

The Roman Forum

11 Carmine St., Apt. 2C
New York, New York 10014
www.romanforum.org

December, 2013

Twenty-Second Annual Gardone Summer Symposium Second Annual International Christendom Congress (June 30th-July 11th, 2014; 11 nights)

1914-2014:

Have We Learned Anything From This “Hundred Years’ War”?

Summer, 2014 marks a tragic centennial: that of the beginning of the First World War. Far from being the “War to End All Wars”, and the “War to Make the World Safe for Democracy”, this terrible conflict proved to be the precursor to another worldwide conflagration, the torments of the Cold War in Europe and Asia, and the evils afflicting the contemporary Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Not only did it serve as the vehicle through which every possible form of ideology stemming from modern naturalism was finally given the opportunity to wreak its havoc throughout the globe. It also seems to have led to the worldwide triumph of the hedonistic, “freedom-loving” culture of the so-called “Moderate Enlightenment”, as well as the oligarchies that define what “liberty” is allowed to mean by John Locke & Company.

Historians have done yeoman service indicating all the many *particular* causes responsible for igniting the “Guns of August”. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church, whose teaching authority and greatest thinkers had warned about the coming disaster for many decades before 1914, understood best of all what the underlying intellectual and spiritual reasons for the senseless slaughter ultimately were. These fundamental grounds of the cataclysm were nothing other than that understanding of life as a jungle “warfare of all against all”, arising out of the heterodox vision of fallen mankind as a “totally depraved” species. By the twentieth century, this twisted vision had translated into all manner of political, economic, and even biological ideologies based upon the need for “struggle”, open and masked, as the key to Progress. In short, the Church understood that war came because modern man was “spoiling for a fight” in a myriad of different ways.

The Church had a clear idea of what was wrong in 1914. Does she *still* have such a lucid judgment in 2014, or has she herself been influenced by the evils against which she once so brilliantly fought? Have her children proven to be capable of passing on her wisdom to the world at large? Is the secular world in any way more receptive to her message as this “Hundred Years’ War” moves into its second century? It is to these basic questions that the faculty of the *Twenty-Second Annual Gardone Summer Symposium* and the *Second International Catholic Christendom Congress* will turn its attention. The cost is 2,100 Euros (\$2,900 at the present exchange). More precise information regarding application and potential scholarships should email the Roman Forum as soon as possible (drjrao@aol.com). *Participation is limited. There are only fifty places available.*

A. The Roman Forum

Professor Dietrich von Hildebrand, the founder of the Roman Forum, put this organization on a solid path to a broader future from the very outset by insisting that we keep our one goal---*the defense of Catholicism and Catholic Christendom*---ever present before our eyes. Nothing petty, parochial, and transient in character was to deflect us from a mission whose end can only come with that of time itself. *Catholique avant tout!*, the happy motto of the nineteenth century French movement of Catholic revival, was inscribed by von Hildebrand on our banners as well.

This goal and methodology have committed us to the work of freeing Catholics from an embrace of the thoughtless, rancorous, and self-defeating political and polemical conflict that characterizes the global pluralist regime; to the task of liberating them from infatuation with an intellectual “dialogue” which amounts to nothing more than endless, instantaneous, and ultimately meaningless commentary on the latest battles on the blogosphere. This commitment has necessarily involved our directing Catholics down the only valid path to solid, long-term success in each and every realm of life, the political and social realm included: learning what a full romance and marriage alliance with Christ really entails, and the incomparably happy fruits that this transforming experience yields for the individual and society alike.

B. A Solid Past

A mammoth spiritual and intellectual culture war with terrible practical consequences has been raging about us for many centuries already. Unfortunately, most believers fight that war by arming themselves with concepts of freedom, the individual, and society that are naturalist in character and destroy the last remnants of Catholic Christendom. The Roman Forum urges a retreat from this suicidal endeavor for the purpose of providing that “basic training” whose necessity a more solid marriage with Christ makes clear. Such basic training arms potential crusaders with spiritual and intellectual weapons that will not explode in their faces when they renew battle with their foes. It is a training that the Roman Forum undertakes on both the national and the international level.

For the last twenty-two years, the Roman Forum has been the only organization in the country offering men and women not enrolled in an academic program a systematic, university-level course in the history of the Catholic Church and Catholic Culture. These take place in New York City through the good offices of the Catholic Center of New York University. *Keep the Faith* (www.keepthefaith.org) provides tapes of many of these programs. We are a bit behind with the more recent lectures, but are working hard to have them all ready by June, 2014, including the 2013-2014 series, *Ad Majoram Dei Gloriam: Sanctifying, Expanding & Defending the Meaning of Catholic Christendom* (1563-1629), dealing with the period following the closure of the Council of Trent and continuing up until the first stage of the Thirty Years’ War.

