind, Cardinal, you should know that the priest who served in the Belgian artillery during World War I politely stuck to his scientific guns. I’ve often wondered if, when Fr. Lemaître learned of this shot across his bow, so to speak, whether he muttered under his breath the phrase often misattributed to Galileo, ‘Eppur si muove.’”

Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke both chuckled at the irony of the mental picture painted by Fr. John.

Fr. John continued, “The epitome of science had called into question the theory of a Catholic priest on the beginnings of time and space. Yet within a short time, data would prove that Fr. Lemaître was exactly right. *It certainly did move.* Observational ‘red shift’ data from the stars proved that the MIT priest’s theory was ‘spot on.’ The universe was indeed expanding. It was moving outwards.”

“It’s crucial to keep in mind,” emphasized Fr. John, “that the Big Bang theory, as it came to be called, was arrived at by Fr. Lemaître via mathematics. That is, from a purely *mathematical* conclusion that the

universe was expanding came a logical deduction that if you ran the ‘movie of creation’ backward in time, you’d ultimately run into a point at which there was that *singularity moment*, that single point when space and time actually *began*. An explosion of light that leads to a space and a time that didn’t exist before that moment. So, again, Cardinal, math was the torch that lit the way.

“Ultimately, the rock solid proof for the Big Bang theory came from across the Hudson River when a couple of unknown Bell Lab scientists – Penzias and Wilson – both earned the Nobel Prize for pointing their huge scientific instruments to the heavens to serendipitously discover the CMB radiation that provided observational proof for what Fr. Lemaître had *mathematically* surmised more than 30 years before. So the objective, experimental proof came later – *after the math*. Now check this out.” Fr. John slid another index card across the table.

THE BIG BANG: SPACE AND TIME = 1110

Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke eyed each other with raised eyebrows after they looked at that result.

“So what we have here is this question,” said Fr. John. “Math allowed the human mind to grope *backward* in time to that day without a yesterday, to that day of the Big Bang moment. But can math now be used to allow us to grope *forward* in time to a day without a tomorrow? We know as Christian Catholics that day is ultimately the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, a day when eternity melts away time.”

“To obtain the knowledge that we did about the past,” continued Fr. John, “we needed to rely upon newly-invented mathematical ways, things like the non-Euclidean geometry of Carl Friedrich Gauss, which was further announced to the world in a famous lecture delivered by a German

mathematician named Bernhard Riemann in 1854. It was a geometry that allowed for considering higher dimensions.

“Let me map this concept out for you this way. In order for Fr. Lemaître to figure out the reality of the Big Bang, he needed the math contained within Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity. And in order for Albert Einstein to figure out his theory of relativity, he needed a very different way of looking at geometry, the non-Euclidean geometry of people like Carl Friedrich Gauss and Bernhard Riemann. A new way of looking at geometry was therefore needed to understand the ‘Let there be light’ moment of the Big Bang.”

Fr. John then asked several questions in semi-rapid succession. “Is the same true for figuring out a general outline of the future? And is this general outline of the future something that God has preordained for us to know about? In other words, do we need a new kind of mathematics to learn what we’ll need to know as Christians to ready ourselves for the great tribulation to come, that of which Christ spoke about in the gospels?”

Fr. John continued at a more relaxed pace: “There is something perplexing about the laws of physics that should be considered here. The laws of physics developed by Newton and Einstein and present-day Nobel laureates, they all teach us the same thing: although our experience tells us that there is indeed an arrow of time – a direction as to how events unfold within time – this arrow cannot actually be found within the fundamental laws of physics. Rather, in these fundamental laws, there is a type of *symmetry* regarding time, that being between the past and the future. Now check this out.” Fr. John slid another card across the table.

SYMMETRY: TIME = 1110

Fr. John continued, “I think that there’s something of a mystery at work here. And it’s this: The 666 of the Antichrist of the future looking

backward from the point in time of his day *would also be the 666 of today looking forward toward his day*. Both would be the same. So with a Bible code, as long as it's dialed in correctly, as long as it's properly calibrated, and as long as the language it uses has completed its alphabetical evolution, *looking forward gives you the same result as looking backward would give you*. There is a real symmetry between the past and the future, one that a Bible code could pick up on and reveal.” Another card was pushed across the table.

BIBLE CODE: FUTURE = 888

The Cardinal and the Bishop both looked at the card with intense interest in their eyes. Bishop Wineke then asked, “What exactly do you mean when you say that the English language has completed its ‘alphabetical evolution’?”

Fr. John replied, “I’ll answer that question with a question: Is the A to Z alphabet now locked into place or will we English speakers add another letter here or there, as we have during the millennium plus that the English language has developed and evolved?”

The Cardinal then asked, “What are your thoughts on that, John?”

Fr. John replied, “Cardinal, the first English language dictionary, Robert Cawdrey’s *Table Alphabeticall*, was printed in 1604. The standardization of the English language that has occurred over the past several hundred years since that time has ensured that the addition of another letter into the English language has a vanishingly small chance of occurring. While new *words* will surely continue to develop, the A to Z alphabet will not change in the future. Furthermore, because of the standardization of the spellings of words - something that was not as concrete before the printing press and before dictionaries became so

widespread – the gematria values of *existing* words are now locked into place.”

Fr. John picked up the Revelation Code Letter that he was given in April, and he pointed to the top results that the author of the letter had shared.

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444

Fr. John then said, “This is significant proof that the English language has essentially finished evolving. By that I simply mean that the A to Z alphabet will not be altered in the future. It’s now locked into place such that these results will not change. And here’s further proof of that statement.” Fr. John picked up another index card out of his briefcase and he slid it across the table.

ENGLISH ALPHABET’S CODE = 1110

Fr. John then said, “The final evolution of the English language has significant implications for us, as I’ll describe momentarily.

“But let me state this next point first, since it undergirds everything that we’re discussing here today. Some people might wonder what math has to do with God. Over these last few months, I’ve thought several times about my wife Sara and about her absolute love for math. She saw in it a crystal-clear sign of God’s beauty, one that reflected like a mirror the ordered mind of God. The word *pattern* could actually be an accurate translation of the Greek word, *Logos*. And because, according to St. John, *Logos* also describes the very mind of God, that is, Jesus Christ, God’s mind can be said to be ordered in a way that can be truthfully described as

mathematical – in a way that the *pattern science of math* is attuned to, so to speak. My wife Sara thought so, anyway, and she had grand company in this belief.”

Picking up another index card to read, Fr. John said, “Here’s some words of Pope Benedict XVI on the subject.”

“The great Galileo said that God wrote the book of nature in the form of the language of mathematics. He was convinced that God has given us two books: the book of Sacred Scripture and the book of nature. And the language of nature – this was his conviction – is mathematics, so it is a language of God, a language of the Creator.”

Fr. John continued, “So God’s *mind and language* are attuned to mathematics in a special kind of way. They are mathematical in a way that is perhaps deeply mystical. And without even being aware of it, we human beings, His creatures, speak in a veiled mathematical way, in a way that, when we join math and language, numbers and letters, we can mysteriously see an order, design and pattern unveiled before our very eyes. *So because we are God’s creations with souls, our language naturally and organically falls into an ordered shape.* And this observation is not all that surprising for someone who is both a Christian and a scientist to find, since for hundreds of years math and science have been revealing ordered patterns in the universe. Why not in language itself, since language springs forth from Man, and Man springs forth from the *Logos*? There’s a divine intelligibility in language because God has marked Man – stamped us, you might say – with His intelligibility.

“In this way, there’s a real *apocalypse* that occurs, using the biblical meaning of that word – a word that means, as you know, *taking back the veil, an unveiling, or even a revelation of reality.*”

The Cardinal replied, “So using the torch of mathematics, a language of the Creator, not only can we identify good, for instance, the order inherent in the Three Person Trinity of God, but we’ll also be able to unveil the evil that we’ll need to know about for the future. And we’ll be able to do so in a way so as to keep our people safe, as best as possible, from the Antichrist’s plans. Is that what you’re proposing, John?”

Fr. John responded, “That’s essentially it, Your Eminence. And recall once again that Einstein needed a new type of geometry, which was essentially a new type of mathematical language, one that didn’t exist when Christ walked the earth, and he needed it in order to come up with a theory that ultimately allowed us to view *backwards* to the beginning of time. Likewise, we can use a new mathematical language, one that didn’t exist when Christ walked the earth, that is, A equals 6, B equals 12, and so on, in order to come up with a way of seeing *forward* toward the end of time. It will reveal things - unveil things - about the future, because - and this is *the key point - the language of that future is now already locked into place today and it’s God’s stamp of intelligibility that can be found on that language.*”

“So the language that we’ll use to accomplish our task,” continued Fr. John, “is the English language *combined* with the gematria key of *six*. That’s the properly calibrated code. *Modern English*, that’s both dial one and dial two that we spoke of earlier, and a gematria key of six, that’s the third dial that we discussed. With those three dials properly set, we know the code is correctly calibrated. In other words, that it’s dialed in correctly.” Another index card went across the table, and this one had three results on it.

BIBLE CODE'S KEY: VI = 888

BIBLE CODE: A KEY OF VI = 906

KEY OF BIBLE: VI, VI, VI = 1110

After allowing his superiors a few moments to absorb these three results, Fr. John concluded his point: “The English language and the key of six. It’s that language - *that mathematical language* - that was designed by God to reveal exactly what we Christians will need to know about now in order to plan for the future. In other words, because the language of the present and the language of the future are one and the same, because the English language is *not* going to evolve to include yet another letter in the alphabet in the future the way that it did in the past, by God’s Divine Providence, we can know certain things *now*. We can know a very basic outline of the future, in advance of the Church’s ‘ultimate trial’, the ‘final unleashing of evil’, what the *Catechism* ultimately calls, ‘the final cosmic upheaval of this passing world’ (CCC 677).”

Cardinal Flanagan responded, “So with this English language Bible code, we’ll be able to pull the mask off of the face of evil to expose it to the light of day, when the time is right, that is.”

Fr. John nodded solemnly in agreement and then he pushed another card across the table to his superiors in the Catholic Church. It read:

BLACK MADONNA = FAUSTINA = FUTURE

“And it will be Mary and the very first Catholic saint of our present millennium that will allow us to know the general outline of that future, so that we can make our battle plans to strategically counter *the primary move of the Antichrist*.”

The Cardinal began to respond, “Do I understand -”

But at that very instant the door of the conference room flung open. There was a panicked look of deep concern on the face of the young priest at the door. “Cardinal, there’s been a terror attack at Times Square!”

#

Chapter 9

A Blast and Shots Heard Around the World

*The wicked go astray from the womb, they err from their birth, speaking lies.
They have venom like the venom of a serpent ...*

Psalm 58:3-4

In the heart of Chicago's Millennium Park, a close friend of Mohammad Addula had just finished praying the Muslim Salaat in a secluded wooded area about 300 yards from the Pritzker Pavilion stage, in an area that was once an abandoned railroad yard. The black backpack that was strapped to his back had just been at his feet while he prayed the words "Allah Akbar."

As he prowled among the midst of the crowd, he took little real notice of the human beings who were there listening to the performance of the Chicago Children's Choir. The crowd was filled with the young, the old, and those in-between. To his left, there was a three-year old child joyously playing on a picnic blanket with his 19 year-old African-American mom; his Hispanic dad was not there that afternoon because he was on board the *USS Cape Cod (AD-66)*, a fast attack tender in the middle of a WestPac deployment. To his right, there were seven new members of the Chicago-area Girl Scouts, all of them in full uniform. That morning those seven girls had taken the Girl Scout Promise in unison.

On my honor, I will try: To serve God and my country,

To help people at all times, and to live by the Girl Scout Law.

They each had cotton candy in their hands to celebrate their new status as Girl Scouts. There was also a German-and-Irish-American unemployed factory worker; he was sitting on a beach towel next to his two girls. He was quite content in the moment, sipping on a wine cooler, content because he

felt like the hero of his two girls again, since he was able to provide a wonderful afternoon for them - for only the cost of two ice cream cones. In listening to the music, his girls had seemed to have forgotten for a time that they had lost their mom the year before in her battle with breast cancer. There was also a young Catholic family laying there on their backs on the grass, calmly listening to the music, forgetting all about the troublesome fight that they had earlier that morning, the classic drama, it seemed, of all newlyweds: a fight about their respective mothers-in-law.

But it was as though the man with a black backpack noticed none of these people. He had a mission to carry out for his friend Mohammad Addula and he was intent on doing it, exactly as it had been wickedly planned out by his friend and his ISIS handlers.

* * *

There was also a man with a small black suitcase, another friend of Mohammad Addula, and he was in the heart of New York City at precisely the same time that his other friend was prowling in the Chicago City Park. He also found it difficult to notice the human beings near him, those near where he sat at a table drinking a Coke. He was just 30 yards from the famed U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station in Times Square. Cleanly shaven and dressed in a flashy black business suit with white pinstripes, all in a pre-planned effort to quash any suspicions that may occur to a guarded NYPD cop, he also had just prayed the Muslim Salaat. His prayer took place at a mosque in downtown Manhattan, a short ten-minute cab ride away. Twenty minutes before, the small black suitcase that the man carried was about five feet to his left, leaning up against the mosque wall, as he prostrated himself on the ground to pray to Allah.

Just outside the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station there were two Navy Petty Officers. They were enjoying a smoke, a habit that they both picked up while deployed at sea during their previous tour on aircraft

carriers. But now they were both stationed in New York City, able to enjoy the night life of all night lives. It was party central in the Big City, and that's what these two young 21-year old bucks were talking about as they smoked their *Marlboro* cigarettes. The man with a small black suitcase *did* notice these two young men; in fact, he carefully *marked* them in his mind. He did so because he knew that his friend Mohammad Addula would like these two "soft targets."

The rest of the crowd - those sitting at tables at the corner of 44th Street and Broadway, outside where the ABC Times Square Studios were located, and those walking and milling about - they were all fungible to the man with a small black suitcase. Any one of them could be a "soft target" taken away in a body bag within an hour or a "witness" left to give the terrorists' message to the world via the media. That message, the one that the man with a small black suitcase wanted known worldwide, was about how *unspeakable terror* had come to the streets of New York City, directly into the heart of the Big Apple.

But, at that moment, the unplanned happened. Two young college-aged girls - tourists from Colorado - came up to the man with the small black suitcase and asked him if he knew the time, of all things. These two young ladies, who were in New York City to see *Les Misérables* on Broadway later that night, had done the unfathomable for Millennials on a trip to the Big City: they had both let their i-Phones completely lose their charge.

The man with a small black suitcase took quick note that the two college girls before him both had t-shirts on that marked them as Christians: their shirts read "Property of the Colorado Christian Cougars" with a 2020 printed in the middle of their shirts inside an oval. He smiled at them as an evil thought formed in his mind. He responded to their question about the time, "Tell you what girls, let me buy you both a Coke, and if you sit

with me for just two minutes, I'll let you know the exact time, and I'll send you on your way with an interesting story to tell.” The man with a small black suitcase had just *marked* these two women to be *witnesses* to the terror that was about to befall the Big Apple. They could tell the world what a cool customer he was in the moments before he killed and was killed.

The college girls looked at each other, shrugged their shoulders, and smiled at the man with a black suitcase. Since both were thirsty and wanted to sit down for a few minutes before they proceeded on to *The Top of the Rock*, they readily took up that “generous” offer. After all, he was dressed in a fine business suit, it was daylight, and they were in the midst of hundreds and hundreds of other people. *What's the harm in taking this nice man up on his offer*, they thought to themselves.

* * *

It was 3:58 P.M., and Mohammad Addula, now a sworn ISIS hitman, who recently returned from a trip to Syria to meet with his three ISIS handlers, was at his car four blocks from Fenway Park, parked in a \$20-a-game lot off of Boylston Street. He had his headphones plugged into his *Android* smart phone, and he was closely monitoring CNN, waiting with great anticipation to hear the first word of his strike team's work. The plan was for simultaneous action in Chicago and New York at exactly 4 P.M., and then he would send a tweet to the major cable news outlets, and he'd leave his newly purchased smart phone in his car, so it could be discovered later by the FBI. That pre-written tweet was ready to send; it read as follows:

@CNN @foxnews @MSNBC #DeathAtMillenniumPark
#DeathAtTimesSquare #DeathAtFenway, #MoreISISMini911sToCome

When he sent that tweet, he planned to casually walk the four blocks to the Kid's Entrance at Fenway Park, Gate K. Then he'd run up to that gate,

which leads to the Kid's Concourse, and he'd detonate the suicide-vest that he wore under his newly purchased L.L. Bean Trail Rain Jacket, size XL, the size needed to accommodate the 15-sticks of C-4 explosives, along with nails and nuts and bolts, that were sewn into that vest and jacket.

Mohammad Addula's chest was pounding with great anticipation as the time on his *Android* smart phone turned to 4 P.M.

* * *

Up on the Pritzker Pavilion stage, the Chicago Children's Choir was in full voice. Isaiah Stevenson, a young African-American vocalist, was semi-famous among his peers, the other members of the Choir. His semi-fame stemmed from the movie role that he played in a low-budget indie zombie movie, one that was entitled *Day of the Living Dead in Chicago*. He had gotten the part in that movie because he knew a Chicago guy who knew an LA guy who knew a Hollywood guy, a stage hand's assistant, in fact. That's how Hollywood works, he had thought to himself, after he got the part. That role had paid him \$750, and he had used most of that money to buy the three-piece, light-colored suit that he was wearing proudly up on the stage. His tie was a lovely cream color with yellow polka dots. He was singing out a haunting, sonorous reggae tune, and the entire Choir, clapping their hands together and rocking back and forth, was his vocal backup.

The lyrics that Isaiah Stevenson was singing at that fateful and awful moment were these:

All my life I've been prayin' for, I've been prayin' for, the
people to say, that we don't want to fight no more, there will be
no more wars, and our children will -

It was at *that moment* that the black backpack filled with C-4 and roofing nails exploded with extreme and lethal viciousness. Human carnage was everywhere. The seven Girl Scouts - and dozens and dozens of others -

were dead within minutes. Isaiah Stevenson, and the entire Choir, were outside of the blast zone. They all lived to be witnesses to the terror in Chicago on August 12, 2017.

* * *

At exactly 4 P.M., the man with the small black suitcase in Times Square leaned down to unzip the suitcase at his feet. As the zipper travelled slowly around the canvas of the bag, he told the two young women, the girls who were proudly proclaiming to be “Property of the Colorado Christian Cougars”, that it was now that he would reveal the time to them. He said, “The time is 4 P.M., ladies ... *the time that the great Satan, the U.S.A., will meet Allah’s wrath!*” He sprang to his feet pulling something about 18-inches long out of the suitcase. The Christian college girls looked in horror: *it was a machine gun with a large ammunition clip.*

In fact, it was a Russian-made 9A-91, one that had been taken by an ISIS fighter off a dead Syrian soldier on the battlefield three months earlier. It was then smuggled into the United States in a crate containing spices that were mailed to Minneapolis. The man began to fire that weapon nonstop in the direction of the two Navy Petty Officers who had been finishing up their smokes. One of them was struck in the jugular vein of the neck, and the other was struck with three shots in the chest, including one through the left ventricle. Both bled out within two minutes. Two unarmed U.S. Marine Master Gunnery Sergeants came running out of the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station. They were shot four times each, dropping them to their knees before they hit the ground. But their wounds, although disabling them from that particular fight, were not lethal. They would battle another day.

At that point, the man quickly turned around and began to spray the civilian crowd with bullets, careful though to leave the two Colorado Christian girls as living witnesses to his last moments. But of the men,

women, and children in Times Square, no one else was purposely spared the man's wrath, including a 4-week old infant in a baby stroller. He was shot through his tiny left leg.

The response from the NYPD was instant and ferocious. Officers came pouring out of the NYPD's sub-station, which is located directly behind the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station, about 20 yards from the back of that building. As people ran away from the spray of gunshots, the NYPD officers ran across West 43rd Street toward the gunshots. Rookie cop Jose Martinez was the first on the scene with his service handgun in his right hand. As he approached the man spraying the 9A-91 into the crowd, the rookie cop calmly leveled his Glock 19 and fired three shots all hitting the terrorist in the right side of his body, one of them piecing his malevolent heart.

Officer Martinez had finished first in Glock 19 marksmanship in his graduating class, and second overall in his classroom work, prompting the Mayor of New York to say to him at the traditional handshake during the graduation ceremony, "If you spent a little less time on the range and a little more time hitting the books, you might have finished first in your class, Officer." Officer Martinez's mental reply didn't leave his lips: "*Thank you, dummy!*"

But before Officer Martinez was able to drop the terrorist to the Times Square ground, the wicked man got off one last shot as he fell, one that struck the NYPD officer next to Officer Martinez. That officer was David Hewson, and he - struck as he was in the abdomen - had blood pouring out of him into a puddle as his fellow officers came to his aid.

