



"BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD" ... "BE DEAD WITH CHRIST FROM THE ELEMENTS OF THIS WORLD"

"LOVE NOT THE WORLD, NOR THE THINGS WHICH ARE IN THE WORLD. IF ANY MAN LOVE THE WORLD, THE CHARITY OF THE FATHER IS NOT IN HIM"

"BE BLAMELESS CHILDREN OF GOD, WITHOUT REPROOF, IN THE MIDST OF A CROOKED AND PERVERSE GENERATION, AMONG WHOM YOU SHINE IN THE WORLD"

ENEMIES OF THE FAITH

The Big Bad World of "ISMS"

St. Paul tells us that "the just man liveth by faith" (Romans 1:17) and "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebrews 11:6). To please God, we must be strong in the faith: "Woe to them that are fainthearted, who believe not God" (Ecclesiasticus 2:15). In the Bible, we see many examples of a strong faith. Abraham, who according to St. Paul, "was not weak in faith" (Romans 4:18-19), was told to leave his father, family, relatives and friends for a "Promised Land" that he had not seen! Similarly, God has also offered us a "Promised Land"—Heaven—if we leave certain things behind. Jesus asked the young man to sell all his possessions and to come and follow Him, but "when the young man had heard this word, he went away sad: for he had great possessions" (Matthew 19:22). Jesus tells us that us: "If any man will follow Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Mark 8:34).

For us, too, there can be many things that hold us back from following Jesus to the Promised Land of Heaven. We could group many of these obstacles to our faith and salvation, under the title of "ISMS." Let us look at some of the chief "ISMS" and how they hurt our faith's progress on the road to God and Heaven.

INDIVIDUALISM: This is the first one, even the chief one, the father of all the others. The Bible says that "PRIDE is the beginning of all sin" (Ecclesiasticus 10:15). Individualism is all about pride—ME! ME! ME! ME!

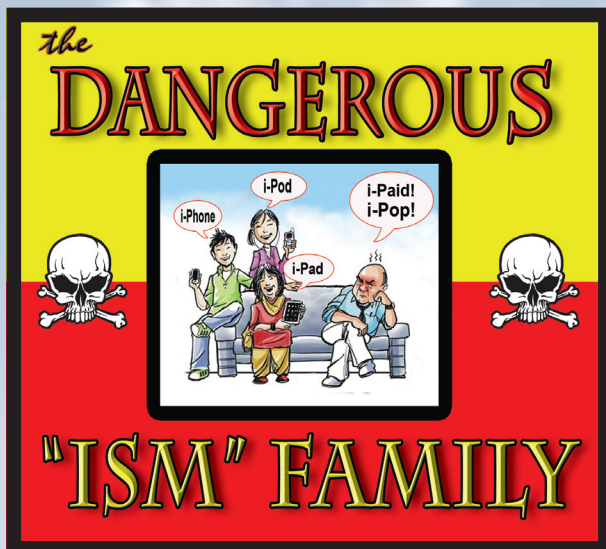
ME! It is the fruit of Original Sin and we are all born with it. It is the root of our problems. We see it in babies and we see it in adults! It is an attitude that says: "I want!" "I think!" "I have!" "I can!" "I can't!" "I will!" "I won't!" "I love!" "I hate!" and so on. The devil and the world feed this terrible ego! We have so many things to help us isolate ourselves

from God and also everyone else. The TV, the internet, the old cell phone, the new smart phone, the i-Phone, the i-Pod, the i-Pad, etc. "I" or "Me" takes center stage and God plays a bit part. We have time-a-plenty for all these things, but so little time for God! Because like Adam and Eve, we want to be gods to ourselves. We could also say that individualism, or love of self, is the daddy of all the other "isms" in the ISM family. This daddy is the i-Pop! The head (or the big-head) of the family!

HEDONISM: This means you have a head only for "isms"! No, seriously, it comes from the ancient Greek word for pleasure (*hedone*) and means that pleasure is pursued as the sole or chief good in life. This is the wife of INDIVIDUALISM and mommy of all the "isms" in the family. She is driven by hedonism or a desire for pleasure! Pleasure comes before the Cross. Pleasure is sought in all areas of life. Pleasure comes before God. It is like sugary foods in the diet—sweet to taste, but fatal to the system! A fatal, but sweet, sugar-mommy!

Now that we have met the parents of the ISM family, let us look at their spoilt brats or their children. They all have the same blood of "love of self" and "love of pleasure" flowing in them, but they differ in their interests, just like all the children in a family differ in their personal interests.

UTILITARIANISM: This child got its name from the Latin and French words for "useful"—*utilis* and *utile*. When faced with a choice in anything, this child does not ask itself "Is this good or is this bad?" but asks instead "Is this useful to



me—regardless of whether it is good or bad?" If it is good, but not useful to him, then he or she will not bother with it! If it is bad, but useful to it, then he or she will do it! What else can you expect from parents such as i-Pop and Sugar-Mommy?

