

# Supplement to *The Desecration of Catholic Places*

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## Introduction

The additions to my book *The Desecration of Catholic Places* in this supplement will be added to the next edition of that book if I get time to do so.

## On the De-Paganizing of Nations and Their Pagan Religions and Pagan and Immodest Images

### The process of de-paganizing a nation

Pagan nations are not de-paganized overnight. It takes time. Hence there is a period of time during this process in which Christian images and pagan and immodest images are displayed in public, to one degree or another.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1) *The Catholic religion is banned*

In the early days of the Catholic Church, such as in pagan Roman Empire, the Catholic religion was condemned and banned. Therefore, Catholics had no power whatsoever to ban paganism and its pagan and immodest images. But Catholics were forbidden under pain of idolatry or immorality to desecrate Catholic places, as this is a dogma and thus there are no exceptions in which this can be allowed.

#### 2) *The Catholic religion is made an acceptable religion among the others*

##### Holy Emperor St. Constantine's Edict of Milan and his Triumphal Arch

The first time the Catholic religion was unbanned and thus made an acceptable religion in the pagan Roman Empire was in AD 313 when the Holy Roman Emperor St. Constantine passed the Edict of Milan:

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Constantine the Great, 1908: "In spite of the overwhelming numbers of his enemy (an estimated 100,000 in Maxentius' army against 20,000 in Constantine's army) the emperor confidently marched forward to Rome. A vision had assured him that he should conquer in the sign of the Christ, and his warriors carried Christ's monogram on their shields, though the majority of them were pagans. The opposing forces met near the bridge over the Tiber called the Milvian Bridge, and here Maxentius' troops suffered a complete defeat, the tyrant himself losing his life in the Tiber (28 October, 312). Of his gratitude to the God of the Christians the victor immediately gave convincing proof; the Christian worship was henceforth tolerated throughout the empire (Edict of Milan, early in 313)."

At the time of the edict, Constantine professed some belief in Christianity, but he also professed belief in the pagan gods. He was in the process of converting and thus did not yet convert to Christianity. This is shown on the Arch of Constantine, which he erected around AD 315. On it is an image of the Chi Rho, which is a symbol representing Christ, and there is an

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<sup>1</sup> See in this article [Nations are de-paganized by going two steps forward and one-step backward](#), p. 7.

immodest image of Hercules and a few other pagan gods. The Chi Rho was the symbol that God told St. Constantine to use as his standard when he went to war against Maxentius at the Battle of Milvian Bridge in AD 312, in which he was victorious.<sup>2</sup>



**Arch of Constantine (Chi Rho)**



**Arch of Constantine (Immodest image of Hercules in upper right)**

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<sup>2</sup> See my book *The Great Apostasy: ...Battle of Milvian Bridge and Edict of Milan*.

Hence, St. Constantine's conversion was like that of many others. It took some time and went step by step. At first he believed that the Catholic God was one god among the other gods. Then he believed that the Catholic God was the most powerful God of all the gods. And upon his total conversion, he believed that the Catholic God is the only God. Because St. Constantine unduly delayed his conversion, God struck him with leprosy, which was cured when he got baptized by Pope St. Sylvester. And this completed his conversion to Christianity<sup>3</sup>:

*A History of the Church*, by apostate Rev. Philip Hughes, 1934: "The famous edict of Constantine and Licinius is by no means a charter of rights and privileges. It is a political act, and as such is conditioned by the circumstances of the moment. Both of these emperors had long been agreed that the persecution menaced the future of the State. If one of them was recently converted to a belief in Christianity—and the belief was as yet incomplete—his colleague, however, still remained a Pagan. Constantine himself could have no policy which went beyond the maintenance of a balance between the two religions, and the language of the edict, as far as we can tell, is not that of a Christian at all. In this respect it is very evidently the supplement to the act of 311 and the spirit it breathes is that of the 'deistic' monotheism which was the reigning fashion at the court. It is an arrangement prepared by Constantine which his colleague accepts, and which is expressed in tactfully neutral language. The motive for the new policy is no longer the restoration of the old Roman ways but simply 'the public good.' This is unattainable if due honours are not rendered to 'the divinity.' That these honours may be rendered, all who honour 'the divinity' have leave to do so—Christians with the rest. Thus the edict does not by any means proclaim universal toleration. 'To the Christians and to all men we decree there be given free power to follow whatever religion each man chooses, that, whatever gods there be, they may be moved mercifully in regard to ourselves and those over whom we exercise authority'—an insurance devised possibly to comfort the devout Pagan critic against vengeance from the old gods for any apostasy implied in the act... But it does more than restore [Christian] liberties. A further clause gives the surest of all guarantees that the toleration is no mere matter of form, no political trick of the moment. It decrees the restoration to Christians of whatever property has been confiscated 'without any price asked or any transference money. . . without delay and without discussion.'