* * *

It was now 4:07 P.M., and Mohammad Addula saw the first News Bulletin on CNN. The banner headline was on the screen: "TERROR REPORTS

FROM NEW YORK AND CHICAGO.” Seeing that, Addula pressed the “tweet” button on his *Android* smart phone, and he tossed the cell phone onto the passenger seat while whispering the words, “Allah Akbar.” He then stepped out of his car, zipped up his rain coat to a position just below his neck, and he began the walk to Gate K, the one that he had mapped out in his wicked little mind a hundred times in the past three months, all since he had returned from Syria and his meeting with his ISIS handlers.

* * *

Seven minutes earlier, at exactly 4:00 P.M. on August 12, 2017, the temperature at Fenway Park was a warm 88 degrees and the sun was shining; according to all weather reports, Bostonians were expecting a perfect, clear-sky, if a bit hot summer evening. Boston PD Sgt. Michael Ryan was in short-sleeved uniform and he was standing his post outside of Gate K - the entrance at Fenway Park that has the banner above it saying “CALLING ALL KIDS.” This entrance leads to the Kid’s Concourse, a kid-friendly zone with balloon artists and face painters, clowns and storytellers, and, of course, Wally the Green Monster, and his little mascot sister, Tessie.

Sgt. Ryan felt himself lucky to get the Gate K post, not only because he would get to see all the young kids coming to the Red Sox-Yankee game, an incredibly special treat for any Boston kid, but also because he got to stand right next to the *Teammates* statue, his favorite place to be outside of Fenway Park.

That statue had a rich Red Sox history, one that Ryan knew well. It was commissioned by the Red Sox top brass to commemorate the story that a famed-baseball writer, David Halberstam, had memorialized in his wonderful book, *The Teammates*, a story about a 1,300-mile car trek that Red Sox legends Dom DiMaggio, Bobby Doerr, and Johnny Pesky had taken in October 2001 to visit their gravely-ill former teammate before he

died the following summer, on July 5, 2002. That teammate was Ted Williams, a man who served in the U.S. Navy Reserves and in the U.S. Marine Corps during World War II. He was widely regarded as the greatest hitter who ever lived, and Sgt. Ryan certainly believed that to be true. The three teammates drove all the way to Florida to visit their ailing friend because, in the aftermath of 9/11, none of them had wanted to fly.

Sgt. Ryan sensed within himself that he was on a special type of alert that afternoon because he had the same exact feeling that he had often experienced as a U.S. Marine out on patrol in Iraq. He wondered to himself if that feeling was because the Red Sox-Yankee game was to start at 5 P.M. on that Saturday afternoon to be broadcast on FOX as the Game of the Week. He thought to himself, *Yes, that must be it*; perhaps the entire Boston PD was on a higher-than-normal alert seeing that the American League East's most storied rivalry would be nationally televised, a happening that always drew the biggest and the rowdiest crowds to Fenway Park.

But the BRIC - the Department of Homeland Security-backed Boston Regional Intelligence Center - went into an all-hands-on-deck red alert when, at exactly 4:02 P.M., news of the shooting in Times Square came into the BRIC's Op-Center. That computer-based intel - a data blast to law enforcement agencies all across the country - originated from a message alert caused by NYPD radio transmissions from the NYPD sub-station, the one directly behind the U.S. Armed Forces Recruiting Station, transmissions that summoned massive backup and scores of ambulances to arrive at Times Square.

Sgt. Ryan's earpiece buzzed with this intel immediately: "All officers, be advised that a terrorist attack - one using small arms - has been reported in Times Square in New York City. Be on the highest alert. Take all necessary precautions." Sgt. Ryan scanned the crowd with extreme

intensity. Then, at 4:04 P.M., a similar type of alert came into the BRIC Op Center, one that originated from the Chicago PD; it caused this transmission to be made into Sgt. Ryan's earpiece: "All officers, be advised that a second terrorist event has been reported taking place in a Chicago City Park. This one is reported to be from an explosive device."

Sgt. Ryan's heartbeat began to accelerate some more, so he made a conscious effort to breathe in deeply and exhale deeply, a calming procedure that he had mastered while out on many patrols in dangerous Iraqi neighborhoods. His eyes carefully scanned the crowd, this time he was looking not only for signs of potential small arms - like a bulge in a pocket or something that could hold that type of weapon - but now he was also looking for clothing that was excessive for that hot summer day, the type of clothing, for instance, that would be able to hide an explosive vest.

This rigorous crowd scanning lasted for the next 6 minutes when, at precisely 4:10 P.M., Sgt. Ryan spotted Mohammad Addula walking down the sidewalk on Ipswich Street, about 150 yards off in the distance, up the street next to the Shell Gas Station. The *tell* for Sgt. Ryan - that small piece of data that was so out of place that it revealed the entire attempted deception - was the large rain coat that was zipped all the way up to just below the neckline. It was not the right attire for the picture-perfect, hot day in Boston, so Sgt. Ryan instinctively knew that there was trouble brewing. He used his right hand to unholster his service weapon, while at the same time he used his left hand to cover his mouth as he radioed into the BRIC.

"This is Sgt. Mike Ryan of the Boston PD. I have a potential terrorist target walking down Ipswich Street in a green rain coat. Request eyes on with all the mounted cameras near Gate K. He just stepped passed the Shell Gas Station. Do you read?"

The BRIC Op Center's response was immediate, "Hold one, Sgt. Ryan." At the Op-Center, the computer analyst at the other end of that transmission was able to locate the target before he was able to take even ten steps toward the ballpark. Having singled-out the individual, the analyst initiated the facial-recognition software. Reaching back into FBI electronic files in DC, it took the computer system exactly seven seconds to produce an alert on the analyst's computer screen, a message that caused an immediate response from him.

"Sgt. Ryan, this is the BRIC Op Center. That target is a RED ALERT. I repeat a RED ALERT. He's a recent return from Syria. The FBI had red flagged him on his return. Use extreme caution. Remember, you are authorized to use deadly force, if necessary. Do you read?"

"I read."

Since he was in uniform, Sgt. Ryan knew that the target would eyeball him, and that was what was happening at that precise moment. Mohammad Addula had indeed seen Sgt. Ryan, the sole PD officer stationed near Gate K, but the terrorist's concerns about this were allayed when he saw what Sgt. Ryan did next. Sgt. Ryan stepped forward a few steps, and turned his back to Addula, causing the terrorist to maintain his steady, but slow-paced steps forward toward Gate K.

The former-U.S. Marine had made that evasive maneuver because he was about to take advantage of something that he had noted a few seconds before he spotted Addula walking down the sidewalk. There was a father, one wearing a N.Y. Yankees baseball cap, posing in front of the *Teammates* statue with his young son and his young daughter. His wife was about to take another picture of them with her i-Phone.

Sgt. Ryan stepped right in front of the father, and he calmly addressed him in a low tone, "Sir, I want you to stand still for me for a few moments.

Now turn your head slightly to the left. A little more. Stop. Hold that position. Do not move. Kids you hold your position, too, please.” The kids, 9 and 7 years-old, looked at each other confused, but their father did just as Sgt. Ryan instructed him, and this led them to do likewise. The father *trusted* the cop who was standing in front of him; there was something about him that conveyed a this-man-knows-what-he’s-doing feeling, so the father kept as still as a statue.

Sgt. Ryan was looking into the Ray-Ban Mirror Aviator Sunglasses of the Yankee fan standing in front of him. In them he could see a perfect reflection of the target as he approached. But Sgt. Ryan could sense that the father’s kids were getting nervous because they could see that he had his service weapon ready in his right hand, held up across his stomach so that it could not be seen by Addula. So while carefully maintaining his own eyes on the target, he said to them in a very fatherly tone, “Hey, teammates, smile for me, won’t you? All’s well here, kids.”

At that moment, Sgt. Ryan saw in his new teammate’s mirrored sunglasses that Mohammad Addula had begun a headlong dash toward Fenway Park’s Children’s Entrance. Sgt. Ryan spun around, leveled his service weapon, a Glock Model 22, and as the terrorist shouted at the top of his lungs, “Allah -”, the single round that Sgt. Ryan had just fired traveled through Addula’s left ear.

Mohammad Addula dropped to the ground 25 feet in front of Gate K. He was immediately incapacitated as soon as the round from Sgt. Ryan’s gun entered his left ear drum, and then exploded into his brain. As a result of this mini-intra-cranium explosion, the terrorist was not able to detonate his suicide vest.

Sgt. Ryan went over to the dead body lying in the street. He examined Addula’s coat pockets and found Addula’s passport and immigration papers within a canvas pencil case, one that was sandwiched with two thin

metal plates inside of it. It seemed that Addula had wanted some immediate fame, wanting the good guys to be able to quickly learn his identity. Then he carefully patted down the outside of the rain coat. It appeared to Sgt. Ryan that the man was indeed wearing a suicide vest. But he'd have to let the PD's Bomb Squad determine that fact for sure, after the area was cleared, that is; yet to do that Sgt. Ryan needed authorization from the BRIC, so he contacted them right off.

“This is Sgt. Mike Ryan of the Boston PD. The target is dead. There is a Somali Passport and some immigration papers in his pocket. The name on the passport is Mohammad Addula. The spelling for the first name is as follows: M-O-H-A-M-M-A-D. And for the last name: A-D-D-U-L-A. The photo is an exact match. It appears that he entered the United States in San Diego in August 1999, he received asylum from an Immigration Judge the following May, and he became a Legal Permanent Resident of the U.S. It also appears that he's wearing an explosive vest. I request backup and authorization to clear the entire side of the ballpark. We'll need the Bomb Squad here immediately. Do you read?”

“10-4. We read you, Sgt. Ryan. We'll send the needed officers to clear the area immediately.”

Sgt. Ryan didn't know it, but the wife of the husband with the two children who were standing in front of the *Teammates* statue, his very own teammates in the killing of a dangerous terrorist, was using her i-Phone to take a video of the transmission that Sgt. Ryan had just made to the BRIC. She was standing directly behind him as he made that call.

And within ten minutes, Sgt. Ryan's entire transmission to the BRIC, as well as a detailed description of what had just happened in front of Gate K at Fenway Park, was being broadcast to the entire world on the Fox News Channel. The wife of the Yankee-fan husband, the one whose mirrored sunglasses Sgt. Ryan had just used to help kill a terrorist, was a producer for

that cable news outlet. She sent her 1 minute, 21 second video back to New York attached to a text message.

* * *

“... so that we can make our battle plans to strategically counter the primary move of the *Antichrist*.” These were the precise words that Fr. John had been saying when Sgt. Michael Ryan had fired the bullet into Mohammad Addula’s brain. And it was seconds later that the door to the Cardinal’s conference room had burst open and a young priest had said, “Cardinal, there’s been a terror attack at Times Square!”

When he had heard those words, the Cardinal switched into battle mode quickly. He barked out an instruction to the young priest, Fr. Patrick Reilly, the one who had just come bursting into the conference room. The Cardinal said, “Fr. Pat, take Fr. John and get Fr. Alvarado and then get down to Times Square ASAP! Take my SUV! There could be some Catholics there who need Last Rites! Now, move, son!”

The Cardinal had thought to himself for a quick moment that he would go to the scene of the anticipated horror, but he quickly rejected that idea, not wanting the media to be able to portray him as wanting to seek glory in the midst of other peoples’ suffering. That mental analysis had taken the Cardinal about three seconds to perform, with him concluding that unknown priests could deliver the grace of the sacrament, and, of course, do so with the same power as he, and with the same authority in the eyes of God.

Within a minute, Fr. John was in the backseat of a black Ford Explorer, the vehicle used to transport the Cardinal around the City, and Fr. Pat was speeding eight blocks down 5th Ave, weaving around traffic and inching through three different red lights. After he hung a sharp right onto West 43rd, and went down a block toward the Avenue of the Americas,

there was a major problem: there was already an NYPD road block in the way, as a squad car was parked across the road. When Fr. Pat honked the horn, the young NYPD Officer in front of him waived him off, yelling out, “No one passes this point! Turn around!”

Fr. John thought he’d take a chance. He jumped out of the SUV, and ran up to the young NYPD officer. “Officer, do you know Officer Steven Boyd?”

The young officer looked at him and said, “Yeah, my first partner was pals with him. A good guy. Why?”

Fr. John replied, “He’s my brother-in-law.” The young cop quickly glanced down at Fr. John’s Roman collar with a perplexed look on his face.

“I married his sister, Sara, and after she died, I became a priest.”

The confusion melted away from the young officer’s face and so did the prior attitude of alarm that existed when the young cop was yelling at them moments before. He said to Fr. John, “What do you want me to do?”

“I want you to let us pass. There are people up there that may need the Last Rites that a priest can give. Do you understand?”

Although the young officer only went to Mass on Christmas and Easter, he understood the spiritual importance of the matter at hand. “I’ll move my squad car out of the way. I may have some NYPD brothers that need you guys. Go ahead! Quickly!”

Fr. John jumped back into the SUV and when the squad car inched out of the way, Fr. Pat slammed his foot onto the gas pedal and the SUV lunged forward. Within just over a minute, the three priests poured out of the SUV parked in the middle of the road, and they ran up to a NYPD Captain who looked like he might be in charge of the situation.

“We want to help,” yelled Fr. John. “Do you have any Catholic officers shot? We’ll start with them.”

“Officer Hewson was shot in the gut. He’s being put into an ambulance right now. Ride with him to the hospital. I don’t know if he’s going to make it. He’s bleeding bad.”

Fr. John turned to the other two priests and said, “You attend to the wounded here. I’ll go with this young cop.”

The Captain ran to the ambulance and told the EMTs, “Take this priest with you.” Then he turned to Fr. John, “What’s your name, Father?”

“Fr. John Adamczyk.”

“Fr. John, take care of David. His name is David Hewson. An Irish-Catholic guy from Queens. A good guy.”

“I will. Thank you.” Fr. John climbed into the back of the ambulance. He asked the EMT, “Where are we going?”

“To New York Presbyterian Hospital,” replied the EMT, as he provided heavy pressure to the gunshot wound to Officer Hewson’s abdomen.

Fr. John spoke to the officer, “David, my name is Fr. John. I understand that you are a Catholic?”

“Yes, Father.”

“Do you want the Anointing of the Sick, David?”

“Yes.”

“This is just a precaution, David. Fight to live! You got that, my new friend!”

“I do. I have a beautiful wife and a two-year old son, Father,” Officer Hewson groaned out.

“Fight for them, David.”

“I will,” the officer said with a grunt as the EMT put more pressure to his wound.

With that Fr. John began the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which he finished just as the ambulance arrived at the hospital. Officer Hewson was wheeled into the ER, and Fr. John was shown to the waiting area. After forty minutes, Officer Hewson’s wife, Amanda, and her mother arrived at the hospital. They were driven there by two NYPD officers. Fr. John spoke with all of them and tried to provide them with comfort.

Two hours later the surgeon emerged from the operating room. The African-American woman was in her late fifties, with gray in her black hair. She reported that the terrorist’s bullet had missed Officer Hewson’s main abdominal artery by half an inch, and that because of that precise, exacting measurement, David’s life was saved.

* * *

Fifty minutes later, Fr. John was driving across the Brooklyn Bridge. He was listening to the car radio, to the talk of terror in Chicago and in New York City. Then he heard about a failed terrorist incident, the terrorist incident that didn’t happen in Boston. That radio report didn’t mention Sgt. Ryan’s name, though, so Fr. John wondered to himself if his friend was involved.

But as Fr. John approached the middle of the Brooklyn Bridge - at precisely the moment when the radio newscaster said the name Mohammad Addula - something very strange happened. There was a quarter-sized white, clear-fluid splat that appeared on the windshield

directly in front of him. Fr. John saw it splat. *He saw it with his own eyes.* At first he thought that a bug had just smacked into his windshield, so he turned on his wipers as he flooded the windshield with a generous amount of washer fluid. But the result of that cleansing attempt was quite odd: the splat remained exactly as it had been before he tried to clean it. Fr. John was perplexed; so he repeated the process a second time, also to no avail. Then Fr. John wondered to himself, *Could it be? But how? How is that possible?*

He reached up in front of him with his right hand, up to the splat on the glass. He then used his right thumb to scratch the middle of that spot. *Impossible but true!* Specks of the completely dried splat, a fluidic splat that had just appeared before Fr. John's eyes no more than twenty seconds before, they began to scrape off, with particles of it falling, unbeknownst to Fr. John, on the fleshy part of the skin of his right hand, the part of his hand that was directly between his thumb and the index finger.

At that precise moment, Fr. John heard a guttural laugh, one that seemed to pervade the entire vehicle, although it was *not* coming from the stereo speakers. But even more odd, it was a sound that also seemed to somehow reverberate *inside of his mind* as well. Fr. John didn't fully understand it at that time, but that guttural laugh was a *locution*; but it was simultaneously an *auditory* sound as well.

Immediately after that, Fr. John's vehicle tires left the Brooklyn Bridge, and he continued on his drive toward his mom's home in the Greenpoint section of Brooklyn. When he arrived home, he talked at length to his family about that day's events, at which time he learned about his friend Mike Ryan's role in the Boston event. Fr. John's mom had been watching FOX News. Fr. John sent a text message to Mike to let him know how proud he was of him and how pleased he was that his friend came home safe that night to Carol and the kids.

Fr. John didn't mention, though, to his mom, his sister, or to her husband what had happened to him in the car as he drove across the Brooklyn Bridge. Having had no real opportunity to reflect on the matter, his initial thought was that maybe he was just a bit unnerved by all of the events of that day. But that thought didn't seem to fit either. *I'll think about that tomorrow*, he said to himself later, as he lay in bed drifting off to sleep.

* * *

It was 7:03 AM on Sunday, August 13, 2017, and Fr. John was in the shower at his mom's home. As he went to pour shampoo into his hand, he noticed that there was a big black mark on the back side of his right hand, in the fleshy portion of his hand that was exactly between his thumb and his index finger. He looked at it baffled, thinking to himself, *What in the world is that?* He took the *Dial* soap off of the tray in the shower and he began to apply it to the black spot. But no matter how hard he scrubbed that spot, he was not able to remove it. After working the soap on that spot for a full three minutes, he realized that it wasn't coming off - the black spot didn't even lighten its color in the least bit. He got out of the shower, dried himself off, got dressed and went downstairs.

Seeing his mom and his sister Humilia sitting at the table having cups of coffee, he kissed them both on the cheek, then he poured a little bit of coffee into a mug; only enough, though, that he'd be able to finish it in the next five minutes so he could maintain the hour-long fast before he'd receive Holy Communion sometime around 8:40 A.M. that morning.

Fr John asked his mom and sister, "Will you look at this?" He showed them his right hand.

Humilia asked, "What is that, John?"

“I’m not sure, Humilia.” John then explained to her and to his mom what had happened during the car ride over the Brooklyn Bridge the night before.

At that moment, Fr. John’s brother, David, stopped in to see the family, coming by a little early, before the 8 A.M. Mass at St. Stan’s, not an unusual practice of David’s, just to check in on his mom, while his wife Mary took the kids directly into the church because their son Augustine was going to serve as an altar boy that morning, the last time he would do so before heading off to college.

Fr. John repeated for David the story of the crossing of the Brooklyn Bridge the night before, and he explained how the mark would not wash off. As he was doing this, Humilia got up and she had her younger brother come to the sink as she too tried to wash off the mark, this time using some *Dawn Ultra Dishwashing Liquid*, the kind that promised the power needed to fight tough grease and to get dishes squeaky-clean. But her vigorous efforts were to no avail as well. Fr. John’s mom stood there watching this; then she had an idea.

“No wonder it won’t wash off with soap,” said his mom. She then walked out into the living room, and as she did, she said, “I’ll be right back.” Seconds later she returned to the kitchen, carrying in her right hand a small, white plastic bottle of Holy Water, one that Fr. John had given to her the year before. It had a stamp on it that stated *National Shrine of The Divine Mercy, Eden Hill, Stockbridge, Mass.*

“This will undo the work of that wicked ol’ Szatan,” she said, using the Polish word for *Satan*.

She brought him back over to the sink, unscrewed the top on the bottle, and then she poured the entire remaining amount of the Holy Water on the top side of her son’s right hand, right over the black mark. As she

did that, the Holy Water completely washed away the black blemish. Fr. John's hand became completely normal, except for the signs of redness at and around where the black spot had been - redness that appeared to be the result of the forceful washings, and not the spot itself.

As Fr. John saw that occur, he said, "That was indeed a Satanic mark. Thank you, mama, for getting rid of it for me."

David asked, "Little brother, do you know why that happened - what that's all about?"

Fr. John thought to himself about it for a quick moment, and he immediately concluded that the mark was a demonic sign connected precisely to what he would be talking to the Cardinal and the Bishop about later that day - unless the Cardinal's schedule would have to be rearranged due to the terror events of the prior day. But he quickly concluded that it was not the proper time to talk to his family about this matter, so he responded, "David, I think that I do now understand it, but it is connected to a confidential matter that I'm working on for the Cardinal. Now is just not the right time for me to discuss it. I believe that I will be able to talk to you and the family about it sometime in the future, though."

The three family members accepted Fr. John's response. Then the three of them, along with Humilia's three children, walked across the street for the 8 A.M. Mass. Fr. John would be concelebrating the Mass, so the kids would get to see "Father Uncle" up on the altar once again. But this would be a very somber day - the Mass would be said for all of those lost in Chicago and New York on the previous day of terrible terror. In all, 66 innocent people had lost their lives in those two brutal attacks.

