Seminars Cross Europe

Forty-Day Tour Ends With Reparation at Fatima

Every seminarian boarding the plane in Minneapolis at the end of last July knew that Fatima — and the gathering of Tradition to make reparation for the desecration of the Capelinha in 2004 by Hindu rituals — was his final destination. But the trip was to begin in Rome, and thousands of kilometers, forty days and four countries stand between seminarians and the site of the famous Marian apparitions.

The countless churches, shrines, saints and sacrifices awaiting them on this trip through the Eternal City, from the Christian graffiti of the 1,700-year-old catacombs to the striking motif of permanence that pervades St. Peter’s.

The travelers were unprepared to have to leave Rome so soon, but all were glad that the airplane’s “pilgrimage assistant” managed to find and deliver the lost luggage — one unfortunate had seen an entire week without a change of clothes. On the way to Florence, a lunch stop was made in Cascia to visit the incorrupt body of St. Rita. The seminarians guide, Rev. Fr. Beena, has found after intercession to be particularly powerful in his 19 years of priestly life (most Seminary professors have a close relationship with a saint of the impossible).

The same day also happened to coincide with the famous Portiuncula indulgence of St. Francis. The Beggars of Assisi obtained from Pope Honorius III the concession, unique for his time, that whosoever would pray at this little chapel of his between noon of August 1 and midnight of the following day would obtain a plenary indulgence under the usual conditions.

Seminarians arrived around 6 p.m. at the end of their day of driving on the first of August and made their way to the tiny chapel, now enclosed in a massive basilica in Assisi. No pilgrimage of Society seminarians would be complete without a trip to the tomb of their founder, Archbishop Lefebvre. After a few days in Florence, our travelers found themselves at Echene thanking the Archbishop for his courage and praying that they might follow faithfully in his footsteps.

From Switzerland, the next stop was France and, more specifically, Avignon. Our Lady declared herself to be the Immaculate Conception as well as a visit to the church of the Jacobins in Toulouse, where the body of Seminary patron St. Thomas Aquinas is awaiting the day of resurrection. A further gift of Providence was the permission granted for Fr. Dreher to say Mass for the seminarians in the Lourdes Basilica on August 15, feast of the Assumption.

The next destination was Spain, and firstly the Basilica of Our Lady of the Pillar in Saragossa. It was there that Our Lady appeared during her lifetime on a little pil-

age St. James that great things would come from his labors there. Along with admiring the majestic beauty of the 11-domed basilica, seminarians made sure to kiss the little portion of the pillar exposed for the veneration of the faithful. At last, pilgrims from Spain to Fatima in Portugal, seminarians found themselves at the final pilgrimage of their pilgrimage. Here, it was not airways that would provide the crosses, but representatives of Holy Mother Church. By manifesting their displeasure in various ways at such a strong showing of traditional Catholics, shrine authorities only made the reparation all the more fruitful and efficacious. Though Bishop Fellay noted that “we are treated like the devil, not much better,” he mentioned that he was glad seminarians were able to see the reality of the fight in which the Society is engaged, a battle whose fury remains, for the most part, hidden.

With all of their pilgrimages accomplished, the erstwhile pilgrims found no crosses in wending their way Winona-ward. They had sung their “Salve Reginas” and called down the intercession of countless saints on behalf of their formation. Now, feeling more than ever connected with the past and present of their Catholic Faith, the Kievos hope that the constant prayer of the faithful is closer to being answered. “Lord, grant us many holy priests.”

Seminarians chant the Salve Regina before the tomb of their patron, St. Thomas Aquinas.

While visiting Avignon, seminarians made friends with traditional Capuchins from Morgan. 

