

The Roman Forum

11 Carmine St., Apt. 2C

New York, New York 10014

www.romanforum.org

August, 2014

“The conservative majorities have not conserved anything. Gradually they have delivered everything and have themselves been delivered over to the violent minorities that they have seemed to combat, but to which, in reality, they have submitted.” (Louis Veillot, *Oeuvres Completes*, xii, 236).

“The right tactic for us is to be visibly and always what we are, nothing more, nothing less. We defend a citadel which cannot be taken except when the garrison itself brings in the enemy. Combating with our own arms, we only receive minor wounds. All borrowed armor troubles us and often chokes us. (L. Veillot, *Mélanges, Oeuvres Completes*, v, 276).

Dear Friends,

These words of Louis Veillot (1813-1883)---one of the greatest defenders of Catholic Christendom in that spiritual and intellectual culture war with terrible practical consequences that has been raging about us for centuries already---hold true in America today even more than in the France of the 1800's where and when he first penned them. Most believers continue to try to fight that war by arming themselves with “conservative” concepts of freedom, the individual, and society that are actually anti-Catholic and naturalist in character---and only seem to be “traditional” because they have so long shaped our own revolutionary society. And this “borrowed armor”, as Veillot so rightly calls it, leads us down pathways that not merely “trouble us” but definitely “choke us”.

Professor Dietrich von Hildebrand, the founder of the Roman Forum, directed us away from such “borrowed armor” from the very outset. He insisted that we keep our one goal, *the defense of Catholicism and Catholic Christendom*, ever present before our eyes. Nothing petty, parochial, transient, and merely “conservative” in character was to deflect us from a mission whose end can only come with that of time itself. *Catholique avant tout!*, “Catholic before all else”---the happy motto of that movement of Catholic revival so eloquently represented by Veillot---was inscribed by von Hildebrand on our banners as well. This goal and methodology have committed us to the work of freeing Catholics from an embrace of the thoughtless, rancorous, and self-defeating political and polemical conflict that characterizes the global pluralist regime; to the task of liberating them from infatuation with an intellectual “dialogue” which amounts to nothing more than endless, instantaneous, and ultimately meaningless commentary on the latest battles on the blogosphere. This commitment has necessarily involved our directing Catholics down the only valid path to solid, long-term success in each and every realm of life---the political and social realm included: learning what a full romance and marriage alliance with Christ really entails, and the incomparably happy fruits that this transforming experience yields for the individual and society alike.

The Roman Forum’s “Armory”

The Roman Forum’s abandonment of “borrowed arms” demands a “basic training” in true Catholic weaponry. This basic training arms future activists with spiritual and intellectual weapons that will not explode in their faces when they

renew political and social battle with their foes. It is a training that the Roman Forum undertakes on both the national and the international level, and for a “band of brothers” whose fraternal union will continue for all eternity. Our basic training takes the following four forms:

1) The New York City Church History Lectures

For the last twenty-three years, the Roman Forum has been the only organization in the country offering men and women not enrolled in an academic program a systematic, university-level course in the history of the Catholic Church and Catholic Culture. These take place in New York City through the good offices of the Catholic Center of New York University. *Keep the Faith* (www.keepthefaith.org) provides tapes of many of these programs, including, upon completion, the 2013-2014 series on the splendid period of Tridentine reform extending from 1563-1629. Our 2014-2015 series---entitled *War in Heaven and the City of Man: Laying the Groundwork for a Garden of Earthly Delights 1629-1689*, deals with an era when the glories of “Tridentine Catholicism” began to be contested by the first “blueprints” for a new vision of life based upon nature alone; blueprints which gained a hearing due both to the tragic division of Christendom as well as internal Catholic problems. *Details and the schedule of Sunday lectures are enclosed.*

2) The Gardone Summer Symposium

One of the ways in which modernity has cheapened and annihilated the drama of life has been through a two-headed assault on man’s international responsibilities; an assault undertaken either by denying the value of international cooperation in and of itself or by perverting its character when actually admitted. But Catholicism and Catholic culture are *intrinsically* international in character. Developing an international Catholic camaraderie in encouraging the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, especially in these difficult days of global secularist reductionism, immeasurably strengthens our vision, our knowledge of the problems that we jointly face, and, inevitably, our effectiveness as well.

In pursuit of this goal, the Roman Forum, for two weeks during the summer for the past twenty-two years, has literally transformed a small Italian resort---Gardone Riviera, on Lake Garda, the largest and most beautiful lake in Italy---into an international Catholic village. It uses this time to offer daily traditional masses, lectures, superb food and wine, and day trips to surrounding sites of historical importance such as Venice and Trent: all in the service of building an enduring spirit of international camaraderie. For participants, many of whom come back year after year and feel like a family, it is a rare and wonderful opportunity to experience Catholic life on the continent where Catholic culture first fully came to flower. And we can see the ever-growing value of this annual cultivation of an international dialogue, camaraderie, and concern for beauty in our “Catholic village” for the animation of our life back in our various homes during the rest of the year.

The *Summer Symposium* hosts a large international faculty, which has included *Dale Ahlquist* (G.K. Chesterton Society of America), *Patrick Brennan* (U. of Villanova), *Christopher Ferrara* (American Catholic Lawyers Association), *Fr. Brian Harrison* (Catholic U. of Puerto Rico, Emeritus), *James Kalb* (author of *The Tyranny of Liberalism*), *Michael Matt* (editor of *The Remnant*), *Brian McCall* (U. of Oklahoma), *John Médaille* (U. of Dallas), *Fr. Richard Munkelt* (Roman Forum), *Fr. Gregory Prendergraft* (FSSP), *Duncan Stroik* (Notre Dame U.), *Alice von Hildebrand* (Hunter College, Emeritus), *David White* (US Naval Academy, Emeritus), and myself from the United States; *Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula* (Human Life International, Rome), *Danilo Castellano* (U. of Udine), and *Roberto de Mattei* (Lepanto Foundation, European U. of Rome) from Italy; *James Bogle* (President, *Una Voce International*) and *Fr. John Hunwicke* (Anglican Ordinariate, *Mutual Enrichment* blog) from the United Kingdom; *Miguel Ayuso-Torres* (U. of Madrid) from Spain; *Thomas Stark* (Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule, St. Pölten) and *Gregor Hochreiter* (Oekonomika Institute, Vienna) from Austria; *David Berlinski* (Discovery Institute) and *Bernard Dumont* (editor of *Catholica*) from France; and *Taivo Niitvaagi* (Hereditas Foundation) from Estonia. The late, prolific, traditionalist author *Michael Davies*, from the UK, and my predecessor as chairman of the Roman Forum, the late *William Marra* (Fordham U.), were honored speakers for many years. Faculty and students are served spiritually by a large number of secular and religious clergy. 2010-2014 *Summer Symposium lectures* are available through *The Remnant Newspaper* (www.remnantnewspaper.com). Most of the other Summer Symposia lectures can be downloaded to your computer or purchased on audiotape at *Keep the Faith*.

Gardone, 2014 took its theme from the tragic centennial this year called to mind: *1914-2014: Have We Learned Anything From This "Hundred Years War"?* The fundamental grounds of that cataclysm were nothing other than that understanding of life as a jungle "warfare of all against all" that arose out of the heterodox vision of fallen mankind as a "totally depraved" species. By the twentieth century, this twisted vision had translated into all manner of political, economic, and even biological ideologies based upon the need for "willful struggle", open and masked, as the key to Progress. The Church understood that war came because modern man was "spoiling for a fight" in a myriad of irrational ways. She had a clear idea of what was wrong in 1914, but the *Summer Symposium* explored the question of just how much she *still* possessed such a lucid judgment in 2014, was *still* capable of passing on her wisdom to the world at large, and *still* found any forces whatsoever in the secular world receptive to her message today.

The twenty-third annual Gardone Summer Symposium will take place from **June 29th through July 10th, 2015**. Given the vast and ever-increasing range of attacks upon the Catholic vision---accompanied by the mounting threat of criminal penalties upon people seeking to defend it---and given, also, the wide expertise of the international scholars attending the Symposium, we have thought it best to entitle next year's program *Forbidden Topics: A Free and Rational Catholic Challenge to the Frightened Modern Mind*. Applications (drjcrao@aol.com) are already welcome, and spaces, as always, will be limited. Further information regarding the "forbidden topics" to be addressed, as well as the speakers addressing them, will be posted by December, 2014 on the Roman Forum website (www.romanforum.org).

3) From International Congress to International Catholic Think Tank

The 2013 Summer Symposium expanded upon the theme of global intellectual cooperation and spiritual camaraderie by "baptizing" itself the *First International Christendom Congress*.

Inspiration for this idea came from the late nineteenth century Italian Catholic lay movement called the *Opera dei Congressi*. The *Opera* shaped Catholic spiritual, intellectual, artistic, political, and economic forces into a kind of "parallel government" that prepared believers living in a regime that was institutionally hostile to their interests for the time that they could gain control of it and transform it "in Christ". Its name came from the fact that its labors were undertaken through local committees and congresses that then met on the national level to discuss the problems that they faced and the successes and failures that they had had in seeking to overcome them.

Our plan, continued through the work of the **2014 Summer Symposium**, was to discuss themes whose conclusions could be brought back by participants to their local organizations in their various countries. These participants were to be invited to return each year with further suggestions for problems that needed to be confronted from a Catholic perspective. The final goal was nothing else than "regime change": replacement of global secular pluralism with the global reign of Christ as King of men and societies.

Last year, I discussed in this letter plans for an **Summer Academy** for an entire month, beginning in Gardone in mid-July and finishing in one other European center, different each season. Designed for men and women of all ages, this could also be used to satisfy home schooling high school students' college entry requirements in history, literature, language, and other disciplines, while giving them a travel experience as well.

We will begin that project next summer. Nevertheless, our recently concluded **Second International Congress**, now integral to the **Gardone Summer Symposium**, brought out the need to expand upon the **Summer Academy** concept. We are thus inaugurating a permanent **Think Tank** defending the vision of international Christendom, and operating both out of our New York address as well as sites available to us in Rome and Vienna.

4) Roman Forum Tours

These are designed to offer direct experience of sites of Catholic spiritual, intellectual, and broadly cultural significance. The tour that is being planned for the **two weeks before the 2015 Summer Symposium, from June 15th-28th, 2015**, is an 11 day trip to **Greece** for exploration of the classical roots of Catholic Civilization. This will then end with a one-day **journey by boat back from Greece and two nights in Venice**. Other trips, including the *History and Culture*

of the City of Rome; The Papal States, The Holy Roman Empire, The Road to Compostella, Crusader France, and Greater Greece are offered at various times during the year---or upon request.

Please consult our website (www.romanforum.org) and that of *The Remnant Newspaper* for more complete information on all these “weapons” in the ROMAN FORUM ARMORY and our many other events, including our annual *New Year’s Eve Dinner Dance* in New York City.

An Urgent Appeal for Funds

In order to undertake our projects properly, the Roman Forum requires an annual budget of \$70,000.

Mailings, advertising, books, storage space for them, and use of conference halls alone now cost us at least \$20,000 per year.

A much greater sum of \$50,000 is needed to support the Summer Symposium and the Summer Academy. Our international roster of scholars, clergy, seminarians, and musicians grows larger every year. These men and women receive no compensation for their work here, but their travel as well as their daily food and lodging expenses must be covered. Moreover, almost all of the college students, seminarians, and young priests hoping to attend the Summer Symposium---and crucial to the future of the traditionalist movement---require at least some financial assistance.

Our appeal is urgent, because by August our treasury runs almost literally on “empty”. We are grateful for every small donation we can muster. Nevertheless, the aid of a Lorenzo the Magnificent would also be welcome. As a not-for-profit registered charity our budget is, of course, open for public inspection. ***All donations are tax-deductible.***

The crisis of Catholic Christendom is a global spiritual and intellectual crisis. It can only be addressed by redirecting men and women back to faith in Christ; back to serious and complete Catholic teachings on the individual, society, and the proper meaning of freedom; back to a holistic love of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in all their forms; back to a politics that has substance to it and is not a criminally expensive fraud. It is this work of redirection back to Christ---with the help of an infinitesimal percentage of the funds wasted in but one modern political campaign--- that the Roman Forum seeks to accomplish on both a national and an international level. To show you our appreciation, we have arranged that the intentions of our benefactors be remembered once a month at a traditional Mass offered in Rome by our chaplain, Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula. With the acknowledgment of your donation, of any size, you will receive a note confirming that you have been enrolled in these Masses. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

Sincerely yours in Christ

John C. Rao, Chairman, D. Phil. Oxford
Assoc. Prof. of History, St. John's University

**Make all your tax-deductible donations payable to:
The Roman Forum, 11 Carmine St., Apt. 2C, NY, NY 10014**

“Even if the wounds of this shattered world enmesh you, and the sea in turmoil bears you along in but one surviving ship, it would still befit you to maintain your enthusiasm for studies unimpaired. Why should lasting values tremble if transient things fall?”

(Prosper of Aquitaine)

**The Roman Forum
Church History Program
2014-2015 New York City**

***War in Heaven and the City of Man:
Laying the Groundwork for a Garden of Earthly Delights
1629-1689***

Lecturer: John Rao, D. Phil., Oxford University
Associate Professor of History, St. John's University

September 7----Stairways to Heaven: The Baroque Cultural Environment
September 21-- Popes, Bishops, Religious, & Tridentine Reform: I
September 28-- Popes, Bishops, Religious, & Tridentine Reform: II
October 19----- *Dévots, Bon Français & Ambiguous Christian Monarchy*
November 2----Westphalia and the Collapse of International Christendom
November 16—Baroque Regalism and the Fractured Empire
November 30---The Regalist Onslaught in the Ibero-Italian World
December 14--- New World Christianity: Religion, Regalism, & the Creoles
January 18----- Jansenius, Saint-Cyran, the Great Arnauld, & Port Royal
February 1----- Regalism, *Le Roi Soleil*, and the Gallican Threat
February 15-----Piety, Mysticism, and Pastoral Discontents
March 1----- Intercontinental Crimes Committed in the Name of Grace
March 15-----The Turk You Will Always Have With You
March 29-----*Raskol* and Russian Tsardom
April 12-----Descartes, *Deus*, et *Machina*
April 26-----The Dutch Kaleidoscope and the Shadow of Spinoza
May 10-----Manifold Agonies of the Anglican World
May 17-----Glorious Revolution & the Foundations of Locke Land

All Sessions Meet on Sundays, at 2:30 P.M.

Wine & Cheese Reception. Entrance Fee at door of \$15.00

University Parish Church of St. Joseph/371 Sixth Avenue

Church Hall Entrance on Washington Place, south of Waverly Place

A, B, C, D, E, F, V trains to West 4th Street Station

Wheelchair Accessible