* * *

Shortly before 9:30 A.M., Fr. John received a call on his i-Phone; the screen showed that it was coming from Michael Ryan's cell number.

Fr. John answered, “Mike? Is that you?!”

“Yes, Fr. John!”

“Oh, thank God, my friend! Thank God you’re okay!”

“I am. I certainly am, Father!”

“Tell me what happened, Mike.”

“Well, our intel command center, the BRIC, it got word of the terrible events in New York and Chicago; they sent it out to us officers in the field; I received the intel through my earpiece; then I saw this suspicious looking guy -”

Fr. John interrupted, “Can I ask, Mike, what made him look suspicious to you?”

“Well, Father, it was a warm, clear-sky summer afternoon, and this guy was dressed in a too-large-for-him rain jacket. That was the tell.”

“The *what*, Mike?”

“The *tell*, Father. The T-E-L-L. I guess it’s originally a poker term. It’s an unconscious act of a poker player that reveals the player’s hand. In law enforcement, it’s that little piece of data that betrays the deception that’s being attempted. The terrorist’s *tell* was that he had clothing on that didn’t match the weather situation on the ground, but would be perfect for trying to conceal an explosive suicide vest.”

“Ah, I see, Mike. I see. Well, thank God you noticed that tell! Thank God - not only for your family, but for the families of others. I shudder at the thought of what might have happened. It would have been just like Chicago. What a horror it was that played out there. Did you see how those seven Girl Scouts were killed? An absolute horror! It really unmask the horrendous capability of the Evil One.”

“I heard about the tragedy of the girls on the TV news. It’s awful! Father, we can only pray for them,” said Mike at a loss for words to describe the wickedness of the event.

“You’re right, Mike. And now they pray for us, I’m sure. My 8 A.M. Mass was said for all those lost yesterday. I bet that there were hundreds of thousands of Masses said this morning for exactly that intention.”

“I’m sure you’re right, Father. I went to Mass with Carol and the kids this morning. We prayed for those lost, those injured, and we were also giving thanks that I was alive.”

“Thank God, Mike.”

The call between the friends went on for a couple more minutes before Fr. John had to pick up another in-coming call, this one was from the Cardinal’s secretary. She called to let Fr. John know that the Cardinal would be visiting those wounded during the previous day’s terror attack in Times Square, so his afternoon meeting would have to be rescheduled. The Cardinal would now meet with Fr. John at 10:30 A.M. on August 14th, Monday morning.

As a result of that cancelation, Fr. John would be able to spend the rest of the day with his family, and with the Lord in front of the Holy Tabernacle at St. Stan’s.

* * *

Fr. John left St. Stan’s at exactly 3:33 P.M. after having prayed the Chaplet of Divine Mercy with some of the parishioners. He knew the time because when he exited the Church he looked up into the sky and was flabbergasted to find the most amazing sight that he had ever seen in a cloud formation.

The cloud off in the distance had an unmistakable form: that of a dragon, one that was almost standing straight up on its back legs. He took his i-Phone out of his pocket to take a video of what he saw, and it was then that he noted the time. But more than that, as he was taking the video, he also noted that a jet was passing in the sky, and the contrails of that jet formed a perfect white line - a line that looked like the dragon's throat was being slit!

Fr. John was sure that if he hadn't caught that amazing scene on video, no one could have possibly believed that the cloud so impeccably resembled a dragon, or that the contrails of the jet so perfectly passed through the neck of that "dragon", in just such a way that it appeared that the dragon's neck was sliced with a sword! A scripture verse immediately came to mind: *"Now war arose in heaven, Michael and his angels fighting against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they were defeated and there was no longer any place for them in heaven"* (Rev 12:7-8). Fr. John didn't mention any of this after he walked across the street.

After dinner that evening, though, Fr. John's brother, David, and his entire family came over bringing some of the family's favorite desserts, two flavors of home-made-style ice cream, Chocolate-Chocolate Chunk and Peaches & Cream, both from the Brooklyn Ice Cream Factory in Greenpoint. After the ice cream was doled out and was begun to be savored by all, Fr. John and David went out into the backyard with all of the kids so that the kids could play some whiffle ball. As the two brothers sat on the back porch watching the kids play in the yard, Fr. John took out his i-Phone to show his older brother the 43-second video of the cloud that he had taken earlier that afternoon.

Since he did not want to prejudice his brother's viewpoint, he didn't mention anything about what he was going to show him, he simply said, "Brother, take a look at this and tell me what you think."

David watched the entire 43-second video and he immediately responded with perceptible sarcasm in his voice. “What do I think of this? I think that they can do lots of things with computers these days. What did you do, download this dragon cloud video off of YouTube? Now, don’t be gullible, little brother.”

Fr. John smiled and responded, “David, I took that video this afternoon immediately after I walked out of St. Stan’s. For some reason, I looked up into the sky and I noticed what you’ve just called a ‘dragon cloud.’ I took that video because I knew that it had to be seen to be believed.”

Hearing that information, David was a bit stunned. “You took this? Let me watch it again.” David watched the entire 43-second video again, this time finding the perfect shape of the cloud - a picture perfect dragon - to be absolutely astounding. And the jet’s contrails forming a neck-slicing motion, that too was just uncanny. In fact, that part caused him to ask for an explicit confirmation of what his eyes were telling him: “Am I right, the white slice, that’s a jet - is that what I’m seeing there?”

“Yep.”

“I can’t believe it. Have you shown this to anyone else?”

“No. After this morning ... after washing off of the mark on my right hand with the Holy Water, I didn’t want to alarm mom or Humilia with any more of these types of out-of-the-ordinary things.”

“John, I’ve tried scores and scores of criminal cases, and what you have there is something that I’m confident any jury would be able to reach a consensus on, once they trusted the source of the video, that is. *They would unanimously conclude that’s a dragon getting its throat cut!* First the Satan mark getting washed off with Holy Water this morning, and now this!

What in the Lord's name are you working on with the Cardinal? Are you sure you can't even give me a hint?"

"I am sure," replied Fr. John. "You lawyers would call it privileged information. But in this case, I'm pretty sure that there's a time limit on that privilege. I expect to be able to tell you all about these things one day."

"Understood. I respect that, and I won't ask again. You tell me when the time is right. So for now, little brother, I'll just keep you extra strong in my prayers! And that starts tonight! I'll get all the kids on that job because God listens extra careful to the prayers of kids!"

"Thanks, big brother. I definitely can use all the help I can get."

The two brothers left the back porch together to join in the kids' whiffle-ball game. It was time to set grown-up things aside and join into some kid-stuff fun.

#

Chapter 10

Putting the Torch to the Antichrist's Plans ... in the Morning

Rescue me from the cruel sword, and deliver me from the hand of aliens,
whose mouths speak lies, and whose right hand is
a right hand of falsehood.

Psalm 144:11

“What does modern science tell us about the makeup of the human body that we didn’t know, let’s say, a hundred years ago, back when Mary first appeared to the Fatima children?” This was the question that Fr. John asked Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke as he sipped his morning black coffee in the library of the Cardinal’s Residence at St. Patrick’s Cathedral. It was 10:40 A.M. on Monday, August 14, 2017, and it was the Feast Day of St. Maximilian Kolbe.

The three Church men had spent their first five minutes together in prayer. They were mourning those who had died in Chicago and in New York two days before, but they also rejoiced and thanked God for the fact that the Holy Spirit had put Sgt. Mike Ryan in the path of the evil that was planned out for Boston. After their prayers, Fr. John shared what he knew about Sgt. Ryan’s heroic actions at Fenway Park and the fact that Cardinal Flanagan had actually met Ryan after a Mass that he said on the banks of the Euphrates River in Iraq back when Ryan was a U.S. Marine, a meeting that was enshrined in a photograph that hung just below the crucifix in the brave Boston cop’s home.

Fr. John had also shared what he had seen that morning on his drive into Manhattan over the Brooklyn Bridge, noting for the Cardinal and the Bishop how the golden sun drops had danced and sparkled off of the City’s skyscrapers, casting a good sign of the City’s beauty even in the midst of tragedy. Fr. John also shared that he had seen how the people of New York

were as undeterred as always, bustling in the streets in their cars and cabs, and barreling down the sidewalks, elbows at the ready, if needed, just like New Yorkers generally, upstate or down. And these three New Yorkers, either born and bred, like Fr. John, or the two out-of-town resettlers, like the Cardinal and the Bishop, they all maintained that same undeterred, steely resolve.

As the Cardinal and Bishop pondered Fr. John's rhetorical question about science and the makeup of the human body, Fr. John interrupted with a response, "The answer is: *much!* Science has taught us *much* indeed about what makes us work." He continued, "Building on the careful analysis of a priest-scientist, Fr. Gregor Johann Mendel, known to us from the history books as the 'Father of Genetics', Man discovered DNA. With James Watson and Francis Crick, we discovered that we are each uniquely marked by God - in a *sui generis* kind of way. Although we look quite similar, with two eyes, one nose, one mouth, two arms and two legs, our DNA tells us that we are each one of a kind."

Fr. John took a sip of his black coffee, and said, "God has marked us. He's given us a DNA ID mark. Cardinal, yours is different from mine. And Bishop, mine is different from yours. Just ask the FBI's crime lab."

The Cardinal nodded in agreement, "I can't argue with that, John."

And the Bishop added, "Nor can I."

"But we know of other ways that God has marked us as distinctly his own," said Fr. John. "Take the human eye, for instance. Each and every person has a unique pattern of blood vessels on their retina at the back of their eye. That retina pattern marks us as matchless marvels of God's handiwork. God distinguishes us, one from another, by this pattern in our eyes. He has ID'ed us this way, as well as in the more familiar way of our fingerprints."

The Bishop responded, “And just ask the NYPD crime lab and they’d tell you that *God mark* has helped a lot of cops put a lot of bad guys in jail.”

“Yes, indeed,” replied Fr. John, “and I’ve got some mathematically-coded results that correspond to these ideas.” Fr. John slid an index card across the table, saying, “This is what science has taught us about the makeup of the human body.”

LORD: FINGERPRINT = 1110

CHRIST’S MARK: DNA CODE = 1110

LORD GOD: RETINA MARK = 1110

Fr. John continued, “*God has branded us with His own ID marks!*”

Cardinal Flanagan added, “And, as the Catholic Church knows full well, it’s a very good thing to be owned by Jesus Christ, and by no one else. Remember what St. Paul teaches, ‘You are not your own; you were bought with a price’ (1 Cor 6:19-20). We are God’s property. So it makes perfect sense that He who knows exactly how we were knit together in our mother’s womb, He who has numbered the hairs of our head, well, that same God would want to be able to show how *uniquely* He has made us.”

Bishop Wienke added, “And that also fits perfectly with the nature of the so-called branding sacraments, particularly baptism and confirmation. In those sacraments God marks us with the holy chrism oil, in the form of a cross, placed right on our foreheads. As I’ve been telling parents and godparents, and those I’ve confirmed for years and years: the marks of the cross made with the holy oil during these sacraments, they glow in the eyes of those in heaven. The angels and the saints can look down on us from heaven and they can tell those who are the baptized children of the Father. We are marked - branded even - by these two sacraments. And for us priests, the sacrament of holy orders does the same banding yet again.”

“Exactly, my friend,” said the Cardinal.

“And here’s some mathematical support for that,” said Fr. John as he slid an index card across the table, since he had previously had the same thoughts occur to him.

BAPTISM OIL: GOD MARK = 1110

LORD’S CROSS MARK = 1110

GOD-MARKED BY BAPTISM = 1110

“Each Christian is marked, which is a fact that just becomes more noticeable each Ash Wednesday at the beginning of Lent, when we Catholics are *marked* with the sign of the cross across our foreheads. ‘Dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return’ (Gen 3:19). It’s a stark way of reminding human beings of St. Paul’s admonition, ‘You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men’ (1 Cor 7:23).

“And that leads me to these results from the letter you received several months back, Cardinal, in what we’re calling the Revelation Code Letter,” said Fr. John. Fr. John held up the letter and pointed to these six results on the bottom of the page.

SATAN ID MARK = 666

BIO-IMPLANT = 666

RECEIVE A MARK = 666

DIGITAL ID CHIP = 666

MARK OF BEAST = 666

ID BY A HAND MARK = 666

“Of course, the Catholic Eagle,” noted Fr. John, referring to St. John the Evangelist, “said something in Chapter 13 of his Book of Revelation that we need to consider as we confront these troubling mathematical results.”

As Fr. John looked for the correct page in his Bible so that he could read the words that corresponded to these mathematical results, he thought of how Pope Benedict XVI had called St. John “*the* theologian.” In this

way, the Church's top theologian of the 20th and 21st century, who became the Church's Holy Roman Pontiff, he had singled out the beloved Apostle because St. John, as he said, "was really able to see the mystery of God and proclaim it: eagled-eyed he entered into the inaccessible light of the divine mystery." And from that light, from that light that was apparently *inaccessible* to any of the other Apostles - and to *the* Apostle, St. Paul, as well, at least to the same degree - the Catholic Eagle, with the aid of angels like St. Gabriel, was able to write of a far-off "beast" and of his beastly battle plans. Consequently, this is what Fr. John read out to the Cardinal and to the Bishop in the Cardinal's residence at St. Patrick's Cathedral:

Also it [the beast] causes all, both small and great, both rich and poor, both free and slave, to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding reckon the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six (Rev 13:16-18).

"What St. John is talking about here," said Fr. John, "is end-time slavery - slavery in the service of the Evil One, that is, Satan. And, in this regard, we have to repeat once again, and underscore, St. Paul's admonition to all of us Christians up and down the centuries, 'You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men' (1 Cor 7:23). *At rock bottom, the Apostle teaches us not to become slaves of Satan's men - that much is sure!* Here are three mathematical results that speak to that eternal command of God." Fr. John slid another index card across the table in the Cardinal's library.

DEVIL SLAVE = 666

DRAGON *CHARAGMA* = 666

(Dragon, see Rev 13:2; *Charagma*: the transliterated Greek word used by St. John in, e.g., Rev. 19:20, defined as “an imprinted mark”)

MARKED SLAVE = 666

“The top and bottom results are self-evident, while the middle result takes a small bit of analysis, which is provided right on that index card itself,” said Fr. John.

“And next I’ll show you a trio of results that tie in the eternal number of 888. I find the middle result I’ll show you to be telling because it incorporates the Latin words used by St. Jerome in his *Vulgate*, the words for the ‘mark of the beast’ phrase. Those words in Latin are, of course, *characterem bestiae*, and the result we find using that phrase signals intelligibility. Cardinal, I know you served as the Bishop for the U.S. Military for ten years, and you travelled throughout the military to see our men and women, so I thought of you when I was lead to the analogy of an active sonar system ‘ping’ used by our Navy’s submariners.”

Cardinal Flanagan immediately smiled broadly when Fr. John said this, recalling the six hours that he had spent underway onboard the *USS Dallas* (SSN-700), a nuclear-powered Los Angeles-class submarine, homeported in Groton, Connecticut. This attack sub, which had been featured in Tom Clancy’s novel *The Hunt for Red October*, had a memorable motto: *First in Harm’s Way*. The skipper had taken his vessel underway for a short exercise with 11 members of Seal Team 10, one in which a SEAL Delivery Vehicle was launched off the northern Atlantic coast from a Dry Deck Shelter attached to the back of the *Dallas*. Before getting underway, the then-Bishop had spent about an hour talking to the Seals about their job - the non-classified portion, that is - and it left an impression about these men that had never faded. And once underway,

the professionalism he witnessed of the silent service, of a completely different but similarly lethal kind, it too was unforgettable. The skipper, a Notre Dame physics grad, even let the then-Bishop of the U.S. Military stand behind the helmsman as the sub performed an emergency ballast blow maneuver rapidly catapulting the cone of the craft out of the water. It was one of the Navy's biggest show-off moves and they were happy to do it for a dignitary like Bishop Flanagan.

"I see from that smile that Fr. John's reference to the Navy has brought back a flood of good memories for you," said Bishop Wienke.

The Cardinal's beaming smile broadened even wider showing off his perfect pearly whites. "Indeed! And I also do remember a detailed conversation that I had with some Sonarmen about their duties, and about the difference between the passive and the active sonar. I had that conversation onboard the *USS Dallas* about seven years back."

"So you know that, with the 'ping' sound," said Fr. John, "the sub is able to determine the type and the distance away of another object in the sea, all by use of formulas that decode the mathematics of the movement of that pulse of sound through the water, and then mathematically measure the echoes that it produces."

"Yes, I do remember that, John," said the Cardinal.

Fr. John continued, "Well, with that analogy in mind, ask yourself whether the Doctor of the Church, St. Jerome, has sent a 'ping' to us, one that has now arrived in the Church's sonar system over 1,500 years later identifying this Bible code we're using as the real thing. That 'ping' being the Latin words *characterem bestiae* - 'mark of the beast.'" Fr. John slid another index card across the table.

BIO-HAND-CHIP SLAVE = 888

CARACTEREM BESTIAE = 888

(“mark of the beast” in Latin, *see, e.g.,* St. Jerome’s *Vulgate*, Rev 19:20)

RIGHT-HAND DRAGON = 888

“This all prompts a simple question for us to answer,” Fr. John persisted. “Are the twelve results that we’ve seen – the six results from the Revelation Code Letter, and these additional six results that I’ve just shown you – are these merely caused by chance, happenstance and coincidence? In other words, can we find no order and design, no internally-imprinted intelligibility, one that screams to us, ‘Warning ... there’s a mathematical intelligence of God’s work here, and you will ignore it at your peril!’”

“Or, Your Eminence and Your Excellency,” said Fr. John with complete deference and humility in his voice, “do we see a deeper, veiled rationality that exists behind and beneath the ordinary sense-perceptible-observable reality. That easily-observable reality, the one that we can so readily access with our eyes and then compute in our brains, that being *simple language*. Letters on a page, placed in a particular order, in a very specific, particular order, they make immediate sense to our brains. We see it immediately and our brains say, ‘This is human language and it has meaning.’ But these twelve results show us something *deeper*, something that we can only see if we assign a ‘deeper value’ to what is readily accessible, a ‘deeper value’ that allows us to unveil a ‘deeper reality.’”

Fr. John took a good long drink of his coffee as he stared out the window for a brief moment to gather his thoughts. At that moment a beautiful white bird flew by, passing from his left to his right across the window frame, and he had a thought ... *birds and bees and baptism*. It caused him to smile and wink at the churchmen to whom he felt genuinely privileged to speak.

“In a way, we’re talking about something that sounds a lot like a sacrament, and it can in fact be analogized to one. The outwardly observable signs of words and water, and the symbol of the cross traced onto the forehead of a baby with oil at a baptism, these things effectuate something deeper, something that cannot be seen with the natural eyes, it requires the eyes of faith. But that occurrence is not even peculiar to the sacraments.

“Think about how much of nature remains invisible unless we *see* it through the proper pair of eyes. For instance, scientists now believe that migratory birds have an ability to actually *see* magnetic fields, and then they can use those magnetic fields for their sense of direction, much like we would use our GPS device. And also bees: they can actually *see* things about a flower that we human beings cannot. Science tells us that their eyes can actually see the ultra-violet light that causes a big bull’s eye to exist right in the center of a flower. They can see that U/V light – that bull’s eye – but our eyes, our regular human eyes cannot see it, unless, that is, we put on U/V light goggles, and it’s only then that we too can see the invisible.”

Cardinal Flanagan asked, “But does science really hold the belief that math allows human beings to see the invisible?”

“That’s what math does best, Cardinal,” asserted Fr. John with great gusto in his voice. “In fact, there’s a celebrated Stanford University mathematician, his name is Dr. Keith Devlin, and he has also taught at St. Mary’s College of California. He famously wrote, ‘*Mathematics makes the invisible visible.*’ He spent a whole book demonstrating how this is in fact done. The book’s title says it all; it’s entitled, *The Language of Mathematics: Making the Invisible Visible*. And I wholeheartedly agree with his premise! Over the course of the history of scientific discovery and scientific development, this has been proven time and time again. Math allows us to see things, even the things that haven’t yet been proven to the

satisfaction of our eyes. Remember what we spoke about the other day: how Einstein’s mathematics predicted what was later proven during the observations made during a solar eclipse.”

Fr. John continued, “So, taking this as a starting point, we begin with a *sign* of the mathematical code. It’s one that, once we put on the right pair of eyeglasses, we can suddenly *see*. With mathematically equipped eyeglasses, we suddenly see the order, the pattern, the design, and the intelligibility that indwells within the words. The first word, of course, is *the* Word, Jesus. The number for the Word is 444. It is more than just interesting that the sum of these numbers, 4 plus 4 plus 4, is the richly symbolic number of 12. We can think here of the 12 tribes of Israel, which prefigured the 12 Apostles of Christ. It’s also significant that the pattern we see originates with the Originator Himself, and then that pattern flows out from the source of that pattern. And, as it flows, it provides a step-by-step intelligibility that can’t be missed. Unless one *wants* to miss it, that is, and there will certainly be some, and this I guarantee, who will want us to miss it. But our minds can’t be tricked out of seeing this intelligibility, if we simply use our common sense.” Fr. John again held up The Revelation Code Letter and pointed to the results on the top of the page.

