

Constant and Universal Theological Opinion

Commentary by *Brothers Michael & Peter Dimond*

Some have sent us e-mails about a new *sede vacantist* blog. We want to make it very clear to our readers that the people who run this blog are adamantly in favor of “baptism of desire” and groups which believe that souls can be saved false religions, such as the SSPV and CMRI. It’s a pro-salvation-for-non-Catholics blog, whether they want to admit it or not. So while the organizers may allow a few comments from individuals who don’t believe in baptism of desire, the blog is dominated by individuals who won’t even look at the arguments against baptism of desire, and aren’t bothered by the fact that the priests they consider Catholic believe that Jews and Muslims can be united to the Church while in false religions.

One of the people in charge of the blog is John Lane, son-in-law of Patrick Henry Omlor, who is viciously in favor of baptism of desire and whom some *wrongly* consider to be a staunch *sede vacantist*.

We think it important for our readers to know that John Lane, while he claims to be a *sede vacantist*, is still a benefactor of the Society of St. Pius X [SSPX] (as confirmed in an e-mail exchange with one of us). This is amazing, actually; for he has claimed to be a staunch *sede vacantist* for a very long time now.

But he is so liberal and pathetically weak on the issue that after about a decade of purporting to be a leading *sede vacantist*, and criticizing the position of those who adhere to the Vatican II Antipopes, he still financially supports a group which recognizes those Antipopes and which, on top of it all, believes in salvation for Buddhists, Jews, Muslims, etc!

So, whenever he writes things against the SSPX’s position, he simply condemns himself out of his own mouth, since he financially assists them in their apostolate – an apostolate which not only isn’t *sede vacantist*, but attacks *sede vacantism*!

He also recently said that “Fr.” Gruner is “evidently of good will.” Besides being a pathetic liberal who supports the SSPX, we have found Lane to be intellectually dishonest. He accuses others of not answering questions when they do, and when confronted with points which refute his position he ignores them. To show how viciously opposed to water baptism Lane is, he describes the position of those who don’t believe in baptism of desire as “*heterodox belief*.” Meanwhile, he funds those in communion with Benedict XVI and who believe in salvation for members of false religions. What a blinded heretic.

On the blog with which he is affiliated, one discovers again that these baptism of desire advocates – if you can even call them that, since almost none of them even believe that one must desire baptism for salvation – are just followers of man. Theirs is a religion of man, in which fallible theologians are the final word, not the infallible Chair of St. Peter. They repeatedly bring up the argument that, according to Pope Pius IX in *Tuas Libenter*, Catholics are bound to follow the teaching of theologians on baptism of

desire. This, of course, is not true. This is covered in detail in Section 19 of our book.

Pope Pius IX taught, rather, that Catholics are bound to the *universal and constant teaching* of theologians. Pope Pius IX, *Tuas Libenter*, Letter to the Archbishop of Munich, Dec. 21, 1863:

“For, even if it were a matter concerning that subjection which is to be manifested by an act of divine faith, nevertheless, it would not have to be limited to those matters which have been defined by express decrees of ecumenical Councils, or of the Roman Pontiffs and of this See, but would have to be extended also to those matters which are handed down as divinely revealed by the ordinary teaching power of the whole Church spread throughout the world, and therefore, by universal and constant [*universali et constanti*] consent are held by Catholic theologians to belong to faith.”

The requirement stipulated by Pope Pius IX that the theologians must be in “universal and constant agreement” for their teaching to be binding is ignored by the baptism of desire bloggers and by Fr. Cekada in an article. Fr. Cekada says that Catholics are bound to follow the “common consensus” of theologians, which is false. Cekada conveniently ignored the “universal and constant” part of the requirement. If Cekada had faithfully applied the “universal and constant” part of it throughout his article, the attentive and sincere reader would easily have picked up the flaw in his feeble argumentation. If something has been held by theologians “universally and constantly,” then it is clearly a matter that pertains to Catholic Faith which Catholics must accept.

Is baptism of desire something that has been held by “universal and constant” agreement? Most certainly not, as our book takes the time to show. For example: St. Ambrose, *De mysteriis*, 390-391 A.D.:

“You have read, therefore, that the three witnesses in Baptism are one: water, blood, and the spirit; and if you withdraw any one of these, the Sacrament of Baptism is not valid. For what is water without the cross of Christ? A common element without any sacramental effect. Nor on the other hand is there any mystery of regeneration without water: for ‘unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.’ [John 3:5] Even a *catechumen* believes in the cross of the Lord Jesus, by which also he is signed; but, unless he be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, *he cannot receive the remission of sins* nor be recipient of the gift of spiritual grace.”

St. Gregory Nazianz, 381 AD:

“Of those who fail to be baptized some are utterly animal and bestial, according to whether they are foolish or wicked. This, I think, they must add to their other sins, that they have no reverence for this gift, but regard it as any other gift, to be accepted if given them, or neglected if not given them. Others know and honor the gift; but they delay, some out of carelessness, some because of insatiable desire. Still others are not able to receive it, perhaps because of infancy, or some perfectly involuntary circumstance which prevents them from receiving the gift, even if they desire it . . .