"That Constantine's conversion to a belief that Jesus Christ is the one only God was sincere is certain, and equally certain his subsequent loyalty to what he considered to be the best interests of the Church through which the one God chose to be worshipped. But whatever the growth of his knowledge of his new faith and of his attachment to it, he remained, as emperor, faithful to the principles of the edict of 313. Even had he desired to christianise the State, the difficulties before him would have prevented it. The Christians were by no means in the majority. The West especially, his own sphere of operations, was strongly Pagan; and its anti-Christian habits and traditional prejudice survived for the best part of the next hundred years. If there were Christians who, impatiently, demanded a reversal of roles and repression of the Pagans they found no welcome at the court. Whatever the emperor's personal preferences, he maintained the Pagans in the posts they occupied...

"Finally, for the first eleven years which followed the edict, Constantine's colleague was a Pagan, and a Pagan who gradually grew hostile to Christianity.

"In 323 there was a breach between the two emperors in which religious differences played their part. Licinius abandoned the policy of 313 and, in the States of the eastern Empire, the persecution raged once more. Constantine's victory at Chrysopolis (September, 323) brought this to an end, and it ended, too, the reign of Licinius. Six months later his death—in which not improbably Constantine had a

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<sup>3</sup> See my book *The Hellenization of Christianity by the Anti-Church Fathers and Scholastics: ...1) All the official sources say that St. Constantine was baptized by Pope St. Sylvester.*

share—left Constantine without a rival, sole master of the whole Roman world. His new, unquestioned supremacy found expression in a notable change of the form of his language about matters religious. So far he had kept studiously to the neutrality of 313. He had, as Pontifex Maximus, carried through certain reforms—divination in secret was henceforward forbidden, and certain abuses in magical rites. As emperor he had granted the Catholic clergy those exemptions from the burdens of citizenship which the Pagan priests had always enjoyed, he had given the churches the right to receive legacies and he had made the Sunday a legal holiday. In his language he had been as impartial as in his actions, and not a sign escaped to show publicly his increasing contempt for the stupidities of the old polytheism and for its superstitions. But now, victorious over a Paganism lately militant, and master for the first time in the more Christian part of the Empire, he was free to express his personal sentiments. In the proclamation which announced the victory to the bishops of the East, he tells the story of his conversion, describes the atrocities of Diocletian's persecution, speaks of himself as brought to the Faith by God to be the means of the Faith's triumph, and declares that he takes up the government of his new State 'full of faith in the grace which has confided to me this holy duty.' There is a like change in his language to his Pagan subjects. The policy of 313 is scrupulously maintained, but he does not hesitate to speak of Pagan 'obstinacy,' of their 'misguided rites and ceremonial,' of their 'temples of lying; which contrast so strikingly with 'the splendours of the home of truth.'

"The convert emperor no longer hides his contempt for Paganism, but he is careful still to distribute offices to Christian and Pagan alike. All are equal, and both religions equal, before the law."<sup>4</sup>

Because other religions were also accepted, for reasons just stated, pagan religions and pagan and immodest images were allowed in public. But Catholics were forbidden under pain of idolatry or immorality to desecrate Catholic places, as this is a dogma and thus there are no exceptions.

Once the Holy Roman Emperor St. Constantine totally converted and thus became a Christian, he condemned and abhorred pagan religions and pagan and immodest images. Whenever it was possible and practical for him purge a land of idols and pagan and immodest images, he did so and replaced them with Catholic images and places. For example, he and his mother St. Helena purged Jerusalem and other places in Israel of idols and false gods and replaced them with holy things. And he also purged Constantinople.<sup>5</sup> This is the only piece of evidence one needs to know that once St. Constantine became a Christian, he would never erect a monument of himself that contains idols, pagan gods, and immodesty.

### *3) The Catholic religion is favored while others are tolerated in public*

The next step in converting a non-Catholic nation to a Catholic one is that the Catholic God and religion becomes the favored religion. Even though the Catholic God and religion was favored, other gods and religions and their pagan in immodest images were tolerated in public, as there were still many pagans in the nation. But Catholics were forbidden under pain of idolatry or immorality to desecrate Catholic places, as this is a dogma and thus there are no exceptions in which this can be allowed.

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<sup>4</sup> *Nihil Obstat*: Reginal Phillips, S.T.L., Censor. Imprimatur: E. Morrogh Bernard, Vicar General, Westminster, 15 February 1947. Publisher: First published 1934, revised edition 1948. Printed and bound in Great Britain for Sheed & Ward Ltd. Vol. 1, c. 6, sec. 2, The State-De-Paganised.

<sup>5</sup> See my book *The Great Apostasy: ...4th century: Emperor St. Constantine: [Purging of idols and false gods in holy places](#).*

#### 4) *The Catholic religion is the only religion and others are not tolerated in public*

The last step in converting a non-Catholic nation to a totally Catholic nation is that the Catholic God and religion are the only God and religion and the other gods and religions and their pagan and immodest images are not tolerated in public; there are exceptions.<sup>6</sup>

To be a totally Catholic nation, it must not only be stated in law but also in deed. For example, several Catholic rulers, such as the Holy Roman Emperors Gratian and Theodosius I in AD 380 and Justinian I in the 6th century, declared the Roman Empire to be Catholic Empire, but they were not able to totally enforce it due to that many pagans still living in the nation.<sup>7</sup> Hence it was not a totally Catholic nation. It was a Catholic nation in which the Catholic religion was dominant but others were still tolerated in public, to one lesser degree or another.<sup>8</sup>

#### **Circumstances in which a Catholic ruler can allow pagan religions and its pagan and immodest images in public**

A Catholic ruler can, without sinning, allow pagan religions and their pagan and immodest images in public.

1. In a nation that is not a Catholic nation, such as in the days of the Holy Roman Emperor St. Constantine.
2. In a nation that favors the Catholic religion but tolerates other religions in public.
3. In a nation that is a Catholic nation but not a totally Catholic nation.

In these cases, the Catholic ruler allows this because there are still many pagan citizens in whom the life of the nation depends on. For example,

*Hagia Sophia*, by Lord Kinross, 1972: “Constantine’s change of religious belief evolved gradually... [When he became a Christian], the emperor’s political acumen led him to steer a middle course between his pagan and Christian subjects. Pagan worship continued side by side the Christian: old temples continued to stand, and two new ones were built for the use of the pagan labor force employed on the city’s construction... During this same period Constantine built a number of churches.”<sup>9</sup>

And in these cases, the Catholic ruler allows this to prevent insurrection (a civil war) in which the pagans will war against Catholics and have a good chance of success or, at least, cause major problems. This happened under the Emperor Julian the Apostate.

Not until a nation has a sufficient amount of Catholics compared to the pagans is it possible to have a totally Catholic nation in law and in deed, and thus, in which pagan religions its pagan images and immodesty are not allowed in public. There are exceptions for certain pagan images to be allowed in public in a totally Catholic nation. (See the next section.)

#### **Circumstances in which a Catholic ruler can allow pagan images in public in a totally Catholic nation**

In a totally Catholic nation pagan images are allowed in public for the following reasons.

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<sup>6</sup> See in this article [Circumstances in which a Catholic ruler can allow pagan images in public in a totally Catholic nation](#), p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> See in this article [Circumstances in which a Catholic ruler can allow pagan religions and its pagan and immodest images in public](#), p.

6. And see [Nations are de-paganized by going two steps forward and one-step backward](#), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> See in this article [Examples that prove there were no totally Catholic nations from the 1st to the 7th century](#), p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> Chapter 1, the New Rome, p. 18.



They are allowed in museums for historical purposes and to learn the ways of unbelievers in order to better understand them and refute and convert them. But the immodest images must be covered.

And they are allowed in public displays, such as monuments, that acknowledge important historical events in the history of the nation, such as the Triumphal Arches in Rome, of which three are left standing: the Arch of Titus (AD 81), the Arch of Septimius Severus (AD 203-205) and the Arch of Constantine (AD c. 315).<sup>10</sup> These arches contain pagan images and some contain immodest images; for example, a bare breasted woman and some naked men on the Arch of Constantine.

In a totally Catholic nation, the immodest images must be covered. If not, then all who have the power and means to do so and do not, are guilty of sins of immorality. And if the immodest images are pornographic (showing sexual acts), then they are also guilty of the mortal sin of heresy. There are no images on the arches of sexual acts.

### **Beware of the lies that St. Constantine built a church with idols in it, held his daughter's funeral in it, and entombed her in a pagan sarcophagus**

Do not believe the lies that after St. Constantine converted, he built a church that had pagan images in it, that he held his daughter's funeral in it, and that he entombed his daughter in a sarcophagus covered with pagan images. The evidence that shows how St. Constantine abhorred paganism and pagan idols and images when he was a Christian is enough to refute these lies. Whenever it was possible and prudent to do, he destroyed pagan temples and images and replaced them with Catholic places and images.<sup>11</sup> My book that refutes these lies is almost completed. I have been working on it for a long time and was delayed several times from completing it. It will be posted soon if I do not get delay with some other project.

### **Nations are de-paganized by going two steps forward and one-step backward**

Pagan nations are not de-paganized overnight. It takes time. Hence there is a period of time during this process in which Christian images and pagan and immodest images are displayed in public, to one degree or another. In this process, the Christian religion goes two steps forward and one step backward to the point that it becomes a totally Catholic nation.

To see what preceded this quote, see in this article [A History of the Church, by apostate Rev. Philip Hughes, 1934](#); 4.

*A History of the Church*, by apostate Rev. Philip Hughes, 1934: "As emperor he [Constantine] had granted the Catholic clergy those exemptions from the burdens of citizenship which the Pagan priests had always enjoyed, he had given the churches the right to receive legacies and he had made the Sunday a legal holiday. ... The first breach in this policy of neutrality was the work of his sons. Constantine died in 337 leaving as heirs his three sons, Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans. The eldest died three years later, and the new law bears the signature of the two younger brothers. It declares the abolition of all sacrifices and threatens dire punishment to those who contravene it (341). Among one section of the Christians its enactment was the occasion of great joy. They exhorted the emperors to go further still. Whence so great an uneasiness among the Pagans that, a year later, the emperor in

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<sup>10</sup> The Arch of Constantine marks the beginning of the conversion of the pagan Roman Empire to a Catholic Roman Empire. The Arch of Titus marks the event when God used Titus to destroy the Second Temple and kill many apostate Jews and take them into captivity, in fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy.

