

# St. Anthony of Padua R.C. Church

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**Traditionally Speaking** by S. Casarotto, cs      05/24/09

## Faith: a life experience

A 2009 national survey by Zogby-LeMoyne College found that most Catholics have an optimistic view of where the Church is headed, but a majority of them are quite comfortable in disagreeing with Church doctrine and regulations. The survey also found that most Catholics have a very parochial view of the Church, identifying their own parish much more than with the universal Church or the hierarchy. And it showed that nearly 50 years after the introduction of the new catechetics, American Catholics are adrift in a sea of confusion about what it means to be Catholic and the contents of our faith.

We should not be surprised then that a 2008 survey found that about 34 million Americans now consider themselves unaffiliated with any religion, up from 14 million in 1990. In New York State, Catholics make up 37% of the population, down from 38% in 2001 and 44% in 1990.

A crucial problem is that contemporary Catholics education increasingly accommodates the two heresies that infect modern Christian minds: 1) the denial of original sin and its consequences; 2) the denial of the supernatural.

Pius XI said *"Every method of education founded wholly on the denial or forgetfulness of original sin and of grace and relying on the sole power of human nature is unsound."* Pius XI also said: *"Today, we see philosophers who spend their lives in searching for a universal code of education as if there existed no Decalogue, no Gospel, no law of nature stamped by God in the heart of man."* We printed on the greenback *"In God We Trust"*. Now we cannot even trust the bankers. Speaking about the present economic crisis, Benedict XVI said that the root problem is a *"crisis of ethics."*

Today's Catholic suffers from a crisis of identity. We need to know who we are and what our path of life is. There may be many reasons for this Catholic identity theft, but we may agree that this is the cause of many other problems.

John Paul II often mentioned that the family is the central place of encounter between Christianity and contemporary society. If we do not understand our life as spouses and parents in a profoundly Christian way, it is very difficult to live a Christian life in today's world.

Our identity as human beings and as Christians is formed in the family. It is in the family that we discover who we are. The fact that we are children of our parents, for ex., is not something accidental or merely biological, but it constituted a central part of our being. The same things is for parents. It is not simply that a man or woman have a child, but that he is a father and she is a mother, actually that they are a couple, are parents. Spouse-parent-child are related, one originates and defines the other.

Today, to paraphrase an observation by Italian writer A. Manzoni, *"People have learned not to obey their conscience, but to outsmart it."* (Cf: A. Manzoni, *Osservazioni sulla morale cattolica*, Ch. XIX)

A century ago, the philosopher Frederick Nietzsche said: "God is dead, but it will still take some time before even the shadow of God is erased from the caves of man. But God is dead." No wonder that Nietzsche created the word "superman." Now Nietzsche is dead and God is still alive!