

# Unity, Division, & Truth

**A Position Paper of: The Foundation of the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary**

**Read and Approved for Distribution by:**

**Fr. Kieran Kavanaugh, O.C.D.**

**Fr. John Wang, Ph.D, JUD**

**Fr. Edward D. O'Connor, C.S.C.**

A rationale often used in justification to ignore or renounce any conscionable personal responsibility regarding the mystical events related to Our Lady of Emmitsburg and their possible credence involves the combined notions of **unity** and **division**. Some argue that the validity of the mystical occurrences can be ascertained by whether or not, or the degree to which, there is division. This method of justification cannot in and of itself be reasoned to be conclusive evidence. Nor can one invoke the preservation of unity as a universally accepted principle applicable to the denunciation of the mystical occurrences related to Our Lady of Emmitsburg.

Concerning the present situation regarding the claim of authentic private revelations to Dr. Gianna-Talone Sullivan, division is natural, nothing unusual. People have different opinions regarding different things, especially in the matter of apparitions. Many people opposed the apparitions of Lourdes, Rue du Bac, and Fatima. It is not the fault of apparitions per se that people are divided. One cannot blame the apparitions for their division. To further clarify this point, consider a saying of Jesus with respect to peace and division found in the Gospel of Luke:

“I have come to set the earth on fire, and how I wish it were already blazing! This is a baptism with which I must be baptized, and how great is my anguish until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you but rather division. From now on a household of five will be divided, three against two and two against three; a father will be divided against his son and a son against his father, a mother against her daughter and a daughter against her mother, a mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.” (NAB Lk 12:49-53).

Now, a valid syllogism is: Jesus is the Truth; Jesus establishes division on the earth; therefore, the Truth establishes division on the earth. We cannot wrongly blame our faultless God for our division. Similarly, it follows that we cannot wrongly blame the truth about private revelations for causing our division regarding them. As at Lourdes, Rue du Bac, and Fatima, so too are Gianna and Our Lady of Emmitsburg unjustly and unfairly blamed. In the case of alleged private revelations, people do well and ought to be more tolerant and refrain from un-Christian attacks.

As far as unity, Jesus praying to the Eternal Father at the last supper, petitions for: “...those whom you (God the Father) gave me out of the world...I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for the ones you have given me, because they are yours ...” (NAB Jn 17:6,9). He then

goes on to pray "...Holy Father, keep them in your name that you have given me, so that they may be *one* just as we are" (NAB Jn 17:11). While this sense of unity is attained through the prayer of Jesus, political or social or world peace is not. Jesus said, "I am the Truth". Therefore, we must always search for the Truth which can only ultimately result that we are united with God as *one* as God is *one*. It may be said that ultimately the truth unites, not divides. If people are divided, it is because they do not know the Truth of the matter. To avoid impaired ability to search and find the Truth, all should strive to be not biased, have no pre-conceived conclusions, and be not lax in research. Then, division can be avoided, and unity will ensue. Search for the Truth.

As far as a general recommended attitude, in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia" (Reconciliation and Penance, December 2, 1984), John Paul II comments on unity, division, and the need for reconciliation within the Catholic Church.:

"To the people of our time, so sensitive to the proof of concrete living witness, the Church is called upon to give an example of reconciliation particularly within herself. And for this purpose we must all work to bring peace to people's minds, to reduce tensions, to overcome divisions and to heal wounds that may have been inflicted by brother on brother when the contrast of choices in the field of what is optional becomes acute; and on the contrary we must try to be united in what is essential for Christian faith and life, in accordance with the ancient maxim: In what is doubtful, freedom; in what is necessary, unity; in all things, charity." (REP 8; Follow St. Augustine's motto: In essentiis, unitas, in dubiis, libertas, in omnibus, unitas.)

So to achieve proper reconciliation it might be said, "We are to strive for charity in all things, unity in what is essential and necessary for Christian faith and life, and grant each other freedom in what is doubtful."

Pope John Paul II also has an insight in his May 25, 1995 Encyclical "Ut Unum Sint – On Commitment to Ecumenism". This insight can be extended in application to what is being developed here. Although he is addressing unity between Catholic and non-Catholic Christians it can be shown to be relevant to these considerations on unity and division. Regarding "compromise" at the "expense of the truth", in a section entitled, "*The fundamental importance of doctrine*," he makes an adroit point:

"...In matters of faith, compromise is in contradiction with God who is Truth. In the Body of Christ, "the way, and the truth, and the life" (Jn 14:6), who could consider legitimate a reconciliation brought about at the expense of the truth? ..." (UUS 18)

It seems it could also be said, "For the preservation of unity or the avoidance of division it is not a legitimate solution to compromise at the expense of the truth."

The issue of unity and division also reminds us of the situation with Caiaphas the High Priest at the time of Jesus after Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead:

“Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary (sister of Lazarus) and seen what he had done began to believe in him. But some of them went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. So the chief priests and the Pharisees convened the Sanhedrin and said, “What are we going to do? This man is performing many signs. If we leave him alone, all will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our land and our nation.” But one of them, Caiaphas, who was high priest that year said to them, “You know nothing, nor do you consider that it is better for you that one man should die instead of the people so that the whole nation may not perish.” He did not say this on his own, but since he was high priest for that year, he prophesied that Jesus was going to die for the nation, and not only for the nation, but also to gather into one the dispersed children of God. So from that day on they planned to kill him.” (NAB Jn 11:45-53)

In the supernatural sense: Caiaphas prophesied. But did he understand the prophecy of God from his own mouth in its full supernatural sense as did John? It could at least be said that there could have been a natural worldly understanding. Since the Pharisees indicate that they are anxious that their “land and ...nation” may be taken away by the Romans because of belief in Jesus, it can be conceived that a worldly interpretation may be proposed. It would be something like: “Out of a concern for well being, solidarity, and unity, it was better that one should die (or perish) than they lose their political standing, religious position, political and religious power, and material land and nation.” Morally, it seems this motivation would not be just in the judgment to kill Jesus. This is reminiscent of a passage from the Encyclical “*Humanae Vitae*” (*Of Human Life*, Pope Paul VI, 1968):

“In truth, if it is sometimes licit to tolerate a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater evil or to promote a greater good, it is not licit, even for the gravest reasons, to do evil so that a good may follow therefrom that is, to make into the object of a positive act of the will something which is intrinsically disorder, and hence unworthy of the human person, even when the intention is to safeguard or promote individual, family or social well-being.” (HV 14)

Regarding the actions of the will that would tear down, Our Lady of Emmitsburg has said:

“...It is most sorrowful and sad that there are those, especially if they are clergy, who exhibit spiritual jealousy; but there are many who walk in this way. They do not realize the great gift that awaits them, and that their useless energy could be spent on doing good to build up, not to tear down....” (oloe 4-7-07).

And again on this topic, on July 13, 2008, she said:

“Little children, praised be Jesus! Dear children, I am a Mother, ‘full of Grace’. I have extended my hand to you. I have presented my Most Adorable and Merciful Son to you. Children, you all possess the same Spirit of Grace that God has gifted you. Why then do you tear one another apart? Why is there not harmony and unity? My Son's Peace is that of holiness and justice. You do not realize the tears, the penance and the sacrifices made at a price for your existence! There are

hidden heroes around the world whose love is their life's mission. They pray to love; and oftentimes they come between you and God, warding off Divine punishment. They pray for a spiritual transfusion and for conversion of hearts. It was the same during the time of my Son. The Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Scribes did not bear fruit through their repeated sins. They desired to persecute, to conquer, to dominate and to distort the goodness of my Son and the Truth of His Word. Is it not the same today—with “pharisees” living with hardness of heart, desiring to tear down, persecute and dominate? Is there not lust, gluttony, hatred and selfishness? So today, I can tell you that true Charity will be precisely gifted upon those who are scorned, mocked, persecuted and laughed at. Little ones, when something is real, you cannot stop God! No judgment from men can impair or influence the Judgment of God. You would only be fighting God. I am your Mother, “full of grace”; and my Merciful Son has allowed me to distribute these graces to you. I have a duty as a Mother to warn, to challenge, to protect and to draw all people to God. Please, receive these graces while I am still allowed. Seals (Rev. 6:1-17) have been broken one by one, but if all the seals were broken at once, humanity would not be able to survive. For those who have ears, hear! ‘We are not leaving.’ I love you. I love you (fading whisper—crying).” (OLOE Public Message 7-13-08).

In conclusion, we seek to live the unity prayed for by Jesus at the Last Supper among those whom God the Father has given Jesus out of the world. However, it is also clear from Jesus that there will be division. The temptation of the worldly understanding of Caiaphas’ prophecy still exists today, perhaps summarized by something like: “‘One should perish’ for the preservation of unity or the avoidance of division, for political and/or religious power or office, and possibly in situations where grave material well being may be lost.” We ought to take great care not to fall into acting on the temptation to subordinate the truth for the preservation of insubordinate values. Likewise, we ought not to hastily condemn the mystical occurrences surrounding the alleged apparitions of Our Lady of Emmitsburg to Gianna Talone-Sullivan in an arbitrary and capricious way for the sake of convenience. Any *just* condemnation would be established and grounded in most certain and right reason and the truth. That has not been found to be the case.

It should be noted here that the Archdiocese of Baltimore has *not* condemned the apparitions or the other mystical events connected to them. They have issued the June 7, 2003 Decree: “*constat de non supernaturalitate*” and directed that there is to be no public activity in the churches, oratories and other properties of the Archdiocese of Baltimore relating to the alleged apparitions and locutions; a directive that has been obeyed without question.

Compiled by: Peter Blanchard  
Board Director, The Foundation of the Sorrowful and Immaculate Heart of Mary, Inc.