<sup>11</sup> See my book *The Great Apostasy*: ...4th century: Emperor St. Constantine: [Purging of idols and false gods in holy places](#).

the West, Constantine, the vast majority of whose subjects were Pagans, published a new law to reassure them, ordering special care for the historic temples of the old capital. Ten years later Constantius II, now sole emperor, published a new edict which threatened death to those who worshipped idols. The temples were to be closed, the sacrifices to cease. No doubt where the thing was peaceably possible the law was enforced. But despite the law the facts show the old religion as still flourishing unhindered throughout the West. All the old feasts were observed at Rome, with all the accustomed sacrifices, in the year which followed this law (354), and in the very year which saw its renewal Constantius II himself, visiting Rome, confirmed the privileges of the different cults, the subsidies of public money granted to them and, acting as Pontifex Maximus, he filled the vacant priestships by nominations of different members of the Roman aristocracy. This contrast between the terrifying threats, and the impotent toleration of those who ignored the threats was characteristic of the general policy of Constantine's vacillating successors. They repudiated their father's policy, and were yet too weak to enforce the repudiation. The chief effect of their legislation was to irritate the Pagans, and to prepare the way for the anti-Christian reaction which followed under Julian.

"Julian (361-363), the successor of Constantius II, has gone down to history as Julian the Apostate, but the title is hardly fair, for though Julian set himself to reverse the policy of the previous fifty years and to restore Paganism, it is hard to see that he was ever a Christian at all, and he certainly was never a Catholic.

"The sudden death of Constantius (Nov., 361) gave him the mastery of the world without a battle, and for twenty months he ruled supreme... For the greatest attempt of all was now made to organise Paganism, its cults and its priesthood; to give it a coherent body of doctrine, a fixed and regular liturgy... The sacrifices were restored and carried out on an enormous scale, Julian himself as Pontifex—against all tradition—actually immolating the victims. The Christian magistrates and officers were replaced. The Christian clergy lost all their privileges. They lost, too, what pensions the State had begun to pay them, and were obliged to restore what they had already received. Even the Christian poor were made to give back the alms which the imperial charity had assigned them. The temples, too, where these had fallen into decay, were to be restored at the expense of the Christians. But the edict most complained of was that which expelled the Christians from the schools... To the Christian henceforward these were banned, and with them all hope of a professional career...

"The persecution ended very suddenly. On June 26, 363, Julian was slain ... The army gave him Jovian for a successor and Jovian was a Catholic. Without any elaborate measure of repression, the whole edifice of Julian's 'Church' crumbled and fell. The new edict restoring religious toleration, and the statutes of Constantine's regime, was enough. The dead thing lately galvanised into a semblance of life ceased to move, the apostates who had served it returned to Christianity more easily than they had left it. The path to the inevitable Christianising of the State was once more open...

"Valentinian I died in 375 and with the accession of his son the youthful Gratian (375-383) the religious situation changed immediately... By an act of the year 382 the privileges and exemptions enjoyed by the Pagan priesthood were abolished...

"[Under Gratian and Valentinian II] There was no attempt to punish Pagans for belief or for practice. There was no Christian revenge, and no attempt, as yet, to substitute Christianity for Paganism as the official religion of the State. The Roman Empire was, for the moment, a State in which religion and the republic were things entirely separate. Under Gratian's successor the policy was to reach its logical conclusion. It was Theodosius who first made the State a Catholic thing.

"Theodosius (379-395); the one great man the Empire produced in the two centuries which separate Constantine and Justinian, was that phenomenon hitherto rare, an emperor baptised from the beginning of his reign and a convinced practising Catholic. The Catholicism of his regular private life was the mainspring of his



public action as the Catholic Emperor... From the beginning Theodosius was definite. The long domination of the little clique of Arian bishops, in whose influence at court lay the real cause of the troubles, came to an end. Catholicism was freed; and security for its future provided in the first code for the repression of heresy. Orthodox Christianity received its first description in civil law as 'the faith which the Roman Church has received from the Apostle Peter,' it is the faith 'professed by the pontiff Damasus and Peter Bishop of Alexandria.' The churches of heretics of every sort, Anomeans, Arians, Apollinarians, Macedonians, are to be confiscated and handed over to the Catholics. Heretical assemblies are forbidden and heretics lose all power of making wills or of inheriting. Six times in the next fifteen years these laws are renewed.

"Towards the Pagans, on the other hand, Theodosius is much less rigorous. There is a law against apostates from Christianity to Paganism, and all sacrifices to divine the future are now strictly forbidden. Divination of all kinds is abolished. On the eve of his succession to the Western Empire (391) upon the death of Valentinian II, an edict closes all the temples once and for all. Gradually they are given over to other uses. Finally, in the year in which Theodosius becomes master of the whole Roman world (392), the law occupies itself with the domestic religion which was the last refuge of Paganism, as, in Rome at least, it had been the place whence it sprang. All household rites are forbidden, all the domestic shrines are to be destroyed. But with all this anti-Pagan legislation it is to be noted that there is no attempt to compel the Pagan to become a Christian. Christian and Pagan are equal before the law. Honours and office continue to go impartially to the one as to the other. There is no violence offered to persons. The supports of the old religion have been ruthlessly struck away. The structure will soon fall of itself. Pagans remain, and will remain, here and there for a century yet, especially in the country districts. The old cults will, finally, come to be so associated with rusticity that the Roman's very name for a countryman (paganus) will for ever describe, and describe primarily, one who worships the old gods. Pagans, countryfolk, living remotely and divorced from the day's life and culture, ignorantly clinging to ancient superstitions and rites, backwoodsmen, there still will be in plenty; and for three centuries after Theodosius the business of their conversion will occupy the Church; but Paganism, with Theodosius, dies never to rise again. "<sup>12</sup>