For twenty-one years, for two weeks in the summer, a small Italian resort, Gardone Riviera, on Lake Garda, the largest and most beautiful lake in Italy, is literally transformed into an international Catholic village, with daily traditional masses, lectures, camaraderie, superb food and wine, and day trips to surrounding sites, such as Venice and Trent. For participants, many of whom come back year after year and feel like family, it is a rare and wonderful opportunity to experience Catholic life on the continent where Catholic culture first fully came to flower. The *Summer Symposium* hosts a large international faculty, which has included *Dale Ahlquist* (G.K. Chesterton Society of America), *Patrick Brennan* (U. of Villanova), *Christopher Ferrara* (American Catholic Lawyers Association), *Fr. Brian Harrison* (Catholic U. of Puerto Rico, Emeritus), *James Kalb* (author of *The Tyranny of Liberalism*), *Michael Matt* (editor of *The Remnant*), *Brian McCall* (U. of Oklahoma), *John Médaille* (U. of Dallas), *Fr. Richard Munkelt* (Roman Forum), *Fr. Gregory Prendergraft* (FSSP), *Duncan Stroik* (Notre Dame U.), *Alice von Hildebrand* (Hunter College, Emeritus), *David White* (US Naval Academy, Emeritus), and myself from the United States; *Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula* (Human Life International, Rome) and *Danilo Castellano* (U. of Udine) from Italy; *James Bogle* (President, Una Voce International; Catholic lawyer, activist, and writer) from the United Kingdom; *Miguel Ayuso-Torres* (U. of Madrid) from Spain; *Thomas Stark* (Philosophisch-Theologische Hochschule, St. Pölten) and *Gregor Hochreiter* (Oekonomika Institute, Vienna) from Austria; *David Berlinski* (Discovery Institute) and *Bernard Dumont* (editor of *Catholica*) from France; and *Taivo Niitvaagi* (Hereditas Foundation) from Estonia. The late, prolific, traditionalist author *Michael Davies*, from the UK, and my predecessor as chairman of the Roman Forum, the late *William Marra* (Fordham U.), were honored speakers for many years. Faculty and students are served spiritually by a large number of secular and religious clergy. 2010-2013 *Summer Symposium lectures* are available through *The Remnant Newspaper* (www.remnantnewspaper.com). Most of the other Summer Symposia lectures can be downloaded to your computer or purchased on audiotape at *Keep the Faith*.

C. A Broader Future and a Call for Your Help

The Roman Forum has always had as its ultimate goal the creation of a full-time Academy. This will definitively begin in New York City in the academic year 2014-2015. It will then continue, from mid-July of 2015, as a month-long summer program, starting at our Symposium center in Gardone and finishing with a Roman Forum Tour to one other European center, different each year. Designed for all, the Academy is also meant to satisfy home schooling high school students’ college entry requirements in history, literature, language, and other disciplines, while giving a travel experience as well. A full description of the Roman Forum Academy will be available on our website by January, 2014. Those interested may contact us by email (drjcrao@aol.com) for further information in the meanwhile.

“God is not on the side of the big battalions, but on the side of those who shoot best.” Although Voltaire, the author of this quotation, did not pen it for the use of Catholics, the argument that he makes with it is correct. *One need only add to it the comment that those who shoot best must know precisely what their target really is meant to be.* When the proper target is not identified, skill in shooting is beside the point. ***The crisis of Catholic Christendom is a global spiritual and intellectual crisis.*** It can only be addressed by redirecting men and women back to faith in Christ; back to serious and complete Catholic teachings on the individual, society, and

the proper meaning of freedom; back to a holistic love of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty in all their forms; back to a politics that has substance to it and is not a criminally expensive fraud. It is this work of redirection back to Christ---with the help of an infinitesimal percentage of the funds wasted in but one modern political campaign--- that the Roman Forum seeks to accomplish on both a national and an international level. In order to undertake past and future projects properly, the Roman Forum has always required an annual budget of \$60,000. It is for this reason that we have urgently needed your help in the form of a tax-deductible donation.

Mailings, advertising, books, storage space for them, and use of conference halls alone now cost us at least \$20,000 per year. A much greater sum is needed to support the Summer Symposium. Our international roster of scholars, clergy, and musicians grows larger every year. None of these men and women receives any compensation for their work here, although their travel as well as their daily food and lodging expenses must be covered. Moreover, almost all college students, seminarians, and young priests hoping to attend the Summer Symposium require at least some financial assistance. Aiding both speakers and the young participants whose presence is so crucial to the future of the traditionalist cause takes up almost all of the rest of our annual budget. As a not-for-profit registered charity this budget is, of course, open for public inspection. Tax-free donations from an IRA may be made until December 31, 2013, by persons who are age 70-1/2 or over. Details are at <http://www.irs.gov/Retirement-Plans/Charitable-Donations-from-IRAs-for-2012-and-2013>.

We are grateful for every small donation we can muster. Nevertheless, the aid of a Lorenzo the Magnificent would also be welcome. *A special thanks in the "Lorenzo" category to the health care professionals at I-DOhC (www.occusystems.com)*. To show you our appreciation for whatever you can spare, we have arranged that the intentions of our benefactors be remembered once a month at a traditional Mass offered in Rome by our chaplain, Msgr. Ignacio Barreiro-Carámbula. With the acknowledgment of your donation, of any size, you will receive a note confirming that you have been enrolled in these Masses. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

John C. Rao, D. Phil. Oxford
Assoc. Prof. of History, St. John's University
Chairman, Roman Forum

**Tax-deductible donations can be made either through our website (www.romanforum.org), through PayPal, or by mailing us directly at:
The Roman Forum, 11 Carmine St., Apt. 2C, NY, NY 10014**

"Even if the wounds of this shattered world enmesh you, and the sea in turmoil bears you along in but one surviving ship, it would still befit you to maintain your enthusiasm for studies unimpaired. Why should lasting values tremble if transient things fall?"

(Prosper of Aquitaine)