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444

Fr. John leaned forward and said, “John Paul II once said this: ‘In the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences.’ That’s a direct quote from him. Cardinal Flanagan, I’m convinced that if he were in your chair, he would see the ‘designs of Providence’, not only in these eight results originating with the name that is *above* every other name, but he

would also see the ‘designs of Providence’ revealed in the name that is *below* every other name.” And he pointed to the mathematical results on the bottom of The Revelation Code Letter.

SATAN ID MARK = 666

BIO-IMPLANT = 666

RECEIVE A MARK = 666

DIGITAL ID CHIP = 666

MARK OF BEAST = 666

ID BY A HAND MARK = 666

Fr. John got a very serious look on his face and his eyes pierced into the eyes of the Bishop first, and then the Cardinal, and then he said this: “John Paul the Great would see the ‘designs of Providence’ in these 666 results because he would know that *it unveils for good men the plans of bad men*. It puts the torch of mathematical truth up near the plans of the future Antichrist, and it allows us to see them with that mathematical light.

“Make no mistake, though; we will not be able to burn up those plans with that torch, for they are in-built into the Bible’s ‘Revelation 13 weather forecast’, to use a figure of speech. But with the light from this biblically-based mathematical torch, we’ll be able to see the outline of their plans. We’ll know precisely what we’ll need to know in order for us to make our own plans, with a type of *biblical* weather-forecast radar.”

“And I’m convinced,” continued Fr. John, “that that sentiment is also why this next result occurs.” With that he showed an index card to the Cardinal and the Bishop that had the following result on it.

DCLXVI = 444

“These are the Roman numerals for the number 666. The letters that make up the Roman numeral 666 are the same exact letters that make up the Roman numeral 444. They are just swapped around in the three different places within the Roman numeral. So we have this observation.” As he

said that, Fr. John provided the Cardinal and the Bishop with an index card with these results joined together in order to make his point clear.

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444
DCLXVI = 444	

“To me,” Fr. John said with a calm emphasis in his voice, “this is symbolic. We’ve been provided by God with a carefully calibrated code, one with a purpose - to reveal necessary 666 end-time things. It is calibrated to Jesus’ name so that good people will know that they can trust it. And we shouldn’t be afraid of this 666 result because it is God who saw to it, in His infinite wisdom, that all of these results would simultaneously occur, so as to give good people the necessary advanced notice of bad things.”

Fr. John poured another cup of black coffee from the white coffee carafe that sat on the tray in front of him. He then pulled a piece of paper from his briefcase. “Remember what then-Cardinal Karol Wojtyła said in America two years before he became the Pope.” And reading from the piece of paper, Fr. John recalled the wisdom of the words of one of the Church’s greatest modern-day saints:

We are now standing in the face of the greatest historical confrontation humanity has gone through. I do not think that wide circles of the American society or wide circles of the Christian community realize this fully. We are now facing the final confrontation between the Church and the anti-Church, of the Gospel and the anti-Gospel. This confrontation lies within

the plans of divine providence. It is a trial which the whole Church . . . must take up.

“Divine Providence has ensured,” said Fr. John, “that we get a divine early warning about this final confrontation, one that comes sufficiently in advance, one that allows the Church an opportunity to think it through, because, as we all know, the Church needs plenty of time to think big things through with the mind of Christ. But God doesn’t skimp on the evidence we need to get ourselves thinking in the right direction.”

With that, Fr. John pushed another index card across the table, saying, “Again, the second coded result on the left contains the Roman numerals for 666.”

ANTICHRIST CODE = 888

ENGLISH GEMATRIA = 888

DCLXVI BEAST CODE = 888

ALPHA-NUMERIC CODE = 888

SECOND COMING CODE = 888

REVELATION CODE = 888

Fr. John then repeated the line from Pope St. John Paul II to underscore the point he wanted to make. “In the designs of Providence, there are no mere coincidences.’

“Your Eminence and Your Excellency, the results found in the column on the left are a description of what the code’s primary purpose is. It’s a mathematical code to reveal the need-to-know intel for the end of time. The results on the right, on the other hand, they are an indisputable type of internal confirmation of the code itself. It’s God’s way of saying, ‘This is what this code is and this is how you know that this is true.’”

Cardinal Flanagan looked at the index card for a few long moments before showing it to Bishop Wienke. He then turned over and over in his mind the likelihood of chance happenstance causing those six results versus the likelihood of an intelligently-planned design, one that God purposely

allowed human beings to discover at the right time in human history, before both the time of the Antichrist and the time of the Second Coming. As he looked out the window pondering the likelihood of this, he recalled once again his days as the Bishop for the Archdiocese of the U.S. Military, and one particular trip to visit the sailors and the Navy and Marine Corps aviators stationed onboard the *USS Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), the Nation's premiere aircraft carrier.

On a Friday before he celebrated a Sunday Mass in the *Reagan's* hanger bay for seven hundred members of the crew, then-Bishop Flanagan spent the entire day visiting the crew in their bunk areas, their mess halls, and in their work spaces. But his favorite thing was being on deck during the night flight ops. He spent three hours that Friday night learning the secrets of the trade, including all about the U.S. Navy's "meatball." And this is what came to his mind as he sat pondering the mathematical results that he was just shown: the U.S. Navy's "meatball."

"Let me tell you both what I'm thinking about," said the Cardinal. "I'm recalling a particular night that I spent onboard a nuclear aircraft carrier, the *USS Ronald Reagan*, while it was out in the Persian Gulf in October of 2006, back during the war."

The Cardinal continued, "One of the things I observed during that visit was night-time flight ops, and what's called the Fresnel Lens Optical Landing System - if I'm remembering the name correctly. It's an ingenious guidance system used by pilots during the last moments of landing on a carrier, one of the riskiest maneuvers known to human aviation. The Fresnel Lens is commonly called the 'meatball' by the pilots and you may have even heard about it in the movies when the pilot is told by radio from the ship to 'call the ball.' The 'meatball' is 'the ball' and it's made up of a series of 12 lenses and 12 lights. And those 12 lens and 12 lights are mounted on a platform. As the pilot approaches the landing strip hoping

for the aircraft's tailhook to catch the third wire, the 'meatball' is on a platform to his or her left. By the way, back in the 1950s they used a mirror, shining lights off of it to the right of the landing strip. Well, now the 12 lenses focus narrow light beams out into the sky at various angles, and that's the ingenious part about it."

The Cardinal explained further, "Because the light beams shoot out at various different angles, depending on the aircraft's pitch, what we might call its glide path as it approaches the flight deck, the pilot will see different lights. For instance, if the aircraft is pitched perfectly on target, if, you might say, the glide path is true, the pilot will see an amber - a yellowish light, that's the 'meatball' - and it will be perfectly in line with a horizontal row of green lights. But if the 'meatball' appears to the pilot's eyes to be above the horizontal row of green lights, the pilot knows that he's coming in too high and he's got to reduce power. On the other hand, if the 'meatball' shows up below the horizontal row of green lights, the pilot knows that he's coming in too low and he's got to increase power. If the light he sees is a low red 'meatball,' then he's dangerously low.

"Basically, it's a very intricate guidance system designed to allow the pilot to carefully calibrate his final landing - to get him home safely. Ask any Navy pilot and he or she would tell you that without the 'meatball' their chances of flying into the back of the ship, especially at night, would go up significantly."

The Cardinal looked at the Bishop and Fr. John for a moment and asked, "Do you see where I'm going with this? I see a direct analogy with the way that this Bible code is carefully calibrated. It's as though God has designed an intricate guidance system for us, too. It's calibrated perfectly. All the mathematical lights line up. And because they do, it shows us that we're on the right path, a glide path to the truth, for -" The Cardinal paused, and then continued his thought "... should I dare say, the end of

our final approach. The last six mathematical results – well, they really drive that point home to me.” He looked at them again.

ANTICHRIST CODE = 888 ENGLISH GEMATRIA = 888

DCLXVI BEAST CODE = 888 ALPHA-NUMERIC CODE = 888

SECOND COMING CODE = 888 REVELATION CODE = 888

“And you know what, gentlemen? Just as an aside, when I visited the *USS Ronald Reagan* on that occasion, I learned the U.S. Navy’s birthday. It’s the same date as the Fatima Miracle of the Sun. October 13th. 10/13. That was in fact the Friday in October of 2006 that I learned about the U.S. Navy’s ‘meatball.’ It was October 13th in 2006.”

The Bishop responded, “That is indeed interesting.”

Fr. John joined, “And the ‘meatball’ is an apt analogy as well, Cardinal, especially if you think about the way that the English language has evolved. The results that we discussed this morning – they would not have been even possible 500 years ago, based on the way that the English alphabet evolved to its present-day, 26-lettered format. As we briefly discussed the other day, we had to shed a few letters here and gain a letter or two there, and then the all of the spellings of the words had to become formalized and finalized and put into dictionaries so that everyone shared the same spellings. This wasn’t the case 500 years ago. These necessary pre-conditions were not even in place when the Protestant’s *King James Bible* was first published in 1611. So our Bible code’s ‘meatball’ system of lens and lights showing us a glide path to the truth ... that would have proven to be off the mark back then. It took until now for the lights to finally line up across the horizon, as you say, Cardinal.”

Bishop Wienke responded, “I’m not sure exactly what you mean when you mention the conditions in place under the original *King James Bible* in 1611.”

“Hold on one moment.” The Cardinal went to a bookshelf and picked up an old 1611 A.D. version of the *King James Version* of the Holy Bible - not an original, but a beautifully bound copy that had been given to him as a gift by a Protestant U.S. Army Chaplin - and he brought it to Fr. John and handed it to him.

Fr. John picked it up and he knew exactly where he wanted to turn; it was to John 19:16-17. He showed those verses to his superiors. “You see here,” as he pointed below the words as he read the verses. “‘Then deliuered he him therfore vnto them to be crucified: and they took Iesus, and led him away. And he bearing his crosse, went foorth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrewes, Golgotha.’ You see the different spellings for *Jesus* and *Cross*. And the 1611 *King James Version* shows that ‘*Gospel*’ was spelled with two *L*’s, that is, G-O-S-P-E-L-L. That means that, in the year 1611, there would be no 444 matchup between *Jesus*, *Cross* and *Gospel*.”

“Ah, I see exactly what you mean,” responded the Cardinal.

“As do I,” added the Bishop. “One looming question remains in my mind, though. If the mark of the beast is a microchip in the right hand, what in the world would ever cause people to want to get it implanted there. That’s quite perplexing to me.”

Another light turned on in the Cardinal’s mind. “I think I now have an inkling of an idea about that,” responded the Cardinal. He picked up his *Navarre Bible* in front of him and he turned it to Matthew 24:29. He then read it aloud:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken

...

The Cardinal looked at Fr. John and asked, “Are you thinking along those lines, John?”

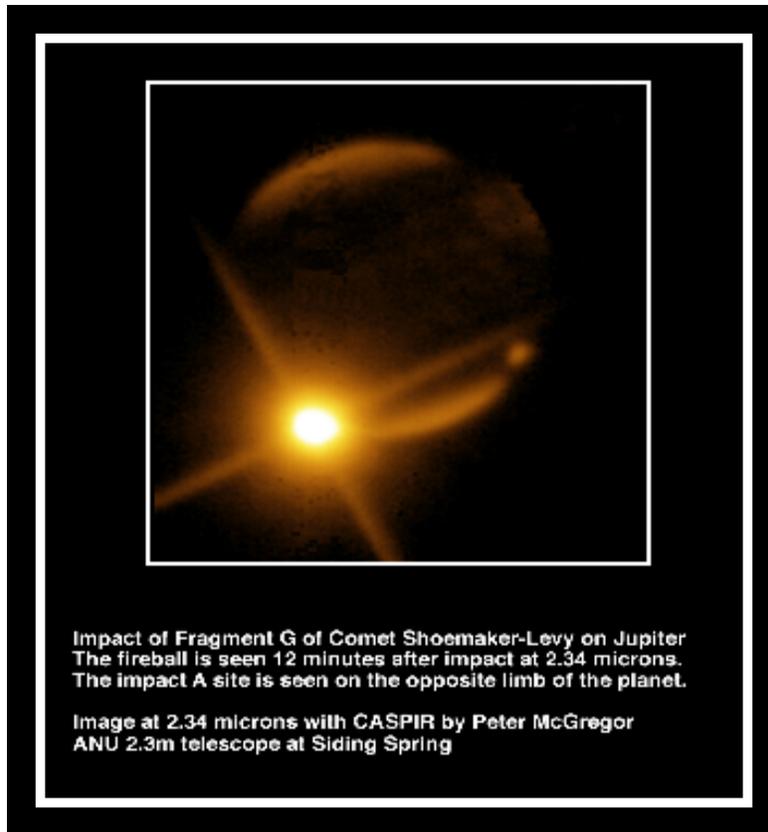
“Precisely. What falls from heaven? As an astrophysicist, I’d say a comet. A huge comet or a series of comets. Or even a huge asteroid. The type of *deep impact event* that caused the dinosaurs to become extinct about 66 million years ago. The same type of event that has a pattern of occurring and then reoccurring over the long course of our planet’s 4.5 billion-year history, its deep-time history, that is.” Fr. John then slid an index card to the Cardinal and to the Bishop.

SATAN COMET = 666

EJECTA PLUME = 666

DEEP IMPACTS = 666

“An ejecta plume,” continued Fr. John, “is the great cloud of debris that is cast thousands of miles into the sky and it spreads for thousands and thousands of miles after the deep impacts of comet strikes, like the series of comets that struck Jupiter in July 1994. That’s better known as the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet strikes. An ejecta plume would darken out the sun for a period of days or weeks.” Fr. John slid a photograph taken of one of the series of the Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet strikes to the Cardinal and the Bishop.



Shoemaker-Levy Comets that Struck Jupiter in July 1994

The Cardinal looked at the photograph from the NASA website for a few long moments and looked out the window and thought for a few more long moments, and then he said, “A comet strike, or a series of comet strikes on the planet earth, would lead to a famine – a world-wide famine – a condition that the Antichrist could use to try to make sure that ‘no one can buy or sell unless he has the mark’ (Rev 13:17). Is that what you’re thinking, John?”

“Yes. I am. That’s my theory. And there is mathematical support for it in this Bible code.” Fr. John pushed another index card toward the Cardinal and the Bishop.

COMET, FAMINE, BIO-CHIPS = 1110

TRIAL OF COMET / FAMINE = 1110

FAMINE CAUSED BY A COMET = 1110

Fr. John then handed out to the Cardinal a two-page summary from EWTN's Website. It was entitled, "The Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Akita, Japan, to Sr. Agnes Sasagawa." He then pushed another index card across the table.

ST JOHN, BIBLE CODE, AKTIA = 1110

"The first thing that I want you to know about Akita," said Fr. John, "is about a mark that appeared on one of the hands of the very humble nun at the center of the events in Japan. I read now from the EWTN's summary in front of you: 'On June 28, 1973, a cross-shaped wound appeared on the inside left hand of Sr. Agnes.'" Fr. John pushed an index card across the table.

CROSS WOUND = 906

JESUS CHRIST = 906

END OF TIME INTEL = 906

Fr. John then explained, "I want you to notice three things, what I'll call 'the three opposites.' First, this Godly mark is a *cross*, it is not anything else, including a computer chip. Second, the location on the hand is on the *inside* of the hand, not the outside of the hand. And third, the hand is the *left* hand, not the *right* hand, the hand that is referred to in Revelation 13:16. *It's all opposites.* I think that's important. It points to a *different kind of marking system*, what I'll talk to you about later. For now, though, let's just put these results in the back of our minds." Fr. John slid another index card across the table.

SR. AGNES: A HAND CROSS = 1110

“Importantly,” said Fr. John, “the cross appeared on Sr. Agnes’ hand in a pattern, one witnessed by the local Bishop, Bishop John Shojiro Ito. Her wound would swell on Thursday, the wound of a cross would appear on Friday, then it would disappear on the next day, on Saturday, only to have that process repeated again the next week and for a few weeks after that. *It was a kind of passion - one that occurred in a pattern.*”

Fr. John added, “Then there was also blood found on the three-foot tall wooden statue of Mary, one in which she was standing in front of a Cross while she stood on a globe. On July 6, 1973, this occurred -” Fr. John read from the EWTN summary:

On the same day, a few of the sisters noticed drops of blood flowing from the statue’s right hand. On four occasions, this act of blood flow repeated itself. The wound in the statue’s hand remained until September 29, when it disappeared. On September 29, the day the wound on the statue disappeared, the sisters noticed the statue had now begun to “sweat”, especially on the forehead and neck.

Fr. John continued, “There was also a cross-shaped mark in the hand of the statue of Mary, known as Our Lady of Akita. This was in her right hand, though, and the hand of the statue bled on each of the Fridays in July of 1973.” Fr. John slid another index card across the table. This one contained the following results.

GOD - OUR LADY OF AKITA = 1110

MARY - AKITA STATUE = 1110

GOD - WOUNDS AT AKITA = 1110

The Bishop remarked, “So there were two wounds. One was on the left hand of Sr. Agnes Sasagawa, and a second one was on the right hand of the wooden statue of Our Lady. Is that right?”

“Yes, that’s right, Bishop. And I can show you and the Cardinal a photo of that statue. I have it here on my i-Phone.”

“Ah, good, John. It’s been a long time since I’ve seen a photo of that statue.” As the Cardinal said this, Fr. John was searching his cell phone, and once he found the right spot, he showed the Cardinal and the Bishop this photo.



Wooden Statue of Mary at Akita, Japan

The Cardinal asked, “So the bleeding occurred on the right hand of this statue?”

Fr. John answered, “That’s correct, and it stopped its bleeding exactly on September 29th -”

The Bishop interrupted, “On the Feast of the Archangels, St. Michael, St. Gabriel and St. Raphael.”

“Yes, indeed,” responded the Cardinal.

Fr. John continued, “Now I want to preface this next observation with this point. As is shown on that EWTN summary, after eight years of investigations, the area Bishop - Bishop John Shojiro Ito of Japan - who, as I mentioned, personally witnessed the miracles of Sr. Agnes’ hand cross and the miracles on the Akita statue, released a letter on April 22, 1984, one that stated that the Church recognizes what he called ‘the supernatural character of a series of mysterious events concerning the statue of the Holy Mother Mary’. EWTN summarizes these matters as follows: ‘the events of Akita continue to have ecclesiastical approval.’ Before we examine the warning that Mary gave at Akita, I want you to see this result.” Fr. John slid this across the table.

MARY - AKITA WARNING = 1110

“To me,” said Fr. John, “the warning that Mary personally gave at Akita, it pops out of this Bible math code in such a way that it would be impossible not to have been designed by the Creator. I think that you’ll see what I mean as the results begin to pile up, one on top of another.”

“And we’ll start with Bishop Ito’s full name, a telling sign,” said Fr. John as he shared an index card with his superiors.

JOHN SHOJIRO ITO = 1110

“That is an interesting observation,” said the Cardinal.

“And there’s a link between him and Mary,” Fr. John continued as he presented the next index card to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

MARY - JOHN ITO = 888

Fr. John then said, “Now, turning to that printout from EWTN, there’s the message that Mary told Sr. Agnes Sasagawa about a ‘terrible punishment,’ one greater than the flood of Noah, one that will be a result of ‘fire’ that ‘will fall from the sky.’ That description would fit perfectly with a comet impacting the Earth. Also important is the fact that this message was given on the 56th anniversary of the Fatima Miracle of Sun, *it occurred on October 13th* in 1973.”

Fr. John then handed a photocopy from EWTN’s webpage to the Cardinal and another to the Bishop, and then Fr. John gave them a few moments to refresh their memories about the October 13th Akita message – the long quotation that Sr. Agnes gave telling others what Mary told her, the message that she was told to bring to her own superior. “I’ve underlined portions of Mary’s words to Sr. Agnes,” said Fr. John.

“As I told you, if men do not repent and better themselves, the Father will inflict a terrible punishment on all humanity. It will be a punishment greater than the deluge, such as one never seen before. Fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity, the good as well as the bad, sparing neither priests nor faithful. The survivors will find themselves so desolate that they will envy the dead. The only arms which will remain for you will be the Rosary and the Sign left by My Son. Each day recite the prayers of the Rosary. With the Rosary, pray for the Pope, the bishops and priests. The work of the devil will infiltrate even into the Church in such a way that one will see cardinals opposing cardinals, bishops against bishops.”

“It is interesting,” said Fr. John, “that Mary spoke to Sr. Sasagawa of fire falling from the sky. I personally see this as a reference to a comet, which is affirmed in this next result here.” Fr. John pushed another index card across the table.

THE COMET OF FIRE = 888

“That’s simply what a comet looks like, with its tail sweeping behind it.”

Then Fr. John said, “I have a short, nine-minute video clip to play for you, one that’s from *YouTube*, it’s includes not only Sr. Sasagawa, but also some footage of an interview with Bishop John Ito.” Fr. John clicked on the tinyurl on his i-Phone to play that video for his superiors: <http://tinyurl.com/Akita-Warning>. He played a few minutes, and then he paused it, saying “Note this, using the words ‘Holy Mary,’ the words found in the Hail Mary.” Fr. John passed this result on an index card.