Mission accomplished: Seminarians, joined by numerous priests and clerics of the Society and over 2,000 faithful, process out of Our Lady’s shrine at Fatima thanking Jesus for making reparation to the Mother of God.
FROM AN ACADEMIC
aspect, the European
reconstruction was primarily
focused on the subject of history.
Although the modern world, with a great deal of
its lofty location on the slope of progress,
looks down disdainfully upon the past, it is
certain that the study of history can teach a
future priest how to discern the hand of God
in the story of nations or individuals. God is
the Master of History. His mystery is, in fact,
so complete that he has chosen to give cer-
tain of His creatures
freewill. And while this means that
angels and men
have the license to
go against His will,
they can never go
against His plan,
that eternal order of
divine Providence. For
those of us strug-
gling in this valley
of tears, however, it
can be quite difficult
to see how God will
salvage the good out
of the many way-
ward acts of the creatures. Because we
know the plan only vaguely, we find it hard
to make sense of God's eternal decrees. In
the words of seminarians' tour guide and
Seminary Church History professor Rev. Fr.
Iscara, "History is like a tapestry woven by
Divine Providence, using as elements even
the free actions of men and angels. In this
world we are able to see only the reverse of the
actual design. The final hour will display
for us the real and meaningful side."

While awaiting the
Last Day for the full
story, Seminary superi-
ors clearly realize that,
looking at History with the eyes of faith
enlightened by revelation,
we can not only come to understand the
meaning of God’s action in
man's past (the “Theology of History”),
but also His action in our
present times, morally
two, as they are.
Furthermore, having
made History's acquainted,
ance, one may summon her to stand as witness
to the Church in discussions where doctrinal
or moral teachings are placed on trial.
Finally, among modern men who view the
ology and philosophy as abstractions unre-
lated to real life, there are many who view
History as based on facts. A knowledge of
true History can be a powerful
tool for opening a
conversation that can
lead to conversions – at
least with non-Catholics of good will. With all
these benefits in mind, the
seminarians touched down
on European soil.
All possible lessons seemed to be localized in their first desti-
nation – Rome, where 3,000
years of human history are literal-
ly layered in the soil, waiting to be unearthed by the
docile student. Of the all the periods of history, the era of the
Roman Empire's domina-
tion of the civili-
ized world was chosen by
Our Lord to take flesh
and redeem
mankind. It was described by St.
Paul as the “full-
ness of time” and
a visit to the
Museum of Ancient Rome
showed why.
Seminarians learned that Rome started as an outpost of a
small Latin tribe.
Although its inhabitants were not initially interested in conquest, God
had granted them an eminent prac-
tical turn of mind and an organizing
and engineering genius which would one
day enable them to subdue the
known world. This process of subju-
gation began almost accidentally. A
neighboring tribe or kingdom would
attack and Rome would conquer it.

More enemies came, more peoples were
conquered and more territories possessed, until
finally Roman power extended from
Britain to Persia. Through the conquests of
Alexandrer the Great, the Greek culture and
language had already been spread through-
out the known world. To this framework
of culture and language, the Romans added the
social and physical infrastructure – laws,
administration, roads, aqueducts, cities –
necessary for large communities and rapid
communication and transportation.
Moreover, everything was built to last; this
was a civilization that had an aspect of per-
manence to it. Seminarians were astounded
that ruins of the Empire at virtually every
stop along their five-country route.
Shortly before the birth of Our Lord,
the Empire began the first prolonged period
of peace in its history and everything was
in place for the coming of the Prince of Peace.
God's Providence had used the
Roman Empire to provide all of the natural
means necessary for the rapid spread of the
Catholic Faith that would take place in the
centuries after Our Lord’s death.
God had still other designs to use the
Romans to promote His glory. If the blood
of the martyrs is the seed of the Church,
then the Romans were the great sowers of
that seed. Seminarians visited several land-
marks of the Roman attack on Christianity:
the prison of Sts. Peter and Paul, the
Colosseum, the tombs of many martyrs and
the catacombs of Sts. Callistus and
Sebastian. The latter site gives pow-
erful visual evidence of the faith of the
eyachts Christians in the graffiti
that can be found by the tombs.
The Roman Empire, unlike the
Church, was not divine. God willed for it to fade out of history so that
His own society could use its exten-
sive natural foundation to pursue the supernatural goal of the human race.
Amogst Rome’s 400 churches,
practically every period of the
Church’s 1,700 year Roman occupa-
tion is represented, from the basilicas
built by Constantine to St. Peter’s
Basilica. She did not
destroy what Rome had put in
place, but used it and
Christianized it. Rome would
become the center of
the Catholic world; legions of
priests and bishops
would march from
church to church to
conquer peoples for
the Faith, until the
Church would
extend her own
empire to the ends
of the world. Truly,
this was God writ-
ing straight with
crooked lines, an
astounding victory
worthy of His infi-
nite wisdom.

No doubt
the Jews before
the coming of the Messiah
wondered why God tarried so in
sending a Redeemer.
No doubt the early Christians were
unsure why God would allow His
nascent Church to
undergo waves of bloody
persecution for
250 years. So
today, tradition
al Catholics
ym for the day
when God will
restore His
Church and
deliver Her from
this terrible hour
of trial. With all of their powerful
Roman lessons behind them, seminarians even
more clearly understand that Providence
does, indeed, have a marvelous plan
beyond all expectation. That a restoration
will come is certain; when or how is not
sure. Seminarians have only to play their
part in God’s plan by cooperating with His
grace and adoring His Providence.

The Pont du Gard, a masterpiece of Roman architecture near Nîmes, France, was capable of pumping 20,000
cubic meters of water per day to lower lying areas.
Webster defines "culture" as "the concepts, skills, arts, institutions, etc. professed by people in a given period." Thus, we can judge a civilization's success or failure by considering its culture. In a 2002 Rector's letter, Bishop Williamson lucidly explained the yardstick for measuring the cultural level of a society: "Clearly it depends on what [is] in men's souls. If there is order, harmony and beauty in the souls, there will be order, harmony and beauty in the arts. If there is only ugliness and disharmony in the souls, there will only be ugliness and disharmony in the manipulation of materials. And from where do up-lift and beauty come into the souls of men, weighted always downwards by original sin? From God alone."

In other words, all order – beauty, truth, and goodness – comes from God, Who is perfection itself. The further men turn away from God, the more disorder – ugly, false and evil – they and their works become. A civilization that acknowledges the rightful place of God and seeks to follow His laws will produce a culture far superior to one driven by a satanic "Non serviam." True culture comes from serving God, anti-culture from turning away from Him.

Most people today, even many Traditional Catholics, believe that the 21st century represents the highest level of civilization in the history of the world. This is certainly true if our measures of culture are monetary wealth, technological advancement and personal comfort. But anyone willing to look beyond these distracting pleasures will see the price of our "progress": an almost complete rejection of God's natural and supernatural orders. Our souls are turned away from the Source of Life and the true origin and destiny of mankind will once more orient itself to that which is eternal and real. The Church is long gone. They were, however, reassured to see that our Faith is the same as that of the faithful of Catholic ages past. Seminarians pray for the day when mankind will once more orient itself toward its Creator and work together for His glory. May it come quickly.

Undoubtedly the highest expressions of a Catholic culture are the lives of the saints. This is the parish church of Cassie, Italy, where the incorrupt body of St. Rita rests.

In a 40-day exposure to the external manifestations of formerly Catholic cultures this summer, seminarians saw clearly that God – not personal pleasure or profit – was once the center of society. Both huge cities and tiny hamlets were punctuated by churches rising up to dominate their surroundings. And what churches? Every citizen, from the humble farmer to the magnificent noble, worked together for generations, sacrificing both time and money for the greater glory of God. This charitable desire is the source of lasting cultural beauty; this is why these magnificent churches still stand today.

On a smaller scale, seminarians saw paintings and frescoes reflecting a spirit of contemplation unattainable by technique alone. The closest one is to the Source of Beauty, the better one expresses that beauty in art. Fra Angelico filled his Dominican monastery of San Marco in Florence with frescoes intended to lift his monks' hearts to God. Each cell has its own masterpiece, designed to help its viewer attain the eternal reward next to which earthly riches are as rubbish.

Where Christ rules, separation of Church and State becomes inconceivable. The palace of the Spanish kings built under Philip II in El Escorial, Spain, contained a library, a school, several gardens and our once glorious cultural heritage. Unfortunately, it can be difficult for seminarians to accurately visualize the Catholic order of ages past – Christendom. This is why Seminary superiors firmly believe that an organized trip to Europe is a vital supplement to classroom studies. By going to Europe, seminarians see the concrete realization of the theories they have studied and witness firsthand the remnants of the social reign of Christ the King.

The stunning high altarpiece of the Basilica at El Escorial, to Spain, is dedicated to St. Lawrence. The entire monastery is laid out like a grid to resemble to its pious founder's courageous vision.

In the Monastery of Alcobaça, in Portugal, this massive reliquary from a flat background. Seminarian Joseph Wood, in a valiant yet ultimately futile attempt, tries to reproduce the image using only pen and paper.
**Summer of Change**

This past summer saw several changes in Seminary personnel. The Seminary’s Vice Rector, Rev. Fr. James Doran, has been re-assigned as prior of Geneva, Switzerland. Fr. Doran had been a professor at the 

There are two new priests now in residence at the Seminary, Rev. Fr. Philippe Puzat took up residence this past summer after his transfer from Syracuse, NY, for a sabbatical year. Additionally, Rev. Fr. Patrick Abbet has come to the Seminary from the Holy Family School in Quebec. Ordained in 2002 at Ecolne, Fr. Abbet is teaching Music to the Humanities and Literary and Philosophy courses to the upper years.

The re-assignment to La Salette Academy in Olivet, IL, of Br. Anthony, the Seminary’s incomparable groundskeeper for the past six years, brought with it the fear that next spring’s Seminary visitors would see vining hanging down from trees and lawns growing to over three feet in height. Tensions abated, however, with the news that the Brothers’ Novitiate, which has recently moved to the Seminary from El Paso, TX, (there will be an upcoming VERBUM story about the Brothers), would take over groundskeeping duties. Br. Louis came to the Seminary from the Novitiate and will be working in the office during the days, as well as providing whatever assistance may be asked of him by the Brothers at manna-lab time.

VERBUM asks its readers to join with all at the Seminary in prayer for those who have moved from and to Stockton Hill, that they may receive the Divine Assistance in the performance of their new duties.

**The Price of Art**

Anyone who has ever walked into the art workshop in the basement of the Seminary’s convent building has been struck by the sheer volume of sketches, drawings, tools, paints, statues (of everything from Madonnas to gargoyles) and sculptures crammed into that enclosed space – all arranged in an “order” known only to Br. Marcel. Even to the most inarticulate eye, it has long been obvious that the workshop needed a roomier location. Plans to re-locate it to the Seminary farm’s barn, however, went in smoke – along with the Seminary farm’s barn – in an unfortunate welding accident last spring. So this past summer, construction began on a new 3,250 sq. ft. building to house the workshop. Progress, however, often comes with certain perils. That cost of the new building in terms of money, time and labor pales in comparison to the price paid by the price paid by the price paid by

Br. Gerard’s garden. In the course of construction and delivery vehicles entering and leaving the building site, all of Brother’s zucchini and part of his tomatoes were over-run. The rest of the tomatoes had to be evacuated along with the kohlrabi. For now, the remaining beans, squash and other shell-shocked survivors appear to be safe. At least until spring, when it is tentatively planned to pour the concrete floor of the building...

Last spring’s barn-burning occasioned a visit from the local fire department.

**On the Centenary of Marcel Lefebvre’s Birth**

Today the SSPX has six seminaries on four continents. Archbishop Lefebvre has passed on to us only “Jesus Christ as the Model for imitation at seminaries should be Jesus Christ.” This dominating thought of the Archbishop is a simple one, really. Perhaps such simplicity is the reason for its abandonment almost everywhere as a rule of life today.

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We hope the new workshop and Br. Gerard’s garden will eventually learn to co-exist peacefully.

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