



Mission and Logo (Explained.) Since this is the first year of the “Mystical Rose”, it would seem only prudent that we explain why we call our newsletter, “Mystical Rose”, and what is the meaning of the Logo at the top Of the first page. The title, “Mystical Rose”, is taken from the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary. (cont.on page 2)

February 10, 2007

Volume III

### *A Catholic Mind: Prelude.*

Writing an article about the meaning and the history of the season of Lent seemed like a good idea. However, how can we understand the seasons of the Church year, if we do not understand the mind of the Catholic Church?

We know, by God’s promise, that the Holy Ghost will always guide the Catholic Church. He will never allow the Church to teach or embrace error. We know this because we know that God is eternally perfect. Jesus said: “Heaven and earth will pass away, but My Words will never pass away.” Therefore, the Mystical Body of Christ, like Her Divine Spouse, will consistently teach and lead God’s children, the same way it has always done for the past two thousand years. On our part, we need a better understanding of the Church, or if you will, the mind of the Church, to be able to accept it’s authority and direction. To that end, we present this article entitled, “A Catholic Mind.”

### *Article.*

We have a Catholic Will if we do what the Church says: but we have a Catholic Mind only when we see what the Church sees—that is to say, when we see the same universe that the Church sees, and consciously live in it.

In that sense, not many of us have Catholic minds. When we look at the universe, we see pretty well what other people see, with a few extra features taught us by our religion. For the most part, the same influences that form their minds, form ours—the same newspapers, periodicals, best sellers, films, radio and television programs, etc. So that we have not so much Catholic minds, as worldly minds with Catholic patches. We wear our Catholicism like a badge on the lapel of the same kind of suit that everyone else is wearing.

If that seems to sweeping a statement, consider what the Church does see when She looks at the universe. She sees all things held in existence, from moment to moment, by the continuing Will of God. Do we? It is not merely a

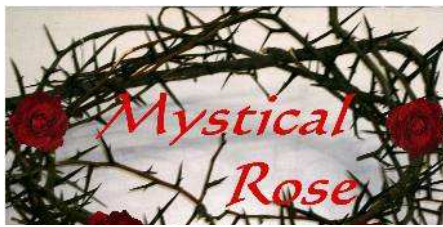
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The Logo of the crown of thorns symbolizes her suffering for her children. The seven roses affixed to the crown of thorns represents the Seven Sorrows of Our Lady.

We dedicate this work to Our Blessed Lady and we ask her to help and guide us, so that we may be able to serve God's people by printing material that will be spiritually edifying; bringing those who read it to a better knowledge of their faith; a better understanding of what God requires of them in order to achieve salvation; and a more sincere desire to serve the Living God to the best of their ability.

Information about Catholicism is so very necessary in order to live a good life. The world in which we live today is in dire need of that information, in order to save mankind from its own self-imposed ignorance. We hope our newsletter will help to inform.

### *Article (cont.)*

matter of knowing that this is so. Do we see it so? If we do not, then we aren't mentally living in the same world as the Catholic Church.

What's more, we aren't seeing things as they are, for that is how they are. If you saw a coat hanging on a wall and didn't realize that it was on a hook, you would not be living in the real world, but in some fantasy world of your own in which coats defied the laws of gravity, and hung on the wall by their own power. If we see things, (men, or ourselves, for example), and do not, in the same act, see God holding them in existence, then equally, we are living in a fantasy world, not the real world. Seeing all things in God is not a matter of sanctity, but sanity, because God is everywhere and all things are upheld by Him. To overlook His presence is not simply to be irreligious: it is a kind of insanity.

That, of course, is only the beginning of what the Church sees when She looks at the universe. Her values and judgments similarly take account of all the relevant factors, not only of those that are immediately under Her nose. She never sees a man without in the same act seeing Adam's sin, and the Redemption, and the Judgment. In the matter of human conduct, it is a mere matter of course that the Will of God is the only sane rule to act by, since it is the sole reason why we exist at all: sin, however, pleasant at the moment, is a kind of imbecility all the same, since clearly we cannot hope to gain anything by running counter to the Divine Will, which alone holds us in being.