GOD, HOLY MARY, AKITA = 1110

Then, Fr. John started the video again, and as the video was playing, Fr. John slid an index card across the conference table, one that contained these three results.

SR. SASAGAWA - AKITA = 906

MARY, SASAGAWA, COMET = 1110

SR. SASAGAWA - JAPAN = 906

As the video continued to play, the three men heard Bishop John Ito saying, “I believe that the third message in Akita has a deep connection with Fatima.” He also said, “Our Lady had to repeat and revive the memory of Fatima again.”

After the video finished, Fr. John added, “In addition to the connection drawn by Bishop Ito between Fatima and Akita, in a 1998

publication of the magazine *Inside the Vatican*, there was a quotation from the former Philippine Ambassador to the Vatican and to Malta. His name is Howard Q. Dee. He is quoted there as saying this -” Fr. John then turned to a quote that he had in front of him from that magazine, it was about Cardinal Ratzinger, before he became Pope Benedict XVI, one that read: “Cardinal Ratzinger personally confirmed to me that these two messages, of Fatima and Akita, are essentially the same.”

“This is significant because of a detail about the 12-minute long Miracle of the Sun that sometimes gets buried in that amazing story. That detail is that, when the Sun was dancing in the sky, as the people described it, it then plunged toward the Earth. I want to share with you three eye-witness quotes on this point. I’ve put them on this paper underlining portions of it.

- “We suddenly heard a clamor, like a cry of anguish of that entire crowd. The sun, in fact, keeping its rapid movement of rotation, seemed to free itself from the firmament and, blood-red, to plunge towards the earth, threatening to crush us with its fiery mass. Those were some terrifying seconds.”
Dr. José Maria de Almeida Garrett, PhD, a Professor at the Faculty of Sciences of Coimbra, Portugal
- “Looking like a ball of snow revolving on itself, it suddenly seemed to come down in a zigzag, menacing the earth. Terrified, I ran and hid myself among the people, who were weeping and expecting the end of the world at any moment.”
Fr. Ignacio Lorenzo, saw the Miracle from 11 miles away when he was a child.

- “The sun, at one moment surrounded with scarlet flame, at another aureoled in yellow and deep purple, seemed to be in an exceedingly swift and whirling movement, at times appearing to be loosened from the sky and to be approaching the earth, strongly radiating heat.” *Dr. Domingos Pinto Coelho, a Lawyer and Bar Association Chairman*

The scientist-turned-priest looked at the Cardinal and said, “Granted, the third witness was a lawyer, not to be trusted by any means,” he said with a twinkle in his eye while turning his gaze to the lawyer-Bishop, “but the first witness was a scientist and the second a priest, and since they corroborate the lawyer, maybe we can trust him too – but just on this point!”

The Bishop blasted out a hearty laugh, one that the Cardinal joined in with enthusiasm.

“The point, though, is a serious one,” spoke Fr. John, “so please excuse my jest. Sometimes we must meet hardship with humor. In fact, it’s often a necessity – a human necessity in order to overcome despair.”

“But, again, the serious point is this,” continued Fr. John, as he slid this index card across the table.

FATIMA - AKITA: COMET = 888

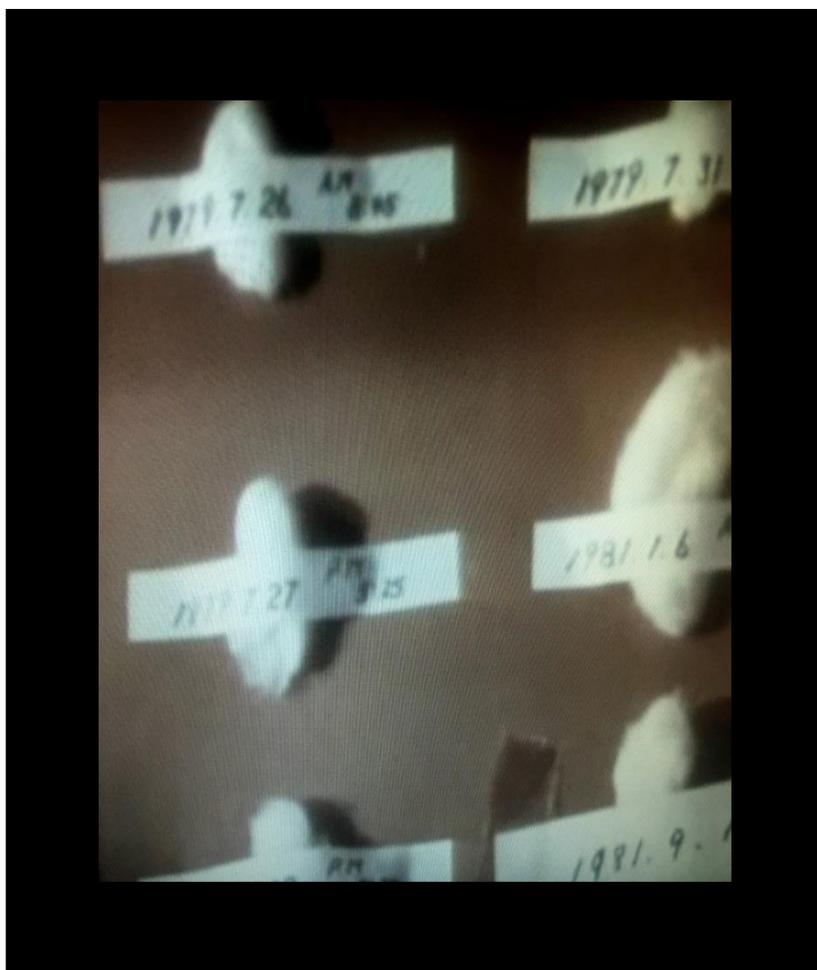
“Fatima and Akita are warnings,” said Fr. John, “warnings that, let’s face it, have been largely rejected by humankind. Just think here of what has occurred with abortion and gay marriage since the time that these warnings were given. And the result of the rejection of those warnings will be a world-wide rise of evil – the eventual rise of the Antichrist, one that will ultimately result in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.” Fr. John slid another index card across the table.

FATIMA AND AKITA: JESUS = 1110

“This proof is mathematical in nature,” said Fr. John. “And it’s powerful proof. But I suggest that there’s even more *scientific* proof – a similar type of additional absolutely *definitive* proof – that can be obtained by the Vatican – if it wants even more proof. That is, if that proof has not already been obtained. And that would be in the DNA testing of the blood, the sweat, and the tears that were emitted from the Akita statue, bodily material that, I understand from other sources, was in fact carefully collected and then scientifically tested. The person who did some of that testing, at least one of the individuals, was Dr. Kaoru Sagisaka, M.D., a non-Christian scientist, an Associate Professor of Forensic Medicine at Akita University School of Medicine. He confirmed with certainty that the blood was of human origin, Type B blood, and the sweat and tears were also of human origin, which included Type AB.”

The Bishop interjected, “I did not know that, John. That’s fascinating. Type AB was found at Akita, you say?”

“Yes,” replied Fr. John. “But it actually depended on *when* the sample of the tears was taken, because the tears at one time would be Type AB, and at another time would be Type O. I want to show you a photo of the samples. Keep in mind that the tears continued to appear 101 different times, each carefully documented, until the last occurrence in 1981.” Fr. John went into the photos in his i-Phone again and then he showed the Cardinal and the Bishop this photo.



Cotton Swabs that Soaked Up the Tears of the Akita Statue

The Bishop said, “Cardinal, remember what I’ve talked to you about in the past - about the blood type found on the Shroud of Turin, as well as in the Eucharistic Miracle of Lanciano, the *Sudarium* held at the Cathedral of Oviedo, and in the Eucharist-turned-into-heart muscle testing performed by Dr. Frederic Zugibe, the Rockland County Chief Medical Examiner, about 15 miles from here in 2004, a Eucharistic miracle that had the direct involvement of Pope Francis when he was a Bishop and a Cardinal.”

The Cardinal, who had been leaning forward listening intently to this entire discussion, replied, “Yes, I do remember talking to you about that, my friend. We discussed about how all of that different scientific testing on

all of those different items found Type AB blood. So we know with certainty that Jesus' blood type was in fact Type AB." Turning to Fr. John, the Cardinal asked, "John, did you know about Jesus' blood type, and did you find anything about the Akita tears in this Bible math code?"

Fr. John respond, "Yes, I did, Your Eminence, on both counts." And as he said that, he pushed another index card across the table. "This first card concerns Jesus' blood type."

TYPE AB IN GOD'S BLOOD = 1110

"And this second card," continued Fr. John, "concerns the tears in Akita - tears of Jesus coming forth from the eyes of Mary."

AKITA - TYPE AB: JESUS = 1110

THE TEARS OF GOD: AKITA = 1110

GOD SUFFERS IN AKITA = 1110

"Jesus and Mary - their very *sufferings* were made manifest in Akita - their literal blood, sweat and tears were all over that statue," said the Cardinal. "Is that what you're saying, John?"

"Yes," said Fr. John. "And that's especially shown on this index card." Another index card was given to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

AKITA'S SUFFERINGS = 1110

"There's even more, though," Fr. John added. "And it's connected especially to the Blood found at Akita." Yet another index card went across the table, with Fr. John saying, "And recall as you look at this card that Dr. Sagisaka did the scientific testing we discussed."

MARY'S DNA - AKITA BLOOD = 1110

BLOOD DROPS IN AKITA = 1110

MARY'S DNA - DR. SAGISAKA = 1110

“To sum up this point, then,” said Fr. John, “Mary’s explicit Akita reference to the fire coming down from the sky, and the corresponding hand signs - the cross mark on Sr. Agnes Sasagawa’s hand *and* the mark of the hand of the statue of Mary, both bleeding in the palms - they can all be linked up, and connected in such a way as to reveal the essence of the warning. That there’s a link between a comet and a bio-chip.” Across the conference table went an index card with these three results.

AKITA WARNING - A COMET = 1110

BIO-CHIP WARNING = 888

CHIP WARNING OF AKITA = 1110

The Cardinal responded, “So the comet leads to a famine, a food shortage, and the Antichrist uses that famine to inflict the ‘mark of the beast’ on people, all under the guise that, ‘We’re just here to help. And we need to ID you so we know exactly how much food we’ve given you.’”

“Yes, exactly! And the *tell* - the tipping of the hand, so to speak - is the fact that a bio-chip is in no way necessary to ID people. God has already done that. A palm print reader or a retina scan could accomplish the same objective task, but the Antichrist’s people will reject that because those are God’s marks, not the ‘mark of the beast.’ So that’s the *tell* that unveils the deception of the Antichrist.”

Fr. John then continued, “And here are those results I showed you previously that dial in some intelligible intel analysis with absolute perfection.” An index card, shown previously, was held up by Fr. John again so that both the Cardinal and the Bishop could see it once again.

COMET, FAMINE, BIO-CHIPS = 1110

TRIAL OF COMET - FAMINE = 1110

FAMINE CAUSED BY A COMET = 1110

“Under the guise that ‘we’re just here to help,’” the Bishop said echoing the words of the Cardinal, and as he said those words he reached back into his photographic memory. He recalled word for word, two well-known statements of two very different American politicians, and he repeated them for Fr. John and the Cardinal to ponder: “You know that President Reagan once said that the ‘nine most terrifying words in the English language are: *‘I’m from the government and I’m here to help.’* It’s the exact opposite of the words that President Obama’s Chief of Staff once said, *‘You never want a serious crisis to go to waste. And what I mean by that is an opportunity to do things you think you could not do before.’*”

“I want to add one other thing about Fatima, though,” said Fr. John. “And it involves the Third Secret of Fatima. Much of the commentary about the Third Secret, which was revealed to the world for the first time in 2000, involves the consideration of the identity of the ‘Bishop dressed in White’ mentioned in the Third Secret. Whether that was a reference to Pope John Paul II, or even, perhaps more likely, to a future more horrible event, we can set that issue aside. What I want to focus on is that part of the Third Secret that refers to the ‘flaming sword’ held by the angel. Here’s a copy of the Third Secret from the Vatican’s webpage. Of course, it’s the account of Sr. Lucia Santos. It was written down by her in 1944, well after the little seer’s Fatima visions of 1917.”

Fr. John handed a copy of the Third Secret to the Cardinal and another copy to the Bishop; these copies had the following section highlighted and underlined by Fr. John:

[A]t the left of Our Lady and a little above, we saw an Angel with a flaming sword in his left hand; flashing, it gave out flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire; but they died out in contact with the splendour that Our Lady radiated towards him from her right hand: pointing to the earth with his right hand, the Angel cried out in a loud voice: ‘Penance, Penance, Penance!’

The Bishop looked up from the page and said, “This language here about ‘flames that looked as though they would set the world on fire’ is quite similar to the language of the Akita message, that is, that ‘fire will fall from the sky and will wipe out a great part of humanity.’”

“It is,” added the Cardinal. “John, do you have any insight on that?”

“Well, Cardinal, I begin by showing you this result.” Fr. John pushed an index card across the table that read:

FATIMA: SYMBOL - SIGN = 1110

“The Third Secret, as it has come to be known,” continued Fr. John, “which the Virgin Mary gave to the seer children on July 13, 1917, contained a *symbol*, the ‘flaming sword,’ while during the Miracle of the Sun itself, there was a *sign*, the sun appeared to ‘plunge towards the earth,’ as the eyewitnesses said. What does the *symbol* - the ‘*flaming sword*’ stand for? Well, here’s a possible answer,” said Fr. John, as he provided another index card to his superiors.

THE FLAMING COMET = 906

“Again, that’s a typical way of describing a comet,” said Fr. John, “with the flaming tail behind it.” Fr. John continued, “So the question is: Does Fatima’s Third Secret make a symbolic reference to a comet?”

The Cardinal asked, “So what’s your best analysis of that question?”

“I think that it does,” said Fr. John. “And here’s why – I think that the Third Secret’s reference to the Angel’s sword, one able to release flames on the Earth, is a symbolic reference to a comet, and here are some results that support that ‘reasoned estimate’, that ‘reasoned theory’, for lack of a better phrase.” Fr. John provided the Cardinal with another index card.

THIRD SECRET: COMET = 1110

THE ANGEL’S FIRE: COMET = 1110

FATIMA SWORD: COMET = 1110

When the Cardinal looked at the card, his eyebrows raised in surprise at what he saw. And as he handed the card to the Bishop, he pointed to the first result on that card and observed, “That’s extra-ordinary.”

While the Bishop was looking at that card, Fr. John then handed the Cardinal yet another card stating, “And here’s some results that bring the name of Sr. Lucia into mathematical focus.”

LUCIA - FATIMA’S SECRET = 1110

COMET OF FATIMA’S ANGEL = 1110

LUCIA - THE FATIMA COMET = 1110

Fr. John concluded, “Ultimately, Fatima is about both *faith* and *reason*. The *faith* part is about who the Virgin Mary is and her appearance to three children. And the *reason* part is about the Miracle of the Sun, an event seen by about 70,000 people. That’s the hard data of about 140,000 eyes. That’s some strong ‘data points,’ 140,000 of them, in fact. Here’s a result that speaks to that way of looking at what Fatima means to the joining of faith and reason.” Fr. John pushed another index card to the Cardinal.

FATIMA - FAITH AND REASON = 1110

“I want add one other thing on this point,” said Fr. John. “On October 7, 2012, Pope Benedict XVI declared St. Hildegard, who he called the Mystic of Bingen, to be both a saint and a Doctor of the Church, the fourth woman to obtain that height in the Church.”

The Cardinal replied, “When you first mentioned a comet, I thought that you’d mention her. She is said to have prophesied about an end-time comet, didn’t she, John?”

The Bishop interjected, “But there is some controversy about whether that comet prophecy is properly attributed to her, correct?”

Fr. John responded, “Yes, to both of your questions. But before I get into that, I want to show you a result to consider. And remember the Fatima sign with the sun appearing to shoot toward the Earth as a fireball.” Another index card was presented to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

GOD, HILDEGARD, END OF TIME = 1110

When the index card was passed from the Cardinal to the Bishop, the Bishop responded, “That is quite interesting, Fr. John.”

The Cardinal asked, “What exactly was it that St. Hildegard prophesied about?”

“Well, some scholars say that she did actually prophesy about a ‘comet,’” said Fr. John. “I can name two. Desmond A. Birch is the first. He’s well known to EWTN viewers and listeners because he put together a lengthy series on that network, and his co-host was EWTN’s resident theologian, the very well-respected Colin Donovan. Birch’s book is *Trial, Tribulation & Triumph: Before, During and After Antichrist*, a 1996 book that was the result of over twenty years of research,” said Fr. John. “In other words,” Fr. John continued, “Birch has got some real Catholic street cred.”

“The second is Yves Dupont and his book, *Catholic Prophecy*,” said Fr. John. “In my hand is a photocopy of St. Hildegard’s words as reprinted in his book; these are pages 16 and 17 of that book.” After handing these two pages to his superiors, Fr. John gave them a few moments to read the page that he had underlined at a few sections.

A powerful wind will rise in the north carrying heavy fog and the densest of dust by divine command, and it will fill their throats and eyes so that they will cease their savagery and be stricken with a great fear. Before the comet comes, many nations, the good excepted, will be scourged by want and famine. The great nation in the ocean that is inhabited by people of different tribes and descents will be devastated by an earthquake, storm, and tidal wave. It will be divided and, in great part, submerged. That nation will also have many misfortunes at sea and lose its colonies. By its tremendous pressure the comet will force much out of the ocean and flood many countries, causing much want and many plagues. All coastal cities will live in fear, and many of them will be destroyed by tidal waves, and most living creatures will be killed, and even those who escape will die from horrible diseases. For in none of those cities does a person live according to the laws of God.

Once Fr. John allowed sufficient time for the Cardinal and Bishop to read this statement, he volunteered, “As an astrophysicist, more important to me than a mention of a comet here is the fact that St. Hildegard also prophesied about a ‘heavy fog and the densest of dust’. This is even more important to me because comets were known about at the time when St. Hildegard lived in the 1100s - and that’s because they had been seen in the sky - but the ‘heavy fog and the densest of dust’ fits in with what modern scientific observation tells us about the *ejecta plume* that is caused by a comet strike, after it hits a planet.”

The Cardinal responded, “That’s the type of ejecta plumes that were observed with powerful telescopes as the comet portions struck Jupiter in 1994. That’s what you told us earlier, right?”

“Yes, exactly,” said Fr. John. “The Shoemaker-Levy 9 comet of July 1994,” replied Fr. John. “But that kind of thing is hardly something that a German Benedictine abbess who died in 1179 A.D. would know about via scientific knowledge. Human beings simply didn’t know about ejecta plumes until very recent years. For her, that was divine knowledge. That’s what I believe.”

“That *is* a bit unusual,” said the Bishop.

Fr. John then said, “A Doctor of the Catholic Church has prophesied about an end-time comet bringing mass destruction. Now recall how the 1994 comet hit Jupiter in a fashion in which it struck that planet in pieces, that is, with successive blows.” Another card was passed across the conference table, the first in a final series of five cards.

END OF TIME AND COMETS = 1110

“A Doctor of the Catholic Church,” repeated Cardinal Flanagan. Then Fr. John held up a second in the series of five index cards.

NANO-SIZE HAND-CHIPS = 1110

RIGHT-HAND BEAST ID CHIP = 1110

(Rev 13:16: “marked on the right hand”)

NEO-NAZIS’ HAND-CHIPS = 1110

“A nano size computer chip is a very tiny chip able to go inside a human cell even,” said Fr. John. And then he held up the third index card in that series.

CARACTEREM BESTIAE: A CHIP = 1110

DIABLO IMPLANTE DE MANO = 1110

(Spanish for “Devil Hand Implant”)

THE BIO-CHIP BEAST MARK = 1110

And then Fr. John held up the fourth index card in that series of five cards.

SATAN - DERMIS BIO-CHIP = 1110

“In order to be scanned,” said Fr. John, “the bio-chip would be placed in the dermis of the hand, the place immediately below the epidermis of the skin.” And then Fr. John held up the final index card in that series of five cards.

THE APOSTASY CHIP = 1110

DIGITAL ID IN NANO MARK = 1110

MARK OF REVELATION = 1110

Looking at the five cards held in his hands as though he were in a deadly game of poker, the Cardinal summed up the morning meeting in his library. “So the mark of the beast in the Book of Revelation is a bio-computer chip placed into the dermis of the right hand, all to force people to be the Antichrist’s slaves. In order to eat after a world-wide cataclysmic event, they must conform. It’s sold to the people as a necessity, something needed to make sure that each person and each family gets only their allotted amount of scarce food. And, of course, the Antichrist could put anything on that computer chip, including his own tiny, little image and his favorite blasphemies against the Creator God, the Lord Jesus Christ, all in computer code. It would be like almost replacing, in a symbolic way, the DNA mark made by the True Christ – the mark by which Jesus had created that distinctive, *sui generis* person. And that’s the *tell* of the Antichrist’s deadly scheme, because God already marked us. For instance, we’ve been

marked in a way that a palm print scan or a retina scan would reveal our identity. But the Antichrist will disregard those means of identification. He'll insist on the hellish chip. Do I have the outline of your theory correct, John?"

"Yes, that's exactly it," replied Fr. John.

"It also occurs to me," said the Cardinal, "that God has arranged things in such a way so as to allow the people of God to use a very simple code, a *mathematical* code, to expose the Antichrist's own mathematical code, but his will be on computer chips, while our very simple code is calibrated to Christ." With that said, the Cardinal pointed to The Revelation Code Letter's top results.

JESUS = 444	ENGLISH = 444
CROSS = 444	GEMATRIA = 444
MESSIAH = 444	CODE OF GOD = 444
GOSPEL = 444	CDXLIV = 444

Then he grabbed one of Fr. John's index cards and held it up once again, saying, "A mathematical code to defeat a mathematical code. A kind of *biblical type* relationship - an opposite kind of type relationship, that is."

ANTICHRIST CODE = 888	ENGLISH GEMATRIA = 888
DCLXVI BEAST CODE = 888	ALPHA-NUMERIC CODE = 888
SECOND COMING CODE = 888	REVELATION CODE = 888

"That's right, Cardinal. I agree completely," said Fr. John. "It can be viewed as almost a *biblical type*. God's people have a math code and they use that simple code to reveal the Antichrist's code."

The Bishop responded, "Well, do you have more for us today, John?"

“I do.”

“Then let’s meet again this afternoon, my friends,” said the Cardinal. “I’ve got some unrelated church business to attend to before that time. Bishop, I’ll need your legal counsel for two of those matters. Let’s meet back here for the Chaplet of Divine Mercy - at 3 P.M. precisely. Then we’ll continue again in the afternoon.”

Fr. John left the library, went downstairs and he marched right out onto the streets of New York City for a walk. Two days after the Times Square massacre, he found the people sturdily making their way, undeterred and leaning forward, as usual. He thought to himself: *That kind of grit will be needed in the future.*

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Chapter 11

Putting the Torch to the Antichrist's Plans ... in the Afternoon

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;
for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.*

Psalm 23:4

After the morning session and Fr. John's bounding walk on the streets of New York, he came back to St. Patrick's Cathedral to pray. On his return his countenance was more serene and his demeanor a bit more somber. As he entered the back of the Cathedral he went to the right-side altar, one dedicated to the Beloved Evangelist, St. John, the author of the last book in the Holy Bible. He found himself almost instinctively praying at that side altar inside the Cathedral. There, while praying, Fr. John noticed that, standing directly next to a statue of St. John, there was an eagle, the symbol of the great saint, and that eagle had a rolled-up little scroll in its mouth.

This caused Fr. John to recall the "little scroll" that St. John had written about in Chapter 10 of the Apocalypse, the one alluded to by the author of The Revelation Code Letter, as well as the "written scroll" that the prophet Ezekiel had been instructed to eat, one that contained "words of lamentation and mourning and woe" (Ezek 2:9-10). Those words were certainly on the afternoon agenda, the continued topic of the discussion with the Cardinal and the Bishop. Fr. John had re-read those words of Ezekiel - those "words of lamentation and mourning and woe" - just two weeks earlier when he learned of a highly-regarded, bishop-approved Marian apparition out of San Nicolas, Argentina, one in which Mary appeared as Our Lady of the Rosary. The Virgin Mary had cited this particular verse to the seer during her very first verbal communication to her, and Mary did so on October 13, 1983, the 66th anniversary date of the Fatima Miracle of the Sun - exactly ten years after the October 13th Akita message. Fr. John found this significant in light of one of the later

apparitions at San Nicolas, where Mary had told the seer, a humble housewife named Gladys Herminia Quiroga de Motta:

“I say this for all my children: God does not want you to humble yourselves before the enemy, nor does He want you to be destroyed by him, but for you to face up to him. Fear nothing, because the Lord goes in front to each battle. May your will not shrink; be strong because you have the Presence of the Almighty.”

Kneeling in St. Patrick’s Cathedral before an altar dedicated to St. John, Fr. John prayed for the assistance of the great saint – and the Presence of the Almighty – to guide him in his discussions with Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke that afternoon, and to be “Jesus-and-Mary strong”!

* * *

“Our planet is 4.5 billion years old,” said Fr. John. “From that beginning point there was a *very frequent* bombardment of our planet by asteroids and comets. That lasted until about 3.8 billion years ago. Just look at the craters on the moon for evidence of asteroids and comets. This is common sense evidence. Because the earth is both bigger than the moon and relatively close to the moon, the impacts seen on the moon must have occurred on the earth, too. That’s what we scientists think, anyways. And I think that this is significant because asteroids and comets pop out of this Bible code in an amazing way. Here’s why I say this.” Fr. John slid a card across the table to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

ASTEROIDS - COMETS = 1110

“Also, keep in mind that scientists, for instance, those like Harvard Professor Lisa Randall – who wrote an excellent 2015 book entitled *Dark Matter and the Dinosaurs* – she refers to the asteroids and the comets that actually *impact* the earth as ‘meteoroids.’ Understanding that this is the

correct scientific word for an impact object from space, now look at this result, one that goes along with our discussions from this morning.” Fr. John pushed another index card to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

METEOROID - BIO-CHIPS = 1110

Fr. John continued, “As we theorized this morning, a giant meteoroid provides the crisis point that serves as the opportunity to mark the human race with the beast’s mark in bio-chips. And what would the primary vehicle of this process be worldwide? Here’s an index card suggesting that means would be the United Nations.” Fr. John slid an index card across the table.

U.N. FOOD CHIP = 666

Fr. John then said, “As we theorized this morning, the computer code on the beast mark - on the computer chip - would contain blasphemies against God and an actual image of the Antichrist within the computer code.”

“John, tell us some more about comets,” said the Bishop, not exactly sure what to make of this statement about the United Nations.

“Sure,” replied Fr. John. “A source of a comet that could strike earth is called the Oort cloud. That’s a cloud of icy objects at the furthest parts of our solar system, and it’s named after an astronomer named Jan Oort. He first theorized its existence. Another thing to keep in mind is that comet orbits are unstable. In other words, comets can be shaken out of their orbits as a result of a variety of activity. The Oort cloud contains trillions of objects, and billions of objects that are bigger than the size of the State of Rhode Island.”

The Bishop then asked, “Has there been recent comet or asteroid activity?”

“Well, there was a comet or asteroid that exploded above the earth in Tunguska, Russia in 1908. Although it was only about 50 meters-wide in size, it produced an explosion that was a 1,000 times more severe than the Hiroshima bomb. But the most famous comet impact was, of course, about 66 million years ago at Chicxulub off of the Yucatán Peninsula in Mexico. That’s what caused the extinction of the dinosaurs and about three-quarters of the rest of the species.”

“Tell us about that, John,” directed the Bishop.

“The comet or asteroid was about the size of a city, perhaps about 10 kilometers in diameter – just about the size of Manhattan, where we sit. It caused an ejecta plume that would have buried certain places in over a hundred feet of debris. There were also huge mega-tsunamis flooding from out of the Gulf of Mexico, causing immense amounts of flood-based destruction at different places in the world. And because the impact itself was like the release of a billion atomic bombs, the shock of the impact set off devastating earthquakes – the equivalent of about a 10 on the Richter scale – as well as enormous volcanic eruptions all around the globe. These earthquakes would also cause tidal waves on the opposite side of the earth. There would be extreme winds and fires. Water, air and soil would be poisoned. In other words, if such a thing were to happen in this age, more than half the human population could be dead within hours or days.”

The Bishop pointed to the Cardinal’s *Navarre* Bible and said, “As you mentioned this morning, Your Eminence, Christ did warn us that ‘the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken’ (Matt 24:29). And in what many scholars call the ‘Great Apocalypse of Isaiah’, that extraordinary prophet states, ‘Behold, the Lord will lay waste to the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants’ (Is 24:1). I recall that the *Navarre* Bible commentary had something interesting about this.” With that, the Bishop went to the

bookshelf to grab the Navarre Bible's *Major Prophets*, and turning to the page related to this verse, he said, "Ah, here it is," as he read the following to the Cardinal and Fr. John.

At the very end, *after a catastrophe of cosmic proportions*, God will reward the righteous with the messianic banquet that marks the definitive victory of the righteous scattered throughout the nations (p. 122).

The Bishop concluded, "That 'catastrophe of cosmic proportions' could certainly be seen in what Fr. John describes to us. A modern-day comet of that size would be devastating."

"Indeed, it would," agreed the Cardinal. "John, does the U.S. government spend funds trying to prevent such an impact from occurring? And, if so, what type of protection plans do they have?"

"To your first question, yes, NASA sure does," answered Fr. John. "For instance, I've taken an excerpt from a NASA webpage for you to review. It's from NASA's Near Earth Object Program. I've underlined a few key sections to keep in mind. Take a look, if you will, Your Eminence and Your Excellency." Fr. John gave a separate copy of this NASA summary sheet to both the Cardinal and the Bishop.

Excerpt from NASA Webpage found at
<http://neo.jpl.nasa.gov/neo/target.html>

On an average of every several hundred thousand years or so, asteroids larger than a kilometer could cause global disasters. In this case, the impact debris would spread throughout the Earth's atmosphere so that plant life would suffer from acid rain, partial blocking of sunlight, and from the firestorms resulting from heated impact debris raining back down upon the Earth's surface.

... [I]f an object is verified to be on an Earth colliding trajectory, it seems likely that this collision possibility will be known several years prior to the actual event. Given several years warning time, existing technology could be used to deflect the threatening object away from Earth. The key point in this mitigation process is to find the threatening object years ahead of time so that an orderly international campaign can be mounted to send spacecraft to the threatening object. One of the techniques suggested for deflecting an asteroid includes nuclear fusion weapons set off above the surface to slightly change the asteroid's velocity without fracturing it. ... [T]he trick is to gently nudge the asteroid out of harm's way and not to blow it up. This latter option, though popular in the movies, only creates a bigger problem when all the pieces encounter the Earth.

After reading the excerpt, the Bishop asked, "So why have you underlined the portions of this that we see here?"

Fr. John responded, "I wanted to highlight the fact that if a Near Earth Object, like a comet, were to head toward earth, it would require a significant amount of lead time for anything to be done about it."

The Bishop pressed for more information, "Is this not possible, is that what you're saying?"

Fr. John responded, "I'll answer that question this way: Professor Lisa Randall of Harvard says this in her book *Dark Matter and the Dinosaurs*, the book I mentioned a moment ago, the book where she explores these issues, she says this - ." Fr. John searched his briefcase and then he pulled a photocopy of a page out of it. "Ah here it is. She says this: 'And it would be pretty much impossible to identify long-period comets in time to do anything - even if technological advances do eventually enable us to deflect

asteroids' (p. 136). So it is certainly possible for a comet to sneak up on us, that is, before we had enough time to do anything about it."

"That is troubling, but necessary information to know," responded the Cardinal. "Do you have anything else to cover this afternoon?"

"Yes, I do."

The Bishop asked, "What is it, John? Speak freely, as is your style, as we've now come to know." The Cardinal smiled.

Fr. John continued, "There is a fundamental principle that is so important, that to get this principle wrong, is to almost guarantee a severe rout against the people of God. And that principle is this: *the Antichrist is hell bound!*" When he said these words about the Antichrist, Fr. John emphasized them with a type of ferociousness in his voice, and with a kind of scowl on his face, that the Cardinal and the Bishop were both a bit taken aback by it.

Fr. John continued undeterred, knowing that he had made his position on this point known, "*There is no - and I repeat - NO possibility that the Antichrist can be saved, and there is no possibility that he can be deterred from his plan.* Now that may seem like a simple and uncontroversial enough statement to make. But I really don't think that it is."

The Bishop asked, "Why do you say that, John?"

"I say that because most Christians have a real hang-up, one that prevents them from declaring that anyone is hell bound, or that anyone was even sentenced into hell in the past. I call it the 'judge not, that ye be not judged' complex. It is a psychological/spiritual complex that comes to the fore most particularly on 'Spy Wednesday,' the day during Holy Week that the Church focuses its gaze on the treachery of Judas Iscariot."

“I’ve heard many homilies growing up,” continued Fr. John, “homilies that go along the lines of this happy talk: ‘*After Jesus was condemned and went to the cross, if Judas had only turned back to God and repented, then we would all be calling him the great Saint Judas today.*’ This type of statement is not at all out of the ordinary.

“For instance, Fr. Raniero Cantalamessa - as the preacher of the papal household, a great and holy man, no doubt - he preached it in a Good Friday homily in 2014. I brought a copy of that homily with me today because I want to read it to you. Speaking of Judas, he preached this, and he did so in the presence of Pope Francis -”

“But let us not pass a hasty judgment here. Jesus never abandoned Judas, and no one knows, after he hung himself from a tree with a rope around his neck, where he ended up: in Satan’s hands or in God’s hands. Who can say what transpired in his soul during those final moments? ... The eternal destiny of a human being is an inviolable secret kept by God. The Church assures us that a man or a woman who is proclaimed a saint is experiencing eternal blessedness, but she does not herself know for certain that any particular person is in hell.”

Looking at the Cardinal, Fr. John said this, “Now, I’m sure being a man related to the military you were often asked by subordinate officers for permission *to speak frankly*. I’m going to do that here, Your Eminence. I’m going to ask you for permission *to speak Brooklyn frank*,” he said, using his most heavily accented *Brooklynese*, “and I think that the Bishop, who has spent so many years working amongst the flock in Brooklyn, he will know something about that.”

Looking at the Bishop with bit of a wry spark in his eye, the Cardinal seemed to brace himself a bit in his chair before he said this, “Okay, Fr. John, have at it.”

“I say that is absolutely and fundamentally wrong because it fails to take into full account Jesus’ words from Scripture!”

The Cardinal and the Bishop raised their eyebrows a bit, as they saw that this young priest was fully willing to critique even the pope’s own preacher.

Fr. John pressed ahead anyways. “And I say that as a sinner who has been gravely wrong about important matters of faith in the past. But I am convinced that if we can’t say with absolute conviction that Judas is in hell, then there is no way that we could possibly say that the Antichrist is hell bound.”

Then Fr. John upped the ante even more, “Now, I’m sure that if you were to challenge Fr. Cantalamessa or any of the happy homilists who talk about the wonderful possibility of a ‘Saint Judas,’ they would point to a papal audience given by the greatest papal theologian to have existed in the last 100 years – the one given by Pope Benedict XVI on October 18, 2006. Speaking of Judas, he said this –”, and then Fr. John read from another document that he had printed off of the Vatican’s website back at the Shrine.

Even though he went to hang himself (cf. Mt 27:5), it is not up to us to judge his gesture, substituting ourselves for the infinitely merciful and just God.

“Now, although those two comments might sound to be almost identical, I can whole-heartily agree with the Holy Father, while I continue to disagree with the statements I just quoted from Fr. Cantalamessa’s homily.”

The Bishop asked, “But how is that possible, if you want to remain consistent?”

“Because I do not substitute myself for the judgment of God, that is, for Jesus Christ. Rather, I point to the very words of Jesus Christ, and I simply rely upon His words of judgment, upon his own judgment of Judas. In other words, the eternal destiny of Judas was not an inviolable secret kept by God. God let that secret be known!”

The Cardinal said, “Flesh that out a bit for us.”

“Sure, Cardinal. Let’s focus first on the Gospel of Matthew, later I’ll turn to the Gospel of John to expand upon this point. But first, in Matthew, Chapter 26, verses 20-25, we have this –”

When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?” Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. *But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.*” Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.”

Fr. John then added, “There are ultimately only two options for Judas. Because Purgatory dissolves away at the end of time, those options are *heaven* or *hell*. Now if Judas enjoys the beatific vision, or will do so one day, even from the lowest and farthest spot in heaven, then how is it possible that the Judge of all humanity pronounced that ‘*It would be better for him if he had not been born.*’ Is that even theoretically possible?”

Fr. John let that rhetorical question linger for a moment, and then he said sternly, “Of course not! Then, later in his Priestly Prayer to His Father,

His prayer on the night before His crucifixion, Jesus says that none of His disciples have been lost ‘but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled’ (Jn 17:12). Who is the ‘son of perdition’ if not Judas? And what is ‘perdition’ if not eternal punishment and damnation?”

The Cardinal and the Bishop looked at one another without any sign of disagreement registering on their faces. In fact, as Fr. John had been speaking, the Bishop’s photographic memory recalled two things. The first was something that the great Bishop Fulton J. Sheen had once written: “*The great tragedy of the life of Judas, one of the twelve, is that he might have been Saint Judas.*” He thought *tragedy* was the key word in that statement, as it certainly didn’t apply to a saint in heaven, nor did it connote that Judas’ potential for sainthood went past the moment of Christ’s verbal judgment. The Bishop’s also recalled that St. Thomas Aquinas had something to say on the subject, namely: “Now, in the case of Judas, the abuse of grace was the reason for his reprobation, since he was made reprobate because he died without grace” (*De veritate*, q. 6, art. 2, obj. 11). But the Bishop didn’t interrupt the younger priest’s train of thought with these points, as he seemed to be on a roll.

Fr. John continued, “Not only did Jesus Christ pronounce a judgment on Judas’ eternal soul, *but he did so while Judas was still alive!* Do you understand the significance of that? It means that not only is Judas *in hell* - a simple point of fact - but it also means that the happy homilies saying ‘if only repentance after the betrayal at the Last Supper, then we’d have a Saint Judas’, well, those happy homilies are a bunch of *happy horse hooey*, as my pop, Gabriel, would sometimes say.

“After Jesus uttered his judgment on Judas, if we’d have a ‘Saint Judas’, he be the only saint in heaven that would have the distinction of being able to say, ‘Hey folks, I’m the only one here whose very presence proves that Jesus Christ is subject to error on his rendering of a judgment

on an eternal soul.’ Or even worse, he’d be able to say – and I shudder at the thought – ‘On the night of His Last Supper, Jesus Christ lied about my eternal destiny when He prayed to His Father.’ *That’s a disgusting impossibility!*”

Fr. John took a long drink from the Pepsi bottle in front of him, and then he continued. “Walk into any Catholic Church and ask the parishioners three questions about Judas. If you’d asked, ‘How many people think Judas is in heaven?’, you might have a couple liberals or communists raise their hands. If you asked, ‘How many aren’t sure?’, you might have a college professor or a theologian with a Ph.D. raise their hands. But if you were to ask, ‘How many think that Judas is in hell?’, every hard-working carpenter, nurse, electrician, secretary, plumber, hotel maid, steel worker, coal miner, check-out clerk, or truck driver would raise their hand. That’s because they have Ph.Ds in common sense. Plain and simple.”

The Bishop responded, just wanting to press the young priest on the implications of that theological point, “John, I think you’re right about that, but does that mean *they’d* be right?”

“Yes, it does. First, because that’s the plain-on-its-face judgment of Christ, as I mentioned a moment ago. But further, Pope Benedict XVI has talked about this type of thing as being ‘the People of God’ as ‘the teacher that goes first’, and then it’s their moral sense of things that gets ‘more deeply examined’ and ‘intellectually accepted by theology.’”

Recalling to himself the Angelic Doctor’s statement on the state of Judas’ soul – the fact that Judas was a “reprobate because he died without grace” – the Bishop said, “Or maybe the real intellectuals in the Church have understood this position all along.”

The Cardinal added, “I sense, though, John, that you’re driving at something more here. If so, lay it out, my friend. Don’t hold back. Not that you have thus far.”

The Bishop laughed out loud at that last comment, thinking to himself about Fr. John’s reference to “*happy horse hooey*.”

“Will do, sir,” Fr. John said with a smile and a salute, but then all seriousness gripped his face once again. “When the time for the identification of the Antichrist and his plan comes, the Church cannot sound an uncertain alarm. *That alarm must be one-hundred percent definitive!* It must be clear and it must be authoritative! Anything less than that and the Shepherds will be leaving the flock to be *absolutely devoured by the wolves*. The Church has got to be able to say three things with all of the authority given to it by heaven.

“One: *Person X is the Antichrist*. Of course, the X will be filled in later.

“Two: *The Antichrist is without doubt on a straight-line path to hell and he will not turn back*.

“And three: *If you follow the Antichrist and do what he wants you to do, you will end up in hell with him*.

“That’s Ph.D.-in-common-sense talk, the kind of plain talk that people can hear and immediately understand. But in order to give that clear clarion call, the Catholic Church has got to be able to say that not only did Jesus Christ declare Judas hell bound *while he was still alive*, but that particular precedent gives the Chair of Peter, the Head of the Body of Christ, *the same exact authority to declare that the Antichrist is hell bound, too*.”

The Cardinal interjected, “John, do you remember the story about Ananias and Sapphira in Chapter 5 of the Acts of the Apostles?”

The light turned on. “Yes, I do, though, until you mentioned it, I had not linked it to what I’ve been suggesting. But it’s there that St. Peter said to Ananias, ‘You have not lied to men but to God,’ and Ananias died at the first pope’s feet, and three hours later, when his wife offered the same lie, she, too, dropped dead at the feet of Peter.”