HUMANISM: Humanism just loves people! This child likes to focus on human values and interests, giving much greater importance to human rather than divine or supernatural matters. All human gifts and qualities and appearances are the focus of this child. They want to look good, know all about the world; speak well; acquire as many human talents as possible; cultivate many human friendships; socialize; even



create and support human focused charities. All is focused on man, with very little or no focus on God.

MATERIALISM: This child's nature is to love material things—such as money and possessions. It has no time for immaterial things—especially supernatural or spiritual things. Only the "here and now" is its focus. More money, more toys, more food, more drink, more clothes, more TV, more movies, more music, more friends, more games, etc. Anyone of these



things, or even all of them, can absorb the soul of this child. Just like its older siblings, whom it copies like children do, it does not look to whether this or that thing is good or bad—it just wants it! The more it can get, the better it feels! If only this child would approach immaterial or spiritual things with the same hunger! But it doesn't get the same pleasure out of spiritual things that it can get out of material things—leaving spiritual things alone, as much as possible.

ATHLETICISM: Just like its older siblings, this child is also seeking personal pleasure—but this child does not find it in people, money or things, but finds it instead in athletics—or to use a broader word, SPORT. Whether it is watching sport, talking sport, thinking sport or playing sport—sport is the main focus of this child's life. What God should be, sport is! Truly it becomes a religion for this child, occupying great portions of



time, thought and money. Today, TV has made sports stars into gods and this child gladly worships them!

RATIONALISM: This child is not athletically gifted, but is more focused on thought and expression. Knowing and talking about things is the preference of this child. They can get so good at it, that they become quite expert in some or even many things. In fact, they can become gods to themselves in these areas. Only they know! Only they can understand it fully! They then start to act like gods, creating their own dogmas, insisting they are always right, never wrong! Just like God! But God plays less and less a role in their lives, the more expert they get! In fact, they even start to judge God and the things of God! Some eventually start to doubt this or that teaching of the Church; they judge this or that apparition worthy or unworthy of belief; they start to believe that some bad things are good, and that some good things are bad. They, like Adam and Eve, become gods unto themselves. They knock God off His throne and replace Him with their own mind, opinions, or reason. Whether it is a knowledge of divine things or a knowledge of human and material things—they rule! They want a freedom to think and say what they like! Their mind judges everything and everybody.

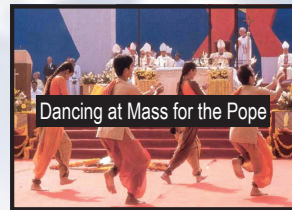


LIBERALISM: If its sibling, Rationalism, wants freedom to think and say what it likes, then Liberalism takes this idea to the field of action in the world. It wants to act as it wants! It wants to do what it wants! It wants to go where it wants! It wants to associate with whomever it wants!



Regardless of whether or not it is good or bad! It wants no authority to rule it. It is its OWN AUTHORITY. But this child always seeks to be liked and wants to "get-on" with everyone—so the child will often have an easy-going character, will agree with almost everyone, agree to almost anything—as long as it can secretly or openly do what it wants to do. Usually, Liberalism will not rock the boat too much—unless it feels threatened or cannot get what it wants. Sometimes this child, Liberal, can be openly controlling and manipulative, while at other times the child seeks to control and manipulate secretly and slyly.

MODERNISM: If Rationalism wanted to be free to think and say what it wants; and Liberalism wanted to do what it wants; then



this next born child—Modernism—combines both of these attitudes in the area of religion. Modernism is a religious

child, but not the typical traditional kind of religious child that has graced many a family for hundreds of years! This child has its own opinions and views on religion. This child is always experimenting and changing this or that, to see how it would work its own way. There is no real religious heart or soul in this child—just the appearance of one. It will introduce any manner or form of worship or prayer into the family, regardless of where it came from or whether it good or bad. Protestant ideas, Eastern Religion ideas, Pagan ideas—all are welcome to the mind of this child. It learns from its siblings to only accept those religious practices and ideas that are pleasant, joyful, useful, and above all, new! For everyone loves NEW things! So out with the old and in with the new! Don't listen to the oldsters, listen to the young ones, cater for the young ones!

AGNOSTICISM: This child tells you that it is impossible to know if God exists or not.



We can never be certain about many things in this world, says this child, and especially so in regard to God. God cannot be known, it says, and so this child lives a perpetual doubt and uncertainty about God. This paralyzes the child both in thought and action. It's

main worry is: "What's the point of following a religion about God if we cannot know if God even exists or not."

ATHEISM: The last born child of the ISM family. At first the child was a believer, but, because of the family's bad example, Atheism took the beliefs of its sibling, Agnosticism, a step further. The child would say to itself: "If we cannot be sure if or not God exists, then we might as well live as though God did not exist!" This child



began to live out its life in practical everyday things as though it did not believe. Not being able to live a two-faced life of theoretically believing with the mind, while having a lifestyle of non-believer, Atheism finally rejected both the theory and practice of the Faith, and convinced itself that God did not exist.



"YOU ARE FROM BENEATH, I AM FROM ABOVE. YOU ARE OF THIS WORLD, I AM NOT OF THIS WORLD"