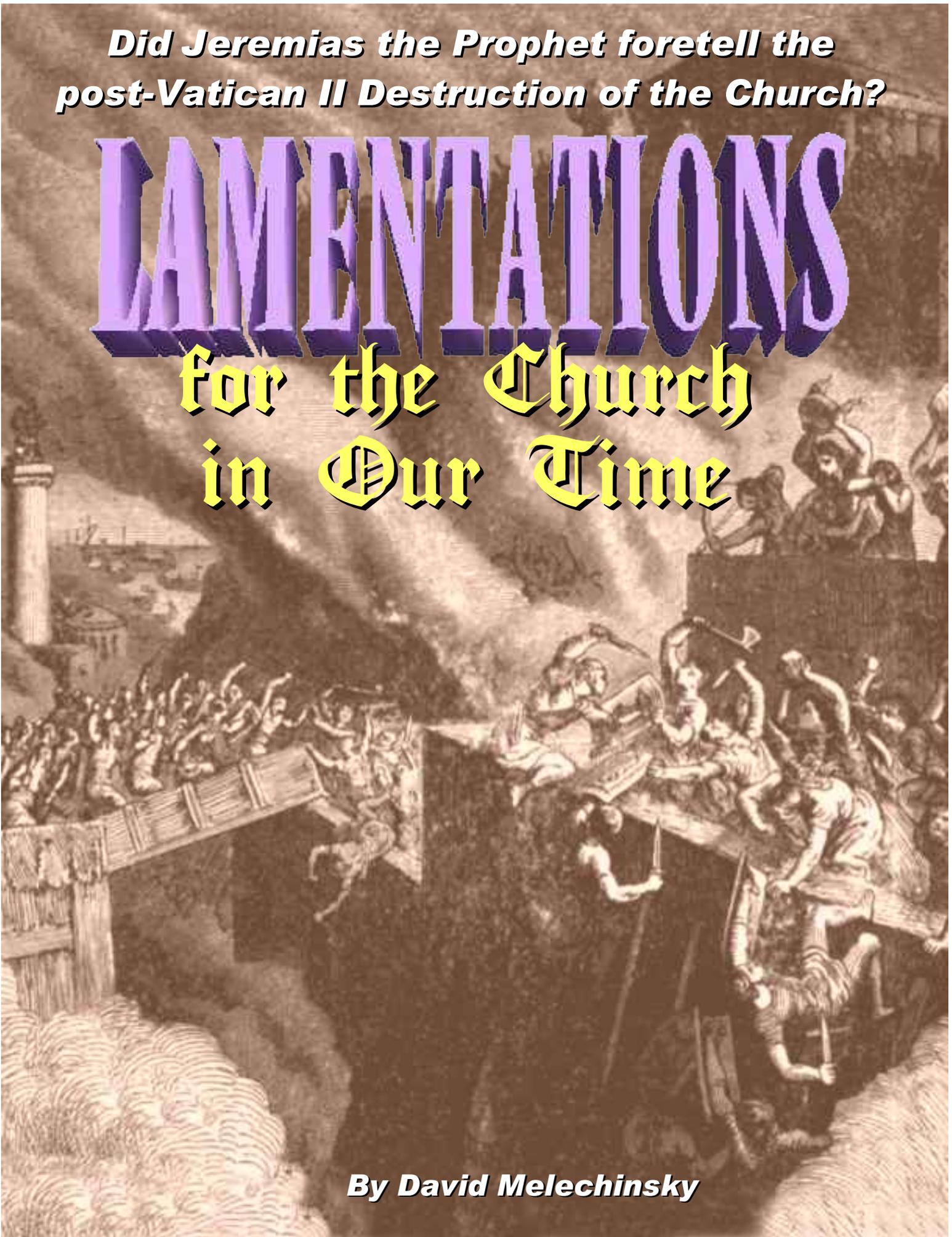


***Did Jeremias the Prophet foretell the
post-Vatican II Destruction of the Church?***

LAMENTATIONS

for the Church
in Our Time

By David Melechinsky

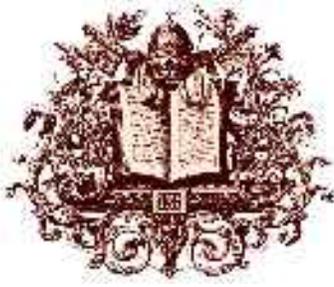


PROLOGUE

Having been following since the early 1970s the ongoing debate concerning the actual nature of the contemporary crisis in the post-Vatican II Catholic Church, and having heard and read the positions of many people ranging from “the Pope can do no wrong and Vatican II is infallible” to “there is no Pope and has not been a valid Pope since (fill in name of last valid Pope)”, I’m proposing another way of looking at this seemingly unprecedented calamity which has befallen the Mystical Body of Christ. This alternative view suggests that the crisis is not really unprecedented, and that it has even been the subject of *prophecy*. If this could be demonstrated, it could help serve to clarify a very confusing situation, and perhaps even help unify a badly-divided cause, namely the cause of Catholics who want to live Catholic lives without being made to believe they must do violence to the teachings of the Church to do it!

That the Catholic Church is divided, torn asunder, and in serious crisis, even in apparent danger of imminent destruction, is as scandalous as it is obvious. