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CHRONICLES

When Will the Pope Defend the West?

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“In the Middle Ages, they would have kicked a few cardinals in the ass, elected a new pope, and declared this one an anti-pope.”

So says the French president in Jean Raspail’s apocalyptic 1973 novel *The Camp of the Saints*, in which a fleet of 100 ships carrying 1 million illegal migrants from Calcutta disgorges its wretched cargo onto the beaches of the Côte d’Azur.

The outburst is occasioned by the insistence of the pope in the novel that Europe should open its borders to all Third-World migrants in the name of charity and solidarity, beginning with this Calcutta fleet. In the novel, His Holiness has sold off all the Vatican art and treasures to raise funds for the migrants, and he is badgering the French president to similarly raise funds to pay for needs of this influx.

“What else can you expect from a Brazilian pope?” the president asks an aide. “The cardinals wanted an innovator as pope, in the name of the universal church, and they certainly got one.”

This fictional scene has obvious parallels to real-life events we’re all experiencing under the current and previous pope, both drawn from service in Latin America, in weakening rather than strengthening the defenses of Europe against a migrant invasion and other anti-Western ills.

During a day trip to the Italian island of Lampedusa in July, Pope Leo took a page out of *The Camp of the Saints* in requesting European governments create a “a long-term strategic plan capable of receiving, protecting, supporting and integrating migrants.” He also praised the locals “for the solidarity that so many of you have shown.” The United States, he said, should likewise be “welcoming, protecting, and assisting immigrants” as “an act of charity.”

In 2025, before he was chosen as pope, then-Cardinal Prevost had taken up a similar cudgel by openly rejecting U.S. Vice President JD Vance’s invocation of St. Augustine’s concept of *ordo amoris* (the ordering of love) which allows that human limits mean we must prioritize those closest to us first and those afar second. To be frank, the hillbilly has a better grasp of Augustine than the man who became pope.

Leo’s predecessor Pope Francis was even more radical, calling for “open humanitarian corridors” for all and sundry who felt they had a right to waltz into the West. People should be “free to choose whether to migrate or stay” and national borders should be transformed into “privileged places of encounter.” Anyone who resisted, according to that logic, was a racist.

In 2023, the former editor of a Vatican newsletter insert, Lucetta Scaraffia, said that Francis “hates the values of the West” and was more interested in climate change than he was in condemning anti-Semitism or defending Christians from persecution around the globe. “He forgets that the West is the lone part of the world that’s tried, even in limited and insufficient ways, to realize the values of the Church,” she said.

The uncanny similarities between this outlook of Francis, an Argentinian, and that of Leo, whose career was spent in Peru, to the fictional Latin American pope in *The Camp of the Saints* is tragedy more than farce. Because if the Catholic Church cannot understand the

problem that mass Third-World migration poses for Christendom, then the game—for Europe, at least—is surely up.

As the novel's author Jean Raspail was aware and made clear in his aside about "the universal church," the Catholic Church has always struggled with its relationship to nation-states. On the one hand, it seeks to build a universal community of believers, something that Christianity shares with Islam, that in a sense makes borders irrelevant. On the other hand, and unlike Islam, Christianity has tended to leave secular power in the hands of nation-states. Theocracy or too much interference from the Church typically ends badly for the faithful and, after all, it was Jesus who told His followers, by his example, to seek a heavenly kingdom rather than a political one.

Historically, popes have recognized state borders as highly relevant from a Christian perspective. They create communities of solidarity in which faith can be practiced and even protected effectively. Open borders creates displacement and distrust. They also sap the source communities of their best and brightest while generating persistent disengagement.

The states of Europe, or the West, have a particular importance in this political theology. For these are the states whose peoples and institutions most fully adhere to Christian values, whether in their democracies, their Judeo-Christian ethical orientations, or their liberal presumptions of free will and personal responsibility.

Submerging the West in peoples raised in non-Western cultures where the fundamental tenets of Christian culture, whether those people happen to be Christian or not, is to invite the disappearance of the very culture that nurtures the Church itself. Moreover, most of the migrants are *not* Christians at all, but Buddhists from China, Hindus from India, and Muslims from everywhere.

Of all these rival faiths entering Europe through mass migration, the most pernicious is Islam, whose historical attempts to erase Christendom (and expunge the Jews it shelters) are nothing if not persistent. Islamic terrorist attacks on the West, wrote scholars Anne Rathbone and Charles K. Riley a year after 9/11, "are designed to wipe out all the religious, economic, legal and political advances of more than half a millennium that have occurred in the West."

In other words, it is not of little importance that the Bishop of Rome should be seen to protect the sanctity of borders in general, and those of the West in particular.

The question of the Catholic Church's complicity with the destruction of Europe, and of Western civilization more generally, has been raised repeatedly in history. There is a great reproach in this question since the West as it exists today is nothing if not a product of the

Catholic Church. The values that define the West are inseparable from those of the Church, and popes have often been at the forefront of defending Christendom.

The intercessions of a pious young girl who became Saint Genevieve are credited with saving Paris from invasion by the Huns in 451 A.D., an example followed by Pope Leo I, who rallied a coalition to protect Rome from the same hordes the following year. Several popes gave sacred status to the 800-year Christian retaking of the Iberian peninsula that concluded in 1492, comparing it to the Crusades against the Muslim occupation of the Holy Land. And Ottoman naval advance into the Mediterranean was defeated at the Battle of Lepanto in 1571 by a coalition of maritime Catholic states constructed by Pope Pious V. He declared Oct. 7 to be the feast day of Our Lady of Victory over the Muslim hordes, surely an opportunity on this day for Christians to recall the same horrors unleashed on their Jewish brothers by Hamas.

It was the central theme of *The Camp of the Saints* that Europe had lost its will to resist. Mass migration and Third World transformation had become so widespread that merely raising practical questions, much less ethical ones, guaranteed branding as an unreconstructed racist. The nostalgia for the remedy common in the Middle Ages of kicking a few cardinals in the ass and ousting the pope as a fraud when he fails to defend the West is quite patently unavailable to us today. It would take a revolt within the Catholic Church itself. Yet only 57 percent of the 241 Catholic cardinals now come from the West, and many of them style themselves defenders of the Third World, like the current and the last pope.

In *The Camp of the Saints*, it is the Belgian Catholics working to resettle Calcutta orphans in the West who open the floodgates to the launching of the flotilla. The priest who encouraged the evacuation ends up a crazed and ragged figure on one of the ships, mumbling words from the Mass as old women massage his loins. He symbolizes the rotting away of the Church's faith in borders and in Western culture.

So where does this leave the West if it is denied the protection of its greatest historical patron? I'll propose two escapes from our nightmare.

The historical solution has been schism. As a devout Anglican, I recognize that God's will sometimes requires that Christians part ways, His will be done. But schism would merely intensify the radicalism of the Catholic Church, turning it into an enemy of the West rather than a mere noncombatant. This hardly advances the cause.

Better is a concerted insurgency from within. Catholics recognize that their fealty to the pope's words is confined to his official encyclicals and letters, not to his wispy mutterings while on day excursions. For better or worse, Catholic scholars and theologians remain the most coherent and convincing defenders of the West because, unlike the secular liberals

who profess loyalty to that ideal, they recognize the centrality of the Church to its past and present. This means there needs to be a determined effort inside the Church to resurrect the sanctity of borders, the honoring of Western culture, and the vital importance of keeping the West Christian, even if only culturally.

American scholar Michael Novak was the great Catholic apologist for capitalism, and its alignment with Christian values. But the Latin American popes nurtured on the mother's milk of socialist revolution seek an evil imposition of state-run economies, a hope already seeing its results in the likes of bankrupt France.

Another American professor, Rodney Stark, was a great apologist for the Catholic Church's role in discovery, knowledge, science, and reason, not to mention the Crusades and Western colonialism. The Latin American popes have abandoned a defense of all these historical events as harmful to human wellbeing, showing their profound ignorance of human history.

These thinkers and many others have maintained a fidelity to Church teachings, especially when they are threatened by antipopes. Future popes will not defend the West until Catholic laypeople begin to profess their allegiance to the fundamental ideas of West, properly understood through the professions of the likes of Novak, Stark, and yes, even JD Vance. Once that happens, it will once again be possible to kick a few cardinals in the ass, elect a new pope, and declare the flirtation with Brazil to have been a heresy.