### **Examples that prove there were no totally Catholic nations from the 1st to the 7th century**

Even though in the late 4th century, the Holy Emperor St. Theodosius the Great was the first to bring about a Catholic nation, it was not a totally Catholic nation. It was Catholic in its laws but not in all its deeds, as some of its laws could not be enforced. For example, in the 5th century, in the days of St. Augustine and Pope St. Gelasius, there were still some pagan religions and images in public.

#### *In the days of St. Augustine (d. 430), Pagan and Christian images were in public*

In the 4th and 5th centuries, in St. Augustine's days, there were pagan places and pagan and immodest images in public places. He tells Catholics to tolerate them and thus not to knock them down or try to remove them. And he pleads to the pagans not to knock down or remove the Christian images (such as crosses) that are on Christian properties. And he teaches that Christians must not have idols on their property:

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<sup>12</sup> v. 1, c. 6, sec. 2.

St. Augustine, *Sermons on Selected Lessons of the New Testament*, Sermon 12: “18. ...They think that we are looking out for the idols everywhere, and that we break them down in all places where we have discovered them. How so? Are there not places before our very eyes in which they are? Or are we indeed ignorant where they are? And yet we do not break them down because God has not given them into our power. When does God give them into our power? When the masters of these things shall become Christians. The master of a certain place has just lately wished this to be done. If he had not been minded to give the place itself to the Church and only had given orders that there should be no idols on his property; I think that it ought to have been executed with the greatest devotion that the soul of the absent Christian brother who wishes on his land to return thanks to God and would not that there should be anything there to God’s dishonour, might be assisted by his fellow-Christians. Added to this, that in this case he gave the place itself to the Church. And shall there be idols in the Church’s estate? Brethren, see then what it is that displeases the heathens. It is but a little matter with them that we do not take them away from their estates, that we do not break them down: they would have them kept up even in our own places. We preach against idols, we take them away from the hearts of men; we are persecutors of idols; we openly profess it. Are we then to be the preservers of them? I do not touch them when I have not the power [to destroy them]; I do not touch them when the lord of the property complains of it; but when he wishes it to be done, and gives thanks for it, I should incur guilt if I did it not [destroy the idols].”

*In the days of Pope St. Gelasius I [d. 496], the pagan Lupercalia was prevalent*

In the fifth century, the pagan rite of Lupercalia was prevalent. Pope St. Gelasius I tried stop it, but did not succeed, as there were many pagans who still practiced it and many Catholics who apostatized and practiced it. Some of them joined the ranks of the pagans while others still claimed to be Catholic. Pope St. Gelasius condemned the nominal Catholics who practiced it and declared them to be excommunicated, but he did not have the power to kill or imprison them.

The following quotes are taken from *The Letters of Gelasius I*, by Bronwen Neil and Pauline Allen. Published by BREPOLs 2014.

### The Lupercalia

“[pp. 46-48] At the end of the fifth century, the church was still developing its own civic, Christian rituals, centred on the seasons of the liturgical year. For Gelasius, as for Leo I (440-461), Christianity was at the heart of Rome’s civic pride and strength as a community, even, or perhaps especially, in the midst of the challenges it faced at the end of the fifth century... Attempts by Roman bishops to displace existing pagan rituals with the feasts of the new Christian calendar encountered some resistance, as in the case of Leo I’s campaign against sun worship...

Our only evidence for the existing celebration of the pagan feast of Lupercalia comes from Gelasius’ Tract 6, composed ‘against Andromachus and the other Romans who are resolved that the Lupercalia should be celebrated according to ancient custom’. The ancient Roman feast of the Lupercalia was still being celebrated in 448, as we know from its entry in the calendar of Polemius Silvius. Celebrated in mid-February with a public procession involving paid actors who ‘named and shamed’ members of the public, its function was to promote the fertility, purification and protection of the Roman people...

Gelasius was apparently criticised by Andromachus and other senators for his failure sufficiently to reprimand a priest for adultery. In return he accused them of

committing 'spiritual adultery' by continuing to offer sacrifices to the god Februarius... Gelasius' objection to the procession was that it was blasphemous and sacrilegious, and completely unsuitable for the participation of those who called themselves Christians. He writes in his conclusion: 'Finally, as it pertains to me, no one who has been baptised, no Christian should celebrate this, and only the pagans, whose rite it is, should pursue it.' It seems, therefore, that he did not seek to abolish the festival perse, but merely to prevent Christian civil servants from involvement in it. He uses the same language of disease and infection as he used for Pelagianism and the followers of Acacius...

"[p. 64] Gelasius' attempt to stop the celebration of a pagan fertility rite, the Lupercalia, was probably futile, given the feast's support among prominent senators...