The Bishop commented, “There the first pope judged some *living souls* such that those living souls actually dropped dead in front of him when he pronounced his judgment.”

Fr. John nodded in agreement, “I suggest that my theology here is not too radical at all - but it is crucial. It’s this: That the Church, at the appropriate time, announced that two people, Judas and the Antichrist, will spend all eternity in hell, and that fact was knowable - and was known - while they each were still alive. In other words, the Church has got to be able to say that two people are definitely going to be in hell when Judgment Day is done. The first is Judas, and he’s there already. And the second is the Antichrist, and he’ll be there someday.”

Fr. John continued, “That’s why St. Paul referred to him as ‘the man of lawlessness,’ and, mirroring the words of Jesus Christ, ‘the son of perdition’ (2 Thes 2:3), the precise words that Christ used to describe Judas. But make no mistake about it; St. Paul was referring to the Antichrist, not to Judas, when he labeled *him* as ‘the son of perdition.’”

The Cardinal looked at Fr. John’s eyes intently. He could see how important this matter was to the young priest, and he thought to himself that it indeed was not a very radical theological conclusion to reach, especially when it was compared to the Lord’s other statement in the Gospel of Matthew, “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate

and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and *many* enter through it” (Mt 7:13). He thought to himself, *If Judas isn’t among the many that make that wide-path trek to hell, who is? And the same for the Antichrist.*

At that point, the Bishop asked, “Fr. John, is there any other reason that you find this point to be so important?”

“Yes, there is in fact another *very* important reason. It comes from the Gospel of John. Remember the scene. Jesus says, ‘one of you will betray me’ (Jn 13:21). Then Peter motions to John. He wants John to find out who the traitor is, so John actually leans on the chest of Jesus – he’s actually in a position to hear his heartbeat – and he asks who it is, so he could find out the culprit, so that Peter would know. What does Jesus do? He *marked* the traitor! And he used *food* to do it! Here’s what the Gospel of John says –.” Fr. John opened his Bible to Chapter 13, beginning at verse 25.

“So lying thus, close to the breast of Jesus, he said to him, ‘Lord, who is it?’ Jesus answered, ‘It is he whom I shall give this morsel when I have dipped it.’ So when he had dipped the morsel, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then after the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, ‘What you are going to do, do quickly’” (Jn 13:25-27).

“Do you see the *typology* – the *type* significance presented by that reading? I have been arguing the case that the Antichrist will require people to be *marked* in order to get food. So it’s at that exchange – *the exchange of food* – that there will be no doubt as to who the Antichrist is: He’s the one that makes the receipt of food *contingent upon a mark*, a man-made-computer-chip mark, imbedded with a man or a woman.

“If Jesus is known as the ‘New Adam’, and properly so, then the Antichrist could be known as the ‘New Judas,’ although that moniker could

also apply to the second beast referred to as having ‘two horns like a lamb,’ but set that aside for a moment, because the Antichrist is who were talking about here. Both are the sons of *perdition* - a word that Jesus applies to Judas, and a word that St. Paul applies to the Antichrist, the ‘man of lawlessness.’”

“So that means,” continued Fr. John, “that Jesus Christ’s Catholic Church will be able to, once again, mark Satan’s own, mark the ‘New Judas’, the Antichrist, and it will occur - *definitively* - once again, *at the exchange of food.*”

The Cardinal and the Bishop glanced at each other. This was definitely new data to them, and they each thought the same thing: It explained perfectly why Fr. John found it to be so imperative to recognize that Jesus had marked Judas out for perdition *while Judas was still alive*. They both saw in their mind’s eye that, at the same kind of exchange of food, the Antichrist will have been *marked for perdition* as well. They could now see the full picture, so to speak, the point that Fr. John was trying to make so earnestly.

Fr. John finished another mouthful of Pepsi while preparing to press his position forward still further. “But think about it a little bit deeper: the ‘New Judas’ will have his own *retaliatory marking process* happening as well. It will be a kind of *Satanic retaliation* for how Christ marked the original Judas. It too will occur at that point in time when the Antichrist requires a mark, his mark, in exchange for food, when men and women and children will be required to present their mark to the Antichrist’s people, to the so-called ‘rescue operation’, the ‘chip-for-food rescue operation,’ that is. We will recognize that rescue operation to require an evil and vile act, one that will be the cause of the perdition of many, because they will be accepting the ‘mark of the beast,’ and that beast is, of course, the Antichrist.”

Fr. John slid a new index card across the table.

MARK OF ANTICHRIST = 1110

THE EVIL IMPLANTS = 1110

ANTICHRIST ID IN A CODE = 1110

Fr. John continued, “And that mark of the Antichrist will be a tiny, nano-sized microchip, the size of a single grain of sand, or possibly even a chip that is entirely fluidic, meaning one that is in an entirely liquid form when injected into the body. It would have the Antichrist’s number, 666, his name, and his digital image in computer code, possibly even encrypted in such a way as to be completely undetectable to independent analysis, in the same kind of way, for instance, that the FBI can’t even get into an *Apple* i-Phone without *Apple*’s aid. And as we discussed earlier today – hold on a moment as I look for the right card.”

Fr. John was looking on the conference table, and he then found the three appropriate index cards that he had presented earlier in the morning, saying, “Ah, here they are ...” He held up the first one for the Cardinal and the Bishop to see once again, continuing “... the results on these cards would not be possible by mere chance.”

DEVIL SLAVE = 666

DRAGON CHARAGMA = 666

(Dragon, see Rev 13:2; Charagma: the transliterated Greek word used by St. John in, e.g., Rev. 19:20, defined as “an imprinted mark”)

MARKED SLAVE = 666

Fr. John then held up the second index card.

NANO-SIZE HAND-CHIPS = 1110

RIGHT-HAND BEAST ID CHIP = 1110

(Rev 13:16: “marked on the right hand”)

NEO-NAZIS’ HAND-CHIPS = 1110

And then he held up the third index card.

CARACTEREM BESTIAE: A CHIP = 1110

DIABLO IMPLANTE DE MANO = 1110

(Spanish for “Devil Hand Implant”)

THE BIO-CHIP BEAST MARK = 1110

With that Fr. John finished up for the day, saying, “I have one more presentation to make to you, but it will take me some time to complete. It turns to a diagnosis of how the Church might confront these matters when the time comes, but also in the build-up to that time.

“I think that the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, tomorrow, August 15th, might be the best day for me to do that. Do you have some time for me tomorrow after your Mass is completed for the day?”

“Yes, I do, and I think it would be fitting for us to conclude this topic, at least for now, on Our Lady’s Assumption. Tell you what, let’s have both of you come back tomorrow for the 8 A.M. Mass, and then after that Mass we can meet here. Does that sound agreeable, my fellow churchmen?”

“Indeed it does,” replied the Bishop.

“Yes, Your Eminence, that sounds perfect,” added Fr. John.

“Then let us end our meeting today with a prayer,” said the Cardinal, at which time he led them in the Hail Mary.

“Hail Mary full of Grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed are thou among women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”

The three men stood up and shook hands and parted company.

* * *

Although it could take longer than other routes, Fr. John returned home *via* the Brooklyn Bridge, always his chosen route because of its historical significance, but most of all because of its personal significance to him: it was the route that his bus took from Brooklyn into Manhattan and back each day on his way to and from Stuyvesant High School. So the Brooklyn Bridge was just special to him, and not even an encounter with Satan on it could alter his route.

In fact, to the way that Fr. John’s mind worked, because he now realized that he had an encounter with the demonic on it, the Brooklyn Bridge would be the precise route that he would choose *every time*, in order to go *right at* the evil he had met on it, just to make sure that Satan knew full well that he did not fear the Evil One. Fr. John knew, deeply within his own person, that he was cloaked in his Christian baptism, and that meant that the light of the Trinity was lit within him, and he also knew that he was sealed by the Holy Spirit in confirmation, and that gave him spiritual power. And the sacrament of Holy Orders imprinted yet another indelible mark on him, one that showed the demons that he was God’s property, God’s priest. Even more, because he had eaten of the Body of Christ that day, he was a nourished Christian. *Satan simply had no power over him, and the fact that the Holy Water could wash off a satanic black mark on the surface of his skin, well, that was just more proof of Satan’s limited power.*

When he arrived home, Fr. John ate dinner with his mom and his sister. Knowing that Fr. John would be late, the three children had eaten earlier with their dad after he arrived home from work. When Fr. John himself arrived, he had a pleasant conversation with his family, particularly with the kids, while he ate. He thought to himself how good it was for him to be around the children – their pure innocence clarified the mind, he believed, as only children can do sometimes.

After dinner, and after he read the children a Dr. Seuss bed-time story, their favorite, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!*, Fr. John went across the street to St. Stan's to pray. The pastor had given him a key to the Church so that he'd be able to pray as needed while he was in Greenpoint.

That day was the feast day of St. Maximilian Kolbe, August 14, 2017, and Fr. John remembered the request of his childhood friend, the Albany Chief of Police. Branden Templeton had asked him to pray to ask that great Polish martyr saint whether, in the days to come, a priest of God should ever allow himself to be arrested by Neo-Nazis, or whether it's the will of Christ that when the Gestapo of that future time comes to the priest's door, he finds that priest with an AR-15 in his hands, ready to kill in self-defense and in defense of others, if needed. Branden said, "Ask that of the saint and then listen to your heart for an answer, John."

Fr. John was there to do just that. For an hour, though, he first prayed on his knees facing the Tabernacle in the center of the Church. The holy receptacle of the Blessed Sacrament was right behind the altar, and directly beneath a huge Cross of Christ. Then, taking up a chair on the altar, Fr. John studied the mural painting up on the wall to the right side of the altar. The mural had the Christ Child in the arms of the Blessed Virgin Mary; they were at the top of the painting, along with some of the angels. As he gazed upon them, Fr. John prayed. First he prayed the *Our Father* as he looked at the Christ Child, and then he prayed the *Hail Mary* as he looked

at Christ's Queen Mother. And finally, Fr. John began to pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy on his brown wooden Rosary beads as he focused upon the other wonderful saints of Poland.

Beneath the Christ Child and His Mother stood St. Faustina in her black habit. She was positioned exactly below the Christ Child, and St. Kolbe was located two saints away to her right, positioned in the painting about ten feet beneath the Virgin Mary's right shoulder. And directly in front of St. Kolbe, dressed in red, was the great Polish Prince, St. Casimir wearing a crucifix around his neck. He faced out, looking toward Fr. John as he viewed the painting from about 20 feet away.

Being a strong warrior prince for his native land during the 1400s, St. Casimir is depicted in the mural painting on one knee, holding lengthways across his body, a sharp, two-edged sword, one that was about three-feet long. Although he died at the young age of 25, the Prince of Poland was canonized after he was reportedly allowed by God, years after his death, to appear on horseback in order to help allied Lithuanian troops cross a river and then defeat Russian troops. Fr. John's pop, Gabriel, had told him that story several times when John was a boy.

Fr. John prayed before that mural painting, just about 15 feet from the Tabernacle, and he did so for over an hour, all the while trying to keep in mind the question that his friend Branden had put on his heart. Then, suddenly, as he continued to gaze up at the mural, the sword in St. Casimar's hands appeared to mystically change form ... it appeared ... it appeared to take the shape of an ... an AR-15 ... and as he looked at it, St. Kolbe's head appeared to move ... it appeared to Fr. John that the great Polish saint, the saint who was martyred at the Auschwitz Nazi Death Camp, was nodding as if to communicate to him his agreement that the AR-15 - or another weapon - would have to be taken up, sometime in the future. As quickly as that vision appeared - for mere seconds - it left.

Fr. John was frankly not sure what to make of that vision ... had he really seen what he thought he saw ... or was he just exhausted. After finishing his prayer to the Lord and his Mother, he genuflected towards the Tabernacle as he left the Church, still a bit perplexed.

After he walked across the street, unlocked his mom's door, and went quietly up to his room, he was inspired to check in the Bible math code for what he had thought that he had just seen.

ST. CASIMIR: JESUS = 1110

SAINT KOLBE: CHRIST = 1110

KOLBE'S WARRIORS = 1110

Fr. John spent nearly an hour pondering in his heart the things of that evening, while, at the same time, he contemplated the words of Scripture that were on his mind, including these: *“Then the dragon was angry with the woman, and went off to make war on the rest of her offspring, on those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus”* (Rev 12:17). After thinking deeply about all of these things, he decided that he would keep these last Bible code results to himself.

But he knew with certitude within his own heart and mind - *with the type of conviction of a Sir William Wallace warrior* - that were he at Eden Hill in some distant day, and a band of Neo-Nazis of the future came knocking on the Church door, ready to inject a nano-computer chip into his hand, he would drop them all with brutal bursts from an AR-15. Fr. John knew then that his childhood friend, the City of Albany's Chief of Police, Braden Templeton, was absolutely right: the Maximillian Kolbe priests of the future would never willingly take an evil injection; they'd have to be ready to fight with deadly, lethal force - or be ready to die in the battle, for their souls, and the souls that God had entrusted to them.

Fr. John went to sleep with those hard thoughts on his mind, but for the first several hours, he slept like a baby, as the images from the mural moved in his dreams. Indeed, he slept as only a man absolutely clear in the conclusions of his conscience could.



The Mural at St. Stanislaus Kostka Church includes St. Casimir, Prince of Poland, kneeling with a sword, while St. Maximilian Kolbe stands over his right shoulder, and St. Faustina stands to his left directly above the Crucifix and directly beneath the Christ Child

###

Chapter 12

A Dream of Revelation

Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other ... and righteousness will look down from the sky.

Psalm 85:10-11

Fr. John's head was nestled in the shallow valley of his pillow. His sleep now was the deep R.E.M. sleep, the kind that produces vivid dreams in the dreamer. In this particular dream, Fr. John dreamt, for the first time since he had become a priest, of his first bride before he took on the bride of Christ, the Church. He dreamt of Sara Boyd Adamczyk.

Sara was dressed all in white. She looked beautiful, just like she did on the day that she found out that she was pregnant with their child. "Our baby girl is lovely, John." These were her first words in Fr. John's dream of her. He felt warm and he felt the love of this woman before him dressed all in white. "Her name is Beatrice. She was given that name by Christ Himself. It was on the same day that we met him, on the day of the car accident in Rome."

"Sara, that is indeed a beautiful name. Can I see her?"

"John, that will have to wait, many years into the future. But I can tell you that she has my freckles and my eyes and your nose and your mouth. And she is a beautiful person, John."

"I look forward to the day that I can meet her, but it is joyous to see you, Sara."

"I've been sent with a message, John. And that message is the same message that I delivered to you on our graduation day, the day we graduated from Stuy. Did you know, my love, that I prepared my Valedictorian Address strictly with you in mind. I wanted to convey to you the beautiful

mind - the *mathematical mind* of God - to bring you back to a real love of God. From heaven's perch, I was so pleased to see that my mom was able to use a video taken of that Address to stir you back to confession, and then ultimately to be a priest of Christ, and an outstanding one, at that, *Father John*."

"That video did change my life, Sara. It got me back on the right path after I turned my back on God, thinking that He had turned His back on me in taking you from me."

"God has His reasons and His ways and His times, John."

"I do know that now, Sara."

"And you'll see that to be true even more so from heaven, John. But you must, of course, continue to persevere in the fight. Right to the end, John. Right to the end!"

"I will, Sara. I will keep up the good fight, as St. Paul urges us, the Church Militant, to do."

"My most important message to you, though, is one of confirmation, John. The truth of the future is just as you have discovered. And mathematics is a language of God that has allowed you to reveal it," said Sara. "The application of mathematics to language reveals God's very *Logos*, the *ratio* and the *oratio*, the inner workings of His mind. It reveals the pattern, the order, the design, and the intelligibility between God's thoughts of reason and the human person's ability to unpack those thoughts of reason to reveal relationships in God's thoughts. And it's those relationships that contain seeds of the blueprint of the mind of Christ, the *Logos* of God. And of the future. You have unpacked them well, my love. There are, though, three more that I ask you to show to the Cardinal and to the Bishop."

At this point, Fr. John's mind was opened to see within it the words and numbers that Sara wished to reveal to him. "To begin, you are already well aware of this first result, John."

GEMATRIA OF MATTHEW = 1110

Fr. John could *see* this result as though it were written in *light*.

"Yes, I do know this one, Sara."

"Well, John, this result is the crucial prelude to these important new results that I wish to show to you," said Sara, as she revealed these to Fr. John's mind.

KING DAVID, DVD, GEMATRIA = 1110

KING DAVID: FOURTEEN = 1110

DALETH, VAV, DALETH: DAVID = 1110

With Fr. John examining these words and numbers in his mind, again, as though they, too, were written with light, Sara said, "As you know, John, the New Testament opens by use of a gematria code. Remember also that St. Matthew used three sets of fourteen generations in Jesus' family tree to point to Him as the Christ, the Son of David. Pope Benedict XVI taught this in his book *Jesus of Nazareth: From the Baptism in the Jordan to the Transfiguration*. As you know, St. Matthew used *fourteen* because that was King David's number, and it was obtained by the use of the three Hebrew consonants in his name *daleth, vav, daleth* - the letters DVD. They are the letters that formed King David's name in Hebrew, and the letters equal 4, 6, and 4 in Hebrew gematria. John, rest assured that these three results were planned for from all eternity to provide a true confirmation of this Bible code."

“I will indeed show these three results to Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke,” said Fr. John.

“There is one other thing, though, John. Remember, not just does the New Testament *begin* with the use of a gematria code, but the final book of the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, also makes a reference to gematria. So we have this result.” Written in light, Fr. John saw this familiar result in his mind.

BOOK OF REVELATION = 1110

“But you need to know this result, too,” said Sara, and, again, another result was written on Fr. John’s mind in light.

RECKONING OF LANGUAGE = 1110

“St. John wrote, ‘This calls for wisdom: let him who has understanding *reckon* the number of the beast, for it is a human number, its number is six hundred and sixty-six.’ Gematria is precisely the *reckoning of language*.”

“I will remember this, too, Sara.”

“These are the things that I’ve been sent to reveal to you, John. You must share them with the Cardinal and the Bishop, but there is one last result that I ask you to keep to yourself for now, and that is this.” Again, in the form of light, Fr. John could see this result in his mind.

KOLBE’S AR-FIFTEEN = 888

“Do you understand the meaning of this, John?”

“I think I do. When the time comes, even priests of God must fight.”

“Pray about this very earnestly, John,” Sara said somewhat somberly.

But then Sara's expression changed, and she continued with a somewhat soft smile. "Now, you should know this too, John. Just two hours ago, while you were already sleeping, Fr. Cherubim died peacefully in his own sleep back in his native Poland. And now he blessedly delights in the beatific vision."

In his sleep, Fr. John smiled too, and he replied within his dream, "Although we will miss him here, Sara, that's sure wonderful news for him!"

"He wished that I tell you that he left a letter for you with Brother Pio back at the Shrine. There is heavenly wisdom in that letter, John. Get it when you return, read it, and keep its wisdom close to your heart."

"Thank you, Sara. I will." Fr. John sensed that his dream was coming to an end, so he made a request of his first bride. "My love, may I dance with you one last time?"

"You may." So they danced. It was like their first dance on their wedding day. And Fr. John awoke just seconds later.

#

Chapter 13

The Apocalypse of Love, Hope and Mercy

*Happy is he ... whose hope is in the Lord his God, ... who executes
justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.*

Psalm 146:5-7

It was August 15, 2017, the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, the date for the Church to celebrate the Virgin Mary's assumption into heaven and her being crowned as Queen of Heaven. Cardinal Flanagan celebrated the 8:00 A.M. Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral with Fr. John and several other priests from the New York Metropolitan area, including Bishop Wienke. The Cardinal gave a beautiful homily, and after the Mass, he walked Fr. John and the Bishop through the underground tunnel that connected the Cathedral and the Cardinal's Residence. It was a tour that passed the resting place of Bishop Fulton Sheen, as well as the future resting place of the Cardinal himself, his own underground grave, an age-long tradition of St. Patrick's Cathedral and the Cardinals who have lived there, and later died there.

Once the three churchmen arrived at the Cardinal's library, they had some black coffee and some Danish treats. It was time for Fr. John to complete his briefing to the Cardinal and the Bishop. This would bring to a conclusion the duty imposed upon him, at least for now, and he was looking forward to getting back to his normal duties as a Marian priest at Eden Hill's Shrine. First up, though, Fr. John would inform the Cardinal and the Bishop about last night's dream, one that checked out when Fr. John did the math at 5:30 A.M. that morning. And that dream was further confirmed when Fr. John received a phone call that morning from Eden Hill informing him about the death of Fr. Cherubim.

But with those things discussed, it was time to talk about Mary and her Son's mercy.

* * *

“Over the past few days we've been talking about a *theory* – and it's only a *theory*, I assure you, because I don't consider myself a prophet – of a future comet that strikes the earth and causes a world-wide, cataclysmic catastrophe,” said Fr. John. “Comets are essentially made of ice and stone and gas. Yet there is something about them that brings to mind something about Our Lady, Our Queen of Heaven, the Woman whom we celebrate today.”

The Cardinal asked, “What is that, Fr. John?”