Now it would be plainly frivolous for most of us to pretend we see things like that. We know a lot about the Blessed Trinity, and the Incarnation, and Infinity, and Eternity, and our creation from nothing; but much in the same manner that we know that the sum of the angles of a triangle is two right angles, or that President Washington's first name was George. They are things that we know, but we have not got them into our "mental landscape": they are extras, immeasurably more important to us than such mathematical or historical "bits and pieces". We do not see them as a matter of course; we see them only when we avert to them.

The test of anyone's mind is what is in his "mental landscape". And it is not enough that we should see the same things as other people, plus the things the Church teaches us. The things that we, and they, see will not look the same, or be the same, because what the Church teaches, affects even the things already in our "mental landscape"; the things of ordinary experience. It's like a physical landscape at sunrise: it isn't that you see the things you saw before, and now find yourself seeing the sun as well. You see everything, in

## *Article (cont.)*

*We have a Catholic Mind only when we see what the Church sees, that is, when we see the same universe that the Church sees, and strive to live in it.*

the landscape, sun-bathed.

The upshot is that the Church is living in one world (which happens to be the real world), and we are living in another. One practical consequence is that the laws of conduct the Church promulgates, moral laws generally, are the nature and obvious laws of the real world and would seem so to us if we were mentally living in it; whereas in the twilight world we are living in, they often seem odd and unreasonable, which does not make obedience any easier. Our problem is to have our minds “master” the Church’s landscape, habituate ourselves to it, move about easily in it, beat home in it. We must become fully conscious citizens of the real world. When we thus have a Catholic mind, we can apply it to special problems. We are not likely to cast full light upon special problems while we, ourselves, are living in the half-dark world of unreality.

Similarly, we are not likely to truly understand and appreciate the mind of the Church in regards to: the seasons of the Church year, and other functions, and Liturgies of the Church, unless we are of the same mind as the Church, which is a Catholic Mind. Pray to God that by His grace, we will be able to make the transition to the real world, which is the Catholic mental landscape, and remain there, forever. Amen.

(Taken from “*The Church and it’s People*”. Published by: *The Catechetical Guild Educational Society*, St. Paul, Minn., *Nihil Obstat, and Imprimatur, August 5, 1952.*)

### *Sermon from Fr. Martin Stepanich O.F.M. : Prayer, Part III “The Lord’s Prayer”*

In the Gospel of St. Luke, (11:1ff), we read that the disciples of Jesus observed closely how He prayed and that they were understandably very much impressed. One day, after Jesus had finished praying, one of His disciples approached Him with the humble request, “Lord, teach us to pray...” This disciple was evidently asking for the benefit of others beside himself.

He expressed his desire to the divine Expert and Jesus, the incomparable Master of prayer, gave him the sublime Lord’s Prayer, the Our Father. The only thing about it is that St. Luke’s version of the Our Father is a bit shorter than the one we know.

The Our Father that we always recite, except for a couple of different words, is given in the Gospel of St. Matthew. It was during the immortal Sermon on the Mount. (Mt:5-7) that the Divine Master declared, while speaking of prayer, “In this manner, therefore, shall you pray: ‘ Our Father, Who art in heaven...but deliver us from evil.’” (Mt.6: 9-`13).

## *Sermon (cont.)*

*Jesus did say that we should “pray always”, which means that we should pray much, frequently, but at the same time, it is important that we should pray to God with the greatest reverence and devotion.*

It is interesting to note that the Our Father in the Protestant Standard Bible, issued some ten years ago, (Jan., 1951), ends in the same way ours does. In other words, it no longer has that old controversial ending, “For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory,” which is given in the old King James Bible. However, it is true that many Protestants, possibly most of them, still use the King James Bible and still recite the Our Father with its special ending.

It should be clear to anyone that there is nothing contrary to the Faith in the words, “For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory.” The thoughts are sublime, there is no doubt. But there is a question here of historical truth, not dogmatic truth. Did Jesus really say those words as an ending for the Our Father? Scripture Scholars, both Catholic and Protestant, have long known that this ending is not in the critical edition of the Greek New Testament. (Cf. CBE, Nt. Pg.396).

In teaching us the Lord’s Prayer, Our Savior gives us the perfect pattern of prayer. He indicates what kind of thoughts we should have at prayer, how we should develop our thoughts, and how we should arrange them in our minds.