## Introduction to the Letter

"[p. 209] The celebration of the Lupercalia, a fertility rite that involved the noblemen and women of the city, perhaps being represented in some sort of violent farce by paid actors, seems to have been alive and well in Gelasius' day... The tract is ostensibly addressed to the urban prefect Andromachus, who seems to have led the criticism of the pope, but is really addressed to all the Roman senate, who wanted the continuation of this rite that had been practised on the Palatine Hill since before the times of Romulus and Remus, in the account of Livy, a festival which was still being observed in his own day (282-219 BC)...

"[p. 210] Gelasius is forced to admit that his predecessors had let the rites continue (ch. 29), as for example during the 'civil frenzy' of Emperor Anthemius and his rival, the general Ricimer, but he defends them by saying they had perhaps tried to get rid of the superstition but had been forced to prioritise their efforts against greater threats to people's spiritual health.

"[p. 211, Footnote 10] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, p. 241; CF. Duval, 'Des Luercales', p. 244 who makes it clear that the pope was fighting a losing battle in that the pagans were resolved to proceed against his interdiction, and he could only try to dissuade Christians in Rome from participating also."

## The Letter

Pope St. Gelasius, *Tract 6*, Letter against Andomachus, 5th century: "8. Ultimately, if the one who, after advancing to the ministry of the church, commits a fault is guilty, are you too not guilty, who after professing the truth return to debased and perverted and pagan and devilish images, which you have declared you have renounced?...

"10. Nonetheless, in these blasphemies of yours, for which you rightly deserve to be beaten... Then you may understand that your inclination is bad and your intention to apostasise is evil, so that the paraphernalia of that vacuous cult is absolutely no help to you at all, nor can you substantiate what you conceive in your heart and discharge from your mouth...

"19. Tell us, you who are neither Christians nor pagans, who are everywhere traitors and nowhere believers, everywhere corrupt and nowhere upright, who cannot hold onto either because they are at variance with each other; tell us, I repeat, you supporters of the Lupercalia and in truth worthy defenders of such wantonness and of bawdy songs, worthy lords of madness who not without reason possess no sound head, well-fitted to this religion, which is celebrated by obscene and dissolute cries. You yourselves shall see what kind of salvation it affords you, this religion which advances such a great collapse and destruction of morals...

“29. But you say that the Lupercalia existed also in Christian times. But those other rites were also celebrated for a long period, during Christian times too. Is it because they were not abolished under the first leaders of the Christian religion that they should not have been removed at all by their successors? Many are the things which, harmful or worthless, have been suppressed by individual pontiffs at different times; for medicine does not cure all bodily frailties at the same time, but what it perceives threatens with greater danger, lest the bodily frame does not stand up to the medicine or else, because of our mortal condition, it cannot ward off everything at once...

30. Finally, no baptised person, no Christian may celebrate this rite, but only pagans, whose cult it is, may perform it. It is appropriate for me to declare that these rites are without doubt harmful and deadly for Christians. What do you have to accuse me of if I declare that what is scarcely inimical to those who profess it should be removed from those who have fellowship with the profession of Christianity? Let me for my part absolve my conscience; let those people who have neglected to obey just warnings look to it.

“31. I have no doubt that my predecessors perhaps did this and tried in the presence of the emperors to have these rites removed, and because it is not agreed that they were listened to, while these ills endure up to today, so the imperial power itself failed, therefore too the name of Rome, in that the Lupercalia were not removed, even when it came down to an extreme situation. And so I now urge you to remove these rites, which I know have availed nothing, while I declare that they have instead been harmful, since they are opposed to the true religion.

“32. Finally, ...I do not dare to accuse my predecessors of negligence because I believe rather that they probably tried to remove this crookedness, and that there were certain reasons and opposing wills that obstructed their intentions...”

### *Pagan Temples in Rome in the 6th and 7th centuries*

Even though in the 6th century, the Holy Emperor Justinian the Great's (d. 565) laws upheld a Catholic nation, it was not a totally Catholic nation, as some of the laws could not be enforced. For example, in the 6th century, as testified by St. Gregory of Tours, there were still pagan temples in Rome:

*History of the Franks*, by St. Gregory of Tours, Book 10: Book 10: “1. In the fifteenth year of king Childebert [d. 558] our deacon returned from Rome with relics of the saints and related that in the ninth month of the previous year the river Tiber so flooded the city of Rome that ancient temples were destroyed and the store-houses of the church were overturned and several thousand measures of wheat in them were lost. A multitude of snakes, among them a great serpent like a big log, passed down into the sea by the channel of this river, but these creatures were smothered among the rough and salty waves of the sea and cast up on the shore. Immediately after came the plague which they call inguinaria. It came in the middle of the eleventh month and according to what is read in the prophet Ezekiel: ‘Begin at my sanctuary,’ it first of all smote the Pope Pelagius [d. 590] and soon killed him. Upon his death a great mortality among the people followed from this disease. But since the Church of God could not be without a head all the people chose Gregory the deacon [Pope St. Gregory the Great].”