“If you were able to judge a man who intends to commit murder, solely by his

intention and without any act of murder, then you could likewise reckon as baptized one who desired Baptism, without having received Baptism. But, since you cannot do the former, how can you do the latter? I cannot see it. If you prefer, we will put it like this: if in your opinion desire has equal power with actual Baptism, then make the same judgment in regard to glory. You will then be satisfied to long for glory, as if that longing itself were glory. Do you suffer any damage by not attaining the actual glory, as long as you have a desire for it?"

St. John Chrysostom, *Hom. in Io. 25, 3*:

"For the Catechumen is a stranger to the Faithful... One has Christ for his King; the other sin and the devil; the food of one is Christ, of the other, that meat which decays and perishes . . . Since then we have nothing in common, in what, tell me, shall we hold communion? . . . Let us then give diligence that we may become citizens of the city above . . . for if it should come to pass (which God forbid!) that through the sudden arrival of death we depart hence uninitiated, though we have ten thousand virtues, our portion will be none other than hell, and the venomous worm, and fire unquenchable, and bonds indissoluble."

Based on these facts alone, one can see right away that baptism of desire has not been held by "universal and constant agreement." Thus, the argument that baptism of desire advocates continually make from Pius IX and the "consent of theologians" is utterly refuted by these facts. Nevertheless, will they continue to use it? Alas, they will.

Much more can be found in Section 19 of the book, but we will add that on the aforementioned blog, Lane, attempting to respond, quoted another part of *Tuas Libenter*:

"But, since it is a matter of that subjection by which in conscience all those Catholics are bound who work in the speculative sciences, in order that they may bring new advantage to the Church by their writings, on that account, then, the men of that same convention should realize that it is not sufficient for learned Catholics to accept and revere the aforesaid dogmas of the Church, but that it is also necessary to subject themselves to the decisions pertaining to doctrine which are issued by the Pontifical Congregations, and also to those forms of doctrine which are held by the common and constant consent of Catholics as theological truths and conclusions, so certain that opinions opposed to these same forms of doctrine, although they cannot be called heretical, nevertheless deserve some theological censure." *Tuas Libenter* (1863), DZ 1684.

"What ever happened to this quote?," Lane asks. The obvious response is, first, that Pius IX is speaking in the context of that which he already stipulated, namely, that the matter must be held by "universal and constant" agreement. Second, in this quote Pius IX says the matter must be held by the "constant" consent of Catholics. As we just saw, baptism of desire doesn't fit into this category. Thus, his argument is refuted.

In fact, it's the teaching on the absolute necessity of water baptism WITHOUT EXCEPTION that fits into the category of a teaching held universally and constantly by Catholic theologians, even by those who sometimes contradicted it! For instance, theologian Ludwig Ott is forced to admit the following based on the overwhelming

testimony of Catholic Tradition and defined dogma.

Dr. Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, The Necessity of Baptism, p. 354:

“1. Necessity of Baptism for Salvation – Baptism by water (Baptismus Fluminis) is, since the promulgation of the Gospel, necessary for all men without exception, for salvation. (*de fide.*)”

This *de fide* (i. e., of the Faith) teaching of the Catholic Church on the absolute necessity of water baptism for all without exception for salvation is precisely why Catholics don't accept the false doctrine of “baptism of desire.”

This shows us that the teaching on the absolute necessity of water baptism is so universally taught by theologians that *even those who contradict it*, such as Dr. Ott (who believes in salvation outside the Church and baptism of desire), are forced to bear witness to it.

Please note: the issue to be considered in regard to Pius IX's teaching is not whether fallible texts or theologians always remain consistent; rather, it's the question of what is the *universal and constant teaching* of theologians on the necessity of baptism.

Here's another testimony from two who believe in baptism of desire, yet are forced to bear witness to the *universal and constant* rule of Faith on the issue. Fr. Francis Spirago and Fr. Richard Clarke, *The Catechism Explained*, 1899, Baptism:

“3. BAPTISM IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY TO SALVATION. Hence children who die unbaptized cannot enter heaven. Our Lord says: ‘Unless a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven’ (John 3:5). He makes no exception, not even in the case of infants. . . Baptism is no less indispensable in the spiritual order than water in the natural order . . .”

Catechism of the Council of Trent, BAPTISM MADE OBLIGATORY AFTER CHRIST'S RESURRECTION, p. 171:

“Holy writers are unanimous in saying that after the Resurrection of our Lord, when He gave His Apostles the command to go and teach all nations: *baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, the law of Baptism became obligatory on all who were to be saved.”

Notice here that the *Catechism of Trent* is inculcating that the absolute necessity of water baptism for salvation is the unanimous teaching of theologians. As we can see, it's not baptism of desire that is the unanimous teaching of theologians; it's just the opposite: *the absolute necessity of water baptism*.

So, don't be fooled by the baptism of desire bloggers who pervert the teaching of *Tuas Libenter*, and would have you believe in a religion of man which replaces the infallible Chair of St. Peter with the fallible teaching of men. There is much more on this point in the book.