Fr. John responded, “I sincerely believe that Our Lady of Guadalupe was not only an apparition that led to the conversion to Catholicism of millions and millions and millions of the people of Mexico, but it was also a prophecy. And there is something about it that can point to a serpent of stone, perhaps even a flying serpent of stone, something like a comet that wreaks world-wide destruction.”

The Bishop directed, “Please tell us what you mean, Fr. John.”

“Here it is, Your Excellency,” said Fr. John. “Back in Mexico, in the 1500s, the Aztec people worshiped an evil serpent god made of stone, a stone serpent, one that, according to their belief, demanded constant human sacrifice. Then the Virgin Mary appeared to St. Juan Diego in December of 1531. When the local bishop asked Juan Diego to find out the name of the Lady he was encountering, Our Lady told Juan Diego a name in the Aztec language, a name that is very important to us today. She used the native words ‘te coatlaxophenh,’ and it meant ‘one who crushes the head of the stone serpent.’ Today she is called Our Lady of Guadalupe for this very reason. Look at her image on Juan Diego's tilma and you'll

see that she stands on the top of a stone crescent moon, which was the symbol of the stone serpent god, its flying symbol in the sky, so to speak.

“Well, when the time comes, Mary will be the Queen Mother of the people of God who fight the effects of a stone serpent - the comet that unleashes tremendous evil. Think of one of the later approved apparitions at San Nicolas, the one where Mary had told the humble housewife seer this -.” Fr. John read the apparition to the Cardinal and the Bishop.

God does not want you to humble yourselves before the enemy, nor does He want you to be destroyed by him, but for you to face up to him. Fear nothing, because the Lord goes in front to each battle.

“I read this to you so that you see that Mary is a fighter. And so will be many of her followers. Here’s what Jesus told St. Faustina about being this same kind of fighter.” Fr. John opened his *Diary* of St. Faustina and read from paragraph 1489.

... [C]hild, you are not yet in your homeland; so go, fortified by My grace, and fight for My kingdom in human souls; fight as a king’s child would ...

The followers of Jesus and Mary will fight to the death to avoid the mark of the beast.”

The Cardinal said, “Hold on for one moment.” As he did so, he thought to himself for about five seconds, gazing out the window, just as he had the day before. Then he continued, “My time serving the U.S. military forces taught me something about what you’re saying now. I’m thinking of the hours that I spent talking to Navy Seals, the U.S. Air Force pilots, the U.S. Army Rangers, and the U.S. Marines. Of course, they are fighters, but not everyone will break against the Antichrist. Some will fight for him, not against. But significant numbers will fight against him and will fight for

Christian values. They'll be the ones that lead the charge, the ones that go out to get the food for the women and the children and the elderly, all of those who refuse the chip of your theory of the future. Military men and women at the point of the spear."

"I agree totally, Cardinal," said Fr. John, as Bishop Wienke also nodded in agreement. "But there are so many more types of men like that. Those that belong to the NRA, for instance. I know a cop and a firefighter who would lead the charge, too, along with most of their brethren. Think also of farmers, small business people everywhere, truckers, construction workers, carpenters, steel workers and coal miners. And how about nurses, too! Well, you get the picture, I'm sure. Future fighters, all of them."

"I certainly get the picture," said the Bishop. "I've grown up with those types of people. The salt of the earth, we always say."

"Indeed," agreed the Cardinal.

"So the end of time will be something like an all-out civil war of world-wide proportions," said Fr. John, "with mostly the anti-governmental forces being on the side of Jesus and Mary. Not only will they fight against slavery to Satan, but also think about the evangelization that will happen then. *Think about it.* If you put food into starving peoples' stomachs - at no cost to them - and you risk your very life to do it, and those people know that's what you've done for them, then they know that you *love* them - and that's a key that opens a door to their heart that no one can close. It reveals to them the supreme love of Christ."

The Cardinal added, "A former Navy Seal drops a box of food in front of a woman and her three kids and says, 'Jesus, not me, gives that to you. Here's the cost: Pray to God and the saints in heaven today that my bullets go in the right direction tomorrow so that I can do this again for you.' Those kinds of acts would melt the heart of someone who would

have taken the chip and regretted it. And they'd win souls for Christ. It would fortify those souls, too."

"Yes, indeed it would," responded the Bishop.

"That's the *last* evangelization," said the Cardinal. "And that's real mercy on display - *the corporal works of mercy*, that is. All of them. To feed the hungry. To give drink to the thirsty. To clothe the naked. To shelter the homeless. To visit the sick. To ransom the captive. To bury the dead. They will all be *daily* acts by the end-of-time Christians, all throughout the world."

The Bishop added, "At every Mass, we come together, and the true King feeds us His Body and Blood - the ultimate act of mercy. So, too, it's the king's duty to always make sure that the people are fed. Joseph's job for the leader of his nation, Egypt, was to feed the people in the time of famine. And when Jesus speaks of His Second Coming, He says of that time that there is a 'faithful and wise steward' that the 'master will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the proper time' (Lk 12:42). Although the Church would be involved in feeding the people in such a situation, that job would primarily fall to the lay people - to the end-time warriors."

The Cardinal turned to Fr. John and said, "Fr. John, have you thought of things that the Church needs to do *spiritually* to ready itself and its people for this time?"

"I've thought of three things that I believe are absolutely crucial," replied Fr. John. "The first concerns purgatory, the Church Suffering. To put it bluntly: we need to clear that place out as best we can before Christ's Second Coming. If we don't tear down the wall between purgatory and heaven completely, we need to build as many bridges as possible over that wall. There needs to be a mass 'prison break', so to speak. I think that,

much in line with the Year of Mercy declared by the Pope Francis recently, the one that ended just about nine months ago for the Church's Militant, Pope Francis needs to declare a Year of Mercy for the Church's Suffering, for all of those in purgatory. Or maybe even 'Three Years of Mercy for the Church's Suffering.'"

"Are you thinking," asked the Bishop, "that the Pope has the ability to build these bridges, as you say, with a special plenary indulgence for those in purgatory?"

"I am suggesting just that," said Fr. John, as he glided another index card across the table.

PLENARY INDULGENCE = 1110

CHURCH'S SUFFERING = 1110

END-OF-TIME INDULGENCE = 1110

Fr. John added, "So it would be a Year of Mercy - or Three Years of Mercy - for the Souls in Purgatory, and the requirements are simple, in addition to the standard requirements, each time a Catholic prays the prayer, 'For the sake of His sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world,' it causes the release of 1,000 souls from purgatory. That means that a chapel full of Catholics praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet can release a million souls from purgatory in the matter of about 20 minutes."

After looking at the card, and listening to Fr. John, the Cardinal responded, "That's an interesting idea! Not only does it serve the Church's Suffering, but it also serves the Church's Militant because those new souls in heaven would surely be put to work praying on *our* behalf, on behalf of the Church's Militant. What was your second idea, John?"

"My second thought I call moment-to-moment divine mercy. It is obtained by saying a variant of the *Jesus Prayer*: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of

the Living God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ So the Pope declares that every time that prayer is said is washes away all of the sins of the person who prays it and it provides that person with the same exact divine mercy that one obtains on Divine Mercy Sunday.”

“That’s simple, yet powerful,” responded the Bishop. “Can it be too powerful, though? In other words, is there precedent for that?”

“Well, on the issue of the forgiveness of sin,” responded Fr. John, “that power comes from John’s Gospel, or rather, the recorded words of Jesus in it. There, after breathing on the Eleven, Christ said to them, ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained’ (Jn 20:22-23). Confession by mouth is *not* a demand of Christ, it’s the creation of the Church. Not that it wasn’t a *very good idea*. But the Church, that is, the Pope in union with his fellow bishops, *can change that*. If *they* forgive the sins of any, even if they allow it to be done by the mental recitation of a prayer, those sins are forgiven in heaven. This is crucially important. It’s a gospel truth.”

The Cardinal responded, “Why do you feel that this change is needed so much, John?”

“Think of the end of time for humanity as being similar to the end of a life of a Christian,” said Fr. John. “For the Anointing of the Sick, the dying Christian does not have to recite his sins verbally to the priest in order for those sins to be forgiven. Rather, even if that dying person has a tube down his throat and he’s unconscious, the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick still forgives his sins. As you know, that’s exactly what the *Catechism* teaches.”

“That is true,” said the Bishop, “it’s at paragraph 1520.”

“Yes. What’s more, for the end of time, a catastrophic end of time, we must prepare for the inability of the laity to find priests to confess their sins

to,” added Fr. John. “And this new way of confessing can’t be implemented after the fact because the communication from the Pope, were he to survive the theorized comet strike, could not be relied upon because a world-wide communication system would likely be impossible after the impact, at least for a very long time.”

The Cardinal asked, “Again, though, is it wise to hand out the complete benefits of divine mercy so freely?”

“Absolutely,” responded Fr. John. “First of all, I’m not removing from the equation the involvement of a priest in the forgiveness of the people’s sins. For instance, the Pope can declare that a priest’s role is to say Mass each day, and during the course of that Mass, he says words of absolution. They can be said aloud, or even in the quiet of the priest’s own mind, whatever the Pope decides. It could be this simple: ‘By the authority of Jesus Christ, and in union with the command of the Vicar of Christ, I absolve the sins of each and every person who, on this day, with a genuine heart of repentance, seeks the Lord’s forgiveness.’”

The Cardinal responded, “So the Sacrament of Confession is enveloped into the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and the priest, acting *in persona Christi*, forgives the sins of anyone who has silently prayed the *Jesus Prayer* asking for forgiveness? That’s what you are proposing?”

“Yes, but even more than that, Your Eminence,” replied Fr. John. “Also, the full Divine Mercy Sunday benefits get applied to that simple prayer as well.”

“Just think about last year,” continued Fr. John. “Think about the benefits that were handed out in the Year of Mercy. Your Eminence, you had moment-to-moment access to the holy doors of St. Patrick’s Cathedral, and I had the same type of access to the holy doors at the Shrine on Eden Hill. We could have obtained thousands of doses of full blown divine

mercy all last year, just by walking through our holy doors. Pope Francis gave the same benefit to prisoners who walked into their chapel, which could have happened many times per day for them. That's a lot of divine mercy being freely dispensed. Everyone will need that at the end of time. The easier the access, the better. And the more, the better, too."

The Cardinal responded, "That also is an interesting *strategic* proposal. So what is the third idea that you mentioned?"

"Well," said Fr. John, "that concerns Christ's promise to St. Faustina about a Cross that will appear in the sky at the end of time. Here's what St. Faustina wrote in her *Diary*." With that, Fr. John read the same paragraph that he had read to the Cardinal and the Bishop when they were back at the Shrine on Eden Hill on the night before Mercy Sunday. That is, Fr. John read Jesus' own words to St. Faustina, as recorded by her in her *Diary* at paragraph 83.

Write this: before I come as the Just Judge, I am coming first as the King of Mercy. Before the day of justice arrives, there will be given to people a sign in the heavens of this sort:

All light in the heavens will be extinguished, and there will be great darkness over the whole earth. Then the sign of the cross will be seen in the sky, and from the openings where the hands and feet of the Savior were nailed will come forth great lights which will light up the earth for a period of time. This will take place shortly before the last day.

"My thought," continued Fr. John, "is that the Pope, in union with all of the bishops, declares, in advance, that the complete Divine Mercy Sunday measure of divine mercy forgiveness is dispensed to anyone who witnesses that sign in the sky, and, in response to it, makes a genuine, heartfelt sign of the cross when that sign appears in the sky."

“The way I see it, Christ’s words to St. Peter,” said the Cardinal, “are embodied in these three ideas of your’s, John. ‘Feed my lambs,’ ‘Tend my sheep,’ ‘Feed my sheep’ (Jn 21:15-17). In spite of the devastating nature of what we’re theorizing about, and it is only a *theory*, as you’ve admitted, it’s a positive approach to the end times – if this is indeed what the end times hold.”

“I agree,” responded the Bishop.

The Cardinal then asked, “Is there anything else that you’d like to leave us with, Fr. John?”

“There is one last thing,” said Fr. John. “It concerns John Paul II’s closing of the celebration of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000. It actually took place on January 5, 2001 when 6,000 children from all over the world performed songs and dances for the Pope and presented him with gifts from each of the continents.

“But there’s something amazing about that event. The presentation of the children was called ‘Following the Comet.’ And I want to let you know some of the things that John Paul the Great said after the children’s presentation. It’s Holy Spirit inspired stuff, I’m convinced.” With that said, Fr. John took a piece of paper out of his briefcase and he began to read it aloud to the Cardinal and the Bishop. Here’s what he quoted the Pope saying, a quote that he had obtained from the Vatican’s website.

I welcome you with great joy! Thank you for this beautiful celebration which you have organized right at the end of the Jubilee. ...

The Holy Year opened with children; and it is right that it should also close with them. This is a positive sign of hope, a concrete wish for life. Above all, it is a homage to children, whom Jesus favored and by whom he loved to be surrounded.

To the people and to his disciples, he pointed to the little ones as models for entering the kingdom of heaven.

Dear friends! Your celebration is entitled 'Following the Comet' and calls to mind the solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, which we will celebrate tomorrow. The comet reminds us of the Wise Men, the mysterious figures mentioned in the Gospel who were wise, cultured and expert in astronomy. But if we take a close look at them, they had childlike hearts fascinated by mystery; they were ready to accept the star's invitation and to leave everything in order to go and adore the King of the Jews, born in Bethlehem.

Dear friends, you who are children and young people today will tomorrow form the first generation of adult Christians in the third millennium. What a great responsibility you have! ... And I, who have had the great satisfaction of leading the Church into the third millennium, look at you with my heart full of hope. In your eyes, in your tender faces, I can already glimpse the milestone of the next Jubilee. I look into the distance and pray for you. Dear young people, keep aloft and shining brightly the lamp of faith which this evening I symbolically entrust to you and to your contemporaries in every corner of the world. With this light, illumine the paths of life; set the world ablaze with love!

May Our Lady accompany you, and I affectionately bless you all.

Having read these words of Pope John Paul the Great to the Cardinal and the Bishop, Fr. John posed a final question to these leaders of the Church. "In 2001, Saint John Paul II talked to 6,000 children in Rome and, by television, millions and millions more around the world about

‘Following the Comet.’ Was he in fact addressing the very same generation that will indeed live and fight ‘following the comet?’ Only time will tell!”

* * *

Those were the last words of substance that Fr. John presented to Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke before the two churchmen thanked their fellow priest for accepting the task that they asked him to take up. Then they said a prayer for the eternal rest of the soul of Fr. Cherubim, and, in light of his dream during the early morning of that day, Fr. John added a prayer for his first bride.

“Holy Father,” the young priest prayed, “I thank you that I met and married the mathematically graced and spiritually gifted Sara Boyd. And I thank you for giving her the wisdom to always see your Son Jesus Christ’s beautiful mind at work in the marvelous mathematics found in the workings of your Creation.”

As he finished this prayer, a mental picture of Sara flashed in Fr. John’s mind. It was of Sara, back when she was his high-school sweetheart, saying in awe, “Math is so beautiful!”

* * *

It was now August 17, 2017. After spending a full day with his family, which included a picnic at McCarren Park near the exact spot where his wedding reception with Sara had taken place, Fr. John was back on the Taconic Parkway heading northwards towards Massachusetts on his return ride to the National Shrine of Divine Mercy on Eden Hill.

As he drove alone up the Parkway, a memory from his childhood took hold. It was about a German Catholic carpenter organizing boys in the Greenpoint neighborhood to go into a Jewish cemetery on a Memorial Day and place American flags on the graves of all of the vets, who were

mostly from World War II. Fr. John was still touched by this patriotic memory all these years later. But what struck him most now about his remembrance of the Jewish vets' graves from World War II was that the Jews with the correct "intel" of Hitler's Final Solution, those who were organized and incorporated into the U.S. Military, they fought and died with rifles in their hands after having killed many Nazis. Yet the Jews with no "intel" in Germany walked into cattle cars not knowing that by doing so they were, in all reality, stepping into the ovens that would kill them. Had they known, the Joshuas and Calebs in the bunch would have rallied, organized and responded with ferocious force, being willing to die in the streets rather than be killed in the ovens.

Fr. John thought that when the people of God know the full "intel," they can act accordingly. The Jewish people of World War II - those on both sides of the Atlantic - gave us that particular insight, allowing the people of God everywhere to learn from that horrific, diabolical event.

As Fr. John listened on the radio to some classical music, in particular, to Pablo Casals' performance of Bach's Suite No. 1 in G, he thought to himself that the "intel" - the mathematical "intel" - that he had reviewed over the past few days with Cardinal Flanagan and Bishop Wienke, it told him one thing, and he whispered it to himself during a brief lull in Bach's music: "We are at war!" Even if the first battle of that war might not break out for more than a decade, the forces of good and the forces of evil would be eying and circling each other as though readying themselves for a final ballet with death. But, for the people of God, those willing to fight, there was hope, and this too was a whisper on Fr. John's lips as he drove northward towards his home on Eden Hill. "Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus, come!"

#

Epilogue

Fr. Cherubim's Letter to Fr. John

August 2017

Dear Fr. John:

I left this letter with Brother Pio instructing him not to mention it to you, but knowing, with faith, that you would learn of it at the proper time and in the proper manner, and, at that time, you would approach him and ask him for it. Whether that would take days, weeks or years, I did not know.

*My friend, I write to you because, in light of our work together, I wanted to share with you an excerpt from Plato's *The Republic*, one that I thought you might like to see, if you haven't seen it recently. As you'll recall, in *The Republic*, Plato is hidden behind an imagined conversation between his brother, Glaucon, and Plato's own teacher, Socrates, the one who he refers to in the work as the narrator. Here's the quote between Plato's brother and Socrates that I wanted you to remember from *The Republic*:*

**"And all arithmetic and calculation have to do with number?"*

"Yes."

"And they both appear to lead the mind towards truth?"

"Yes, in a very remarkable manner."

“Then this is knowledge of the kind for which we are seeking, having a double use, military and philosophical; for the soldier must learn the art of number or he will not know how to organize his army, and the philosopher also, because he has to rise out of the transient world and grasp reality, and therefore he must be able to calculate.”

“That is true.”

“And our guardians are both soldiers and philosophers?”

“Certainly.”

Plato’s The Republic.

Fr. John, I present these words to you because I believe you to be both a soldier for Christ and a philosopher of the Catholic Church. In these roles, going forward, I urge you to always remember Joshua and Caleb, those who spied out the Promised Land for the people of God. At a crucial moment, they gave Godly counsel to their people:

“If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land which flows with milk and honey. Only, do not rebel against the Lord; and do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them” (Numbers 14: 8-9).

Within these words there is a message and a motto for the Christian soldiers and philosophers of the future: One day, a day not rightfully characterized with the flowing of milk and honey, but rather a day when the enemy may have all of the bread, remember that as long as our Christian soldiers have bullets left, the enemy is bread for us!

So, in that day, in that time of tremendous tribulation, Fr. John, I ask you to preach these words to the soldiers of Christ:

Go, fight, take and feed ... all of the hungry! ... free of cost! The enemy is bread for us! And our God, the Lord Jesus Christ, is with you in the battle! Remember, men can shoot bullets, but God can decide where the bullets land!

Until then, my friend, may God bless you and keep you safe from all harm!

With love, your brother in Christ,

Fr. Cherubim

A Note to the Reader from the Author

The Book of Revelation teaches, “*Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense, to repay every one for what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.*” Rev 22:12. These words are, of course, of and about the Christ.

The Book of Daniel, though, teaches something about the Antichrist: “*By his cunning he shall make deceit prosper under his hand, and in his own mind he shall magnify himself. Without warning he shall destroy many; and he shall even rise up against the Prince of princes; but, **by no human hand, he shall be broken.***” Dan 8:25 (emphasis added). This is the Word of God, so don’t think that you can ID the Antichrist and rid humanity of him. No way! You must let Jesus Christ alone handle the timing of and the means of death of the Antichrist!

Yet this is not a worry for us Christians because we can rest soundly in the words of Our Lady of Guadalupe: “*Am I not here, I, who am your mother? Are you not under my shadow and protection? Am I not the source of your joy? Are you not in the hollow of my mantle, in the crossing of my arms? Do you need something more? Let nothing else worry you, disturb you.*”

So we can look to the last words in the Holy Bible with complete confidence, like babes in our Mother’s arms: “*‘Surely I am coming soon.’ Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.*” Rev 22:20-21.

For those who know that these words are trustworthy and true, I salute you! *Maranatha!*

About the Author

Michael Gerard McCartin is the devoted father of two sons, John and Michael. Mr. McCartin has served as a JAG in the U.S. Navy in San Diego, a Special Assistant U.S. Attorney in the Southern District of California, a Trial Attorney for the U.S. Department of Justice in Washington, D.C., and as a Special Counsel in the New York State Attorney General's Office in Albany, New York. He is a member of the bar in New York and California, and although he has never argued a case before the U.S. Supreme Court, he has the honor of being a member in good standing of the bar of the high court, as well as of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit (Philadelphia), the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit (San Francisco), and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York, among other federal courts where he has argued and tried cases. But, most of all, he just likes to go fishing with his sons.