And in the 7th century, there were not enough Catholics compared to the pagans to make Rome and Italy a totally Catholic nation, as the pagan Pantheon with its pagan and immodest

images was still standing at that time. It was Pope St. Boniface IV in 609 who converted it to a Catholic church:

Nominal Catholic Encyclopedia, Pope St. Boniface IV: “Boniface obtained leave from the Emperor Phocas to convert the Pantheon into a Christian Church, and on 13 May, 609 (?) the temple erected by Agrippa to Jupiter the Avenger, to Venus, and to Mars was consecrated by the pope to the Virgin Mary and all the Martyrs. (Hence the title S. Maria Rotunda.) It was the first instance at Rome of the transformation of a pagan temple into a place of Christian worship.”

And it may still have not been a totally Catholic nation after that. A study needs to be made to see when and if there was a totally Catholic nation.

One thing the conversion of the Pantheon from a pagan temple to a Christian church proves is the dogma that Catholic places must not be desecrated with false gods, idols, and immodest images, as all these images were removed from the Pantheon and replaced with Catholic images and relics. The opposite was done during the Renaissance era when idols and pagan gods and immodest images were placed in Catholic places.<sup>13</sup>

*Heresies and heretics were also prevalent to one degree or another*

What has been said about pagan religions in Catholic nations, the same applies to the heretics and their sects and churches in Catholic nations. As their numbers grew, it became harder to eradicate them or, at least, remove them from public and only allow them to practice their false religions in private. In some cases, the heretics (such as the Arians) took over Catholic nations and turned them into non-Catholic nations (such as Arian nations).

### **The Culpability of Catholic Rulers who allowed pagan religions and their images in public**

To determine if a Catholic ruler is guilty for allowing pagan religions and their immodest images in public, these conditions must be met:

- It has to be a totally Catholic nation, thus in law and in deeds. For example, in the days of Emperor Justinian I in the 6th century and Pope Boniface IV in the 7th century when he converted the pagan Pantheon into a Catholic church, the empire was not a totally Catholic empire, as some paganism was allowed in public, to one degree or another.
- The pagan or immodest images have no a historical purpose.
- The pagan images and immodest images have a historical purpose, but the immodest images were not covered.

Keep in mind that the immodest images may have been covered in their day but uncovered later on. For example, this happened during the Renaissance era when immodest images were covered (called the fig-leaf campaign) and then uncovered later on. The Arch of Constantine was in ruin and covered. It was restored in the days of apostate Antipope Clement XII in the 18th century, restored again in the 1990's, and once again in the early 21st century:

*History of the City of Rome in the Middle Ages*, by Gregorovius, 1900: “Between the Palatine and Colosseum some houses were still seen. The triumphal arch of Constantine—preserved as if by miracle—was smothered in ruins, and houses had been built against it. Around it the ground was covered by natural vegetation as far

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<sup>13</sup> See my book [The Desecration of Catholic Places](#).

as the Coelian and the Colosseum, round which lay fallen masses of wall resembling rocks.”<sup>14</sup>

Nominal *Catholic Encyclopedia*, Pope Clement XII: “He began the majestic façade of St. John Lateran and built in that basilica the magnificent chapel of St. Andrew Corsini. He restored the Arch of Constantine...”

*AI Overview*: “The Arch of Constantine was erected in 315...In the 18th century and again in the 1990s, it underwent major renovations. The arch has also been restored in the early 21st century, and is still standing today.”

A study would need to be made to see what the arch looked like before the restorations, especially to see if the immodest images were covered up.

That is not to say that there could not be any culpability in a non-totally Catholic nation; that is, a nation that is Catholic in law but not in all its deeds. If it was in the means of a Catholic ruler to remove pagan religions and their pagan and immodest images in public (except for the exceptions mentioned above<sup>15</sup>), *and* it was practical and prudent for him to do so, and he did not, then he would be guilty of a sin negligence and scandal. But it would not be a sin against the faith, as long as he wanted to remove them but did not think it practical or prudent to do so at the time. It is not easy to judge such cases unless one does a thorough study of conditions at that time.<sup>16</sup>

Pope St. Gelasius’ *Tract 6* against the pagan practice of Lupercalia is a good example of the difficulty involved regarding this. Take special note that the popes in those days did not have power in the secular arena. The Catholic Emperors or other secular Catholic rulers did. For fuller text and a commentary on it, see in this article, [In the days of Pope St. Gelasius I \[d. 496\], the pagan Lupercalia was prevalent](#), p. 10. I will quote a few here:

The Commentary:

“[p. 210] Gelasius is forced to admit that his predecessors had let the rites continue (ch. 29), as for example during the ‘civil frenzy’ of Emperor Anthemius and his rival, the general Ricimer, but he defends them by saying they had perhaps tried to get rid of the superstition but had been forced to prioritise their efforts against greater threats to people’s spiritual health.”

“[p. 211, Footnote 10] Salzman, *On Roman Time*, p. 241; CF. Duval, ‘Des Luercalies’, p. 244 who makes it clear that the pope was fighting a losing battle in that the pagan were resolved to proceed against his interdiction, and he could only try to dissuade Christians in Rome from participating also.”

The Letter:

“29. But you say that the Lupercalia existed also in Christian times. But those other rites were also celebrated for a long period, during Christian times too. Is it because they were not abolished under the first leaders of the Christian religion that they should not have been removed at all by their successors? Many are the things which, harmful or worthless, have been suppressed by individual pontiffs at different times; for medicine does not cure all bodily frailties at the same time, but what it perceives threatens with greater danger, lest the bodily frame does not stand

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<sup>14</sup> v. 7, pt. 2, c. 7, sec. 5, p. 770.

<sup>15</sup> See in this article [Circumstances in which a Catholic ruler can allow pagan images in public in a totally Catholic nation](#), p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> We have a saying regarding American Football: “It is easy to be a Monday morning quarterback.” That means it is easy to judge what could have been done or should have been done after the game. But unless you were playing in the game itself, you would not know for sure (in many cases but not all) if something could have been done or should have been done.



up to the medicine or else, because of our mortal condition, it cannot ward off everything at once...

“30. Finally, no baptised person, no Christian may celebrate this rite, but only pagans, whose cult it is, may perform it. It is appropriate for me to declare that these rites are without doubt harmful and deadly for Christians. What do you have to accuse me of if I declare that what is scarcely inimical to those who profess it should be removed from those who have fellowship with the profession of Christianity? [major excommunication] Let me for my part absolve my conscience; let those people who have neglected to obey just warnings look to it.

“31. I have no doubt that my predecessors [popes] perhaps did this and tried in the presence of the emperors to have these rites removed, and because it is not agreed that they were listened to, while these ills endure up to today, so the imperial power itself failed, therefore too the name of Rome, in that the Lupercalia were not removed, even when it came down to an extreme situation. And so I now urge you to remove these rites, which I know have availed nothing, while I declare that they have instead been harmful, since they are opposed to the true religion.”

In all these cases, we are not talking about the desecration of Catholic places (such as Catholic churches, monasteries, convents, and Catholic homes). We are talking about places in a Catholic nation that are not Catholic places.

It is always a sin against the Catholic faith to desecrate a Catholic place with images that glorify false gods, idols, false religions, and heretics. Hence there is no excuse for secular Catholic rulers or popes who promote it, or allow it, or do not condemn it, or have the power to remove it but do not. They would be guilty of a mortal sin against faith and thus would not be Catholic.

Keep in mind that some Catholic places were taken over by pagans or heretics and then desecrated and turned into a pagan place (such as a pagan temple) or heretical place (such as an Arian church). And in some cases, the pagans or heretics took over the nation.

Lastly, when God punishes a Catholic nation or a nation that favors the Catholic religion (as you read above [Pagan Temples in Rome in the 6th and 7th centuries](#), p. 12), then either the Catholic secular ruler is guilty, or the pope is guilty, or the majority of the citizens are guilty, or two or all three guilty.

In the case of the Catholic secular ruler or the pope, he would be guilty of sins of gross negligence for not doing what was within his power and prudent to do in making or enforcing laws to limit or remove public displays of paganism or heresy. But they would be guilty of sins against the faith if they promoted these things and thus had no intention of limiting or removing them in public when it was possible and when they believed it was prudent to do so.

Sometimes the Catholic secular ruler is guilty but not the pope (such as when the pope has no power in the secular nation).

Sometimes the pope is guilty but not the secular Catholic ruler, such as when the pope does not back up the Catholic secular ruler's good and prudent laws or enforcement of them in limiting or removing paganism or heresy in the public domain.

And sometimes the Catholic secular ruler and the pope are not guilty but the majority of the citizens are. Hence they are overwhelmed by paganism or heresy among their citizens. For example, in the days of the holy King Josias, the majority of the Israelite citizens were guilty but not the king. So God took King Josias by allowing him to die in battle so he would not be around to see the punishment God was going to inflict on the people. It is also possible that the chief religious rulers (such as Helcias) also were not guilty but only the majority of the people:

“So Helcias the priest, and Ahicam, and Achobor, and Saphan, and Asaia went to Holda the prophetess, the wife of Sellum the son of Thecua, the son of Araas, keeper of the wardrobe who dwelt in Jerusalem in the Second. And they spoke to

her. And she said to them: Thus saith the Lord the God of Israel: Tell the man that sent you to me: Thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will bring evils upon this place and upon the inhabitants thereof, all the words of the law which the king of Juda hath read, because they have forsaken me and have sacrificed to strange gods, provoking me by all the works of their hands. Therefore, my indignation shall be kindled against this place and shall not be quenched. But to the king of Juda who sent you to consult the Lord, thus shall you say: Thus saith the Lord, the God of Israel: For as much as thou hast heard the words of the book, and thy heart hath been moved to fear, and thou hast humbled thyself before the Lord, hearing the words against this place and the inhabitants thereof, to wit, that they should become a wonder and a curse, and thou hast rent thy garments and wept before me, I also have heard thee, saith the Lord. 20 Therefore, I will gather thee to thy fathers and thou shalt be gathered to thy sepulchre in peace that thy eyes may not see all the evils which I will bring upon this place.” (4 Ki. 22:14-20)

“He pleased God and was beloved, and living among sinners he was translated. He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul.” (Wis. 4:10-11)

“The just perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and men of mercy are taken away, because there is none that understandeth; for the just man is taken away from before the face of evil. Let peace come, let him rest in his bed that hath walked in his uprightness.” (Isa. 57:1-2)

*For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men*

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