Jesus begins the Lord’s Prayer with respectful words of praise addressed to the Father in heaven, Who is thereby acknowledged as the Supreme Lord of us all. The greatness of His Holy Name is recognized. His interests are to be promoted hereon earth, namely, the interests of His Kingdom. And perhaps the key idea of the whole Our Father, which should have a special impact on us, is found in the words, “Thy Will be done...” It is only then that it mentions our own needs.

All these thoughts of the Lord’s Prayer exalt God and they, at the same time, tend to keep us humble and respectful before God. We want to speak to Him with the greatest reverence. We dare not exalt ourselves when we pray to God. And, finally, let it be noted that the Our Father is a brief prayer. It says much in comparatively few words and it says it well. It is a model of simplicity and brevity, which actually adds to its sublimity and beauty.

Just before giving us the Our Father, the Divine Master had advised, “In praying, do not multiply words as the Gentiles do: for they think that by saying a great deal, they will be heard. So do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.” (Mt. 6:7) In other words, Jesus advises us to concentrate on praying well.

If we find ourselves saying so many different kinds of sets of prayers, that we rush to get them all said and can no longer concentrate on what we are saying, it would be advisable to cut down, a little bit at least, on such prayers, so as to say them more reverently and with more devotion.

Jesus did say that we should “pray always.” (Luke. 18:1), which means that we should pray much and pray frequently. But, at the same time, it is important that we pray to God with the greatest reverence and devotion.

(Given in Chicago, Illinois on December 22, 1963)

## *Catechism : "What is Man ?"*

Man is a creature of God; he has a body and a soul, the latter made to God's image and likeness in that it is a spirit, immortal, and endowed with intelligence and free will.

Soul is not just another word for spirit. Animals have souls, but they are not spirits. Only man's soul is a spirit; in man is the only kind of spirit that is a soul.

Soul is defined as the principle of life in a living body. Angels, therefore, are not souls; they do not animate a body. But animals have souls, which, however, are material. The human person is a union of soul and body. Although the soul is a spiritual substance, capable of existing by itself, (as we know from revelation that it does between life and the resurrection of the body ), it has a natural aptitude and even a need to exist in a body.

In this life, the body cannot perform a single action independently of the soul, nor can the soul independently of the body. Souls are not inherited. Each is a distinct creation of God and is united with the body at the time of conception.

*"Only man's soul is a spirit. Soul is defined as the principle of life in a body. Angels do not have souls, they do not animate a body. Animals have souls, but they are material, not spiritual."*

### *"Man has a Spiritual Soul."*

There is an obvious difference between a living human body and a corpse. That difference is the soul. It is the soul, which prevents a living body from doing the only thing a corpse can do—return to dust. There must be a principle of operation behind every activity. In man there must be a principle, which thinks and wills. That principle cannot be a mere chemical, otherwise doctors and scientists would be able to discover it. Yet it is something—a spiritual soul which is beyond the reach of chemical analysis.

A material principle could not have spiritual operations; therefore, it cannot be material. All day long we make statements, which show that we have abstract or universal concepts; for example, the dog is a noble animal. Making such a statement, we do not think of a particular dog of definite shape or color or size or breed, but we have taken, so to speak, the essence "dog" and are thinking of a thing we cannot contact with our senses. The idea in our minds is a spiritual one.

Similarly with our anticipation of the future, the consideration of possibilities, the logical deduction of conclusions from our premises, notions of spiritual beings, and so on.

John thinks. He can reflect on his thinking. He can apprehend himself (who is reflecting) to be identical with the being who thinks. There is complete and perfect reflection of a man back upon himself, a process quite impossible to matter; for example, a piano cannot play itself, an eye cannot see itself, nor can a knife cut itself.



## *Catechism (cont.)*

### *“The Soul is Immortal.”*

Therefore, man’s soul is spiritual. It is not made up of parts, which are distinct and separable. Hence, even though the body dies, the soul cannot corrupt in itself or be killed through the agency of any creature. The only way it could cease to exist would be annihilation by God—and that would be against His infinite wisdom, goodness, and justice.

Again, all men desire perfect happiness. If that desire could only end in frustration, human nature would have been created defective by God. His wisdom and justice demand that a desire springing from human nature itself must be capable of attainment. In other words, perfect happiness is the destiny God has appointed for man; it must, therefore, be attainable by all who act in conformity with the Divine Will. But perfect happiness cannot be attained in this world, and so there must be a future life in which it is to be found.

Another proof that the soul is immortal is to be found in the conviction that God’s justice demands a future life in which the obvious inequalities of this life will be redressed. Conscience implies the existence of a Supreme Legislator Who will recompense the good and punish the wicked. Yet during this life the wicked prosper only too often while the good suffer. To suggest that death is the end of everything is an affront to the infinite justice of God.

### *“What does Scripture say ?”*

Scripture is full of proof that the soul of man is spiritual and immortal. “The Lord God formed man of the slime of the earth and breathed into his face the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” (Gen. 2:7).

“The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torments of death shall not touch them. In the sight of the unwise they seemed to die...but they are in peace...their hope is full of immortality.” (Wisdom 3:1-4).

The bringing of the dead to life, for example, by Elias and Eliseus, would be impossible unless the soul had remained in existence so as to be able to return to the body. Also, it is clear from many texts in the Old Testament that the Jews always believed in the after life. They had to be forbidden, for instance, to try to get in touch with the spirits of the dead.

There is a famous incident, too, of the prophet Ezechieh’s vision: “(The Lord) set me down in the midst of a plain that was full of bones...and I prophesied as He had commanded me; and the spirit came unto them, and they lived.”

*“Therefore, man’s soul is spiritual. It is not made up of parts which are distinct and separable. Hence, even though the body dies, the soul cannot corrupt in itself or be killed through the agency of any creature.”*



## *Catechism (cont.)*

The Book of Proverbs speaks of the after life of the good and wicked: “The wicked man shall be driven out in his wickedness; but the just hath hope in his death.” The classic text is from the second Book of Machabees: “It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from their sins.” (12:46).

In the New Testament the soul is always considered as distinct from the body and destined to live on after the body’s death: “There is no need to fear those who kill the body, but have no means of killing the soul.” (Matt. 10:28).

“Who else can know a man’s thoughts, except the man’s own spirit that is within him.” ( I Cor.2:11).

Many times Our Lord speaks of the after life. Here are some examples:

“ Work to earn food which affords, continually, eternal life, such food as the Son of Man will give you.” (Jn. 6:27)

“ If anyone eats of this bread he shall live forever.” (Jn. 6:52)

“God so loved the world, that He gave up His only-begotten Son, so that those who believe in Him may not perish, but have eternal life.” (Jn. 3:16)

“This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise.” ( Luke 23:43)

In a word, Our Lord’s whole mission, His entire life, His suffering, and His death are built upon the belief in eternal life. The latter, He emphasizes, is the real, the true, the strong, the beautiful life.

How magnificently St. Paul writes on the subject: “The trumpets will sound, and the dead will rise again, free from corruption, and we shall find ourselves changed; this corruptible nature of ours must be clothed with incorruptible life, this mortal nature with immortality.” (I Cor. 15:52)

How right, then, was Voltaire in saying; “Materialism is the most enormous of all absurdities, and the greatest folly that has entered the human mind.”

How right our simple catechism which bids our little children respect: “ I must take more care of my soul; for Christ has said, ‘ What does it profit a man if he gain the whole world and suffer the loss of his soul?’”

On one occasion a young man came to visit St. Philip Neri and informed him that he was to take an examination. “And after the exam?” asked the Saint. “A degree, I hope.” “And after the degree?” “I want to be a lawyer.” “ And then?” “I suppose I shall have to work hard to make some money to settle down in life.” “and then?” “ Oh, I may end up as a judge.” “And then?” “At any rate, I shall have a pension on which to retire.” “And then?” “I suppose I shall have to die someday.” “And then?”

Is it any wonder that that young man later threw up his worldly career to devote himself to the service of God in St. Phillip’s own Congregation of the Oratory?

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## *Catechism (cont.)*

During life we are engaged in making our souls ready for eternity. We cannot escape from that task even for a second. Just as a great masterpiece of painting is made up of a multitude of little strokes, so the state of our soul for all eternity will be the result of every thought, word, deed, and omission during life.

### *“ We are Free.”*

The very fact that good is to be rewarded and evil punished implies that men are free to do good and avoid evil. Every man will reap what he sows. He is free during life to identify himself with either good or evil: the choice rests with him.

Before acting, he deliberates; in acting, he chooses. But deliberation and choice testify to man's freedom. It is he who determines which group of motives is to prevail and he knows that he is not merely passively swayed by these motives. He is conscious, too, that he does not let himself drift in the direction of temptation. When he has chosen. He knows he could have chosen otherwise.

Duty, law, obligation, responsibility, punishment, reward, merit—all these and many other words imply moral liberty. The universal consent of mankind expressed in the laws, literature, and language of all ages and nations affirms that real obligations do exist. The lunatic is carefully distinguished from the criminal.

The internal feelings of self-approbation after good actions and remorse after evil ones implies realization of one's personal responsibility.

Character due to heredity and environment and the circumstances of the moment obviously count tremendously in a person's conduct, but they do not absolutely control the actions of man's will. It is one thing to be influenced by a motive; it is quite another thing to be inexorably determined by it.

That man is personally responsible for his thoughts, words, and deeds is well expressed throughout literature and history.

### *“What does life mean?”*

Every man, whether he likes it or not, must live on after death, for eternity. His eternal destiny depends on his choice. It may be an eternity of life, in the vision of God; or an eternity of death, in enmity with God.

“Master, what must I do to achieve eternal life?” Is a question we all ask, in union with the rich young man of the Gospel. (Mark 10:17). For we have each an immortal soul, able to choose good rather than evil. Therefore, we are made for life everlasting.

*“The very fact that good is to be rewarded and evil punished implies that men are free to do good and avoid evil. Every man will reap what he sows.”*

## *Catechism (cont.)*



In the words of the Catechism: “ God made me to know Him, Love Him, and serve Him in this world, to be happy with Him forever in the next.” I cannot know God without being moved to love Him; I cannot love God without serving Him; I cannot faithfully serve God without receiving the reward of life everlasting with Him for all eternity.

Hence, knowledge—especially the supernatural knowledge called faith—is most important. Knowledge of God is, in fact, the most important thing that can claim the attention of men.

The body is but dust; the things of this world will pass away; but God and the soul are eternal; they will live forever. The soul is made for happiness with God. If it misses that, it’s whole destiny is ruined. What sense is there, then, in treating the things of this world—wealth, ambition, comfort—as if they are more important than God and the soul ? Eternal life is worth any sacrifice. “How is a man the better for it, if he, gains the whole world at the cost of losing his own soul ?” asked Our Lord. And that is a question we can never afford to forget.

( Taken from “*This is Our Faith*” Published by Catechetical Guild Educational Society, St. Paul. Minn., *Nilil Obstat, and Imprimatur.*, January 25, 1951.)

### *The Following of Christ: Book III, Chapter 55*

#### *“ Of the corruption of Nature and of the Efficacy of Divine Grace.”*

*“For I perceive in my flesh the law of sin contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive to obey sensuality in many things,”*

O Lord, my God, Who has created me to Your own image and Likeness, grant me this grace, which You have shown to be so great, and so necessary to salvation, that I may overcome my most corrupt nature which draws me to sin and to perdition. For I perceive in my flesh the law of sin contradicting the law of my mind, and leading me captive to obey sensuality in many things. Neither can I resist the passion thereof, unless Your most holy grace, infused with fervor into my heart, assist me.

I stand in need of Your grace and of great grace, in order to overcome nature, always prone to evil from its youth. For fallen as it is through the first man Adam, and corrupted by sin, the punishment of that stain has descended upon all of mankind; so that nature itself, which by You was created good and right, is now taken for vice and the infirmity of corrupt nature; because the motion thereof, left to itself, draws to evil and to things below. For the little strength which remains is but as a little spark hidden under ashes. This is the

## *Following of Christ (cont.)*

*“ Oh, how supremely necessary for me, O Lord, is Your grace, to begin that which is good, to go forward with it, and accomplish it. For without it, I can do nothing; but I can do all things in You, when grace strengthens me.”*

self-same natural reason, encompassed with much darkness, having yet the judgment of good and evil, and the discernment of truth and falsehood; though it be unable to fulfill all that it approves; neither does it now enjoy the full light of truth, nor the former healthfulness of its affections.

Hence, it is, O my God, that according to the inward man, I am delighted with Your law, knowing Your command to be good, just, and holy, both for the reproof of all evil and for the avoiding of sin. And yet in the flesh I serve the law of sin, while I obey sensuality rather than reason. Hence it is, that to will that which is good is present with me, but how to accomplish it I find not. Hence I often make many good purposes, but because grace is wanting to help my weakness, through a light resistance I recoil and fall off. Hence it comes to pass, that I know the way of perfection, and see clearly enough what I ought to do, but pressed down with the weight of my own corruption, I rise not to the things that are more perfect.

Oh, how supremely necessary for me, O Lord, is Your grace, to begin that which is good to go forward with it, and accomplish it. For without it I can do nothing; but I can do all things in You, when grace strengthens me. Oh, grace truly celestial, without which our own merits are nothing, neither are the gifts of nature to be esteemed! No arts, nor riches, nor beauty or strength, no genius, nor eloquence avail aught in Your sight, O Lord, without grace. For the gifts of nature are common to the good and to the bad; but grace or divine love is the proper gift of the elect, with which they are adorned are esteemed worthy of eternal life. This grace is so excellent, that neither the gift of prophecy, nor the working of miracles, nor any speculation, how sublime it may be, is of any value without it. No, not even faith, nor hope, nor any other virtues, are acceptable to You, without charity and grace.

Oh, most blessed grace, which makes the poor in spirit rich in virtues, and renders him who is rich in many good things humble of heart, come, descend upon me, replenish me early with Your consolation, lest my soul faint through weariness and dryness of mind. I beseech You, O Lord, that I may find grace in Your eyes; for sufficient for me is Your grace, though I obtain none of those things which nature desires. If I be tempted and afflicted with many tribulations, I will fear no evils while Your grace is with me. This alone is my strength; this alone gives me counsel and help. This is more mighty than all my enemies, and wiser than all the wise.

Your grace is the mistress of truth, the teacher of discipline, the light of the heart, the consoler of anguish, the banisher of sorrow, the expeller of fear, the nurse of devotion, the producer of tears. What am I without this but a withered branch and a useless trunk, meet only to be cast away? Therefore, O



## *The Following of Christ. (cont.)*

Lord, let Your grace always go before and follow me, and make me ever intent upon good works, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

### *Practical Reflections*

We do justice to ourselves when we mistrust our own strength, and to God, when we confide in the assistance of His grace. This is never wanting to us; but we are often wanting in our correspondence with it, though the only means of insuring salvation is to be faithful to its attractions, for they would lead to the practice of every virtue.

Human nature having been corrupted by the first man's sin, the effect of this corruption, as well as the stain of sin, descended to all mankind; hence are we constrained to fight incessantly against the motions of nature, and follow those of grace. Without offering this holy violence to ourselves, by which we subdue and renounce our own inclinations, it would be impossible to be saved. In the state of innocence, all in man being orderly and subject to God, on account of original justice, the passions did not revolt against reason; but in our present state of sin, concupiscence continually rebels against the soul; this we must never cease to resist, until we cease to live.

*“When, O God, shall Thy grace reign in our hearts, and subject them to the influence of Thy love ?”*

### *Prayer*

When, O God, shall Thy grace reign in our hearts, and subject them to the influence of Thy love? He who knows how to estimate the value and excellence of Thy grace, O Lord, which is a participation of Thy divine nature, and a holy infusion of Thy goodness into our souls, will suffer the loss of all things else, rather than be deprived of such a treasure, and will not hesitate to make any sacrifice however great, to preserve it.

When I consider, O Lord, that those graces which I reject, or neglect, have been purchased for me by the price of Thy suffering and precious Blood, how am I covered with confusion, so having made so bad use of them, and for having preferred even trifles before them! Well may the account I must one day give of all the inspirations which I have neglected, as of so many drops of Thy sacred Blood dissipated or profaned, fill me henceforth to correspond with them most faithfully, that I may not forfeit my salvation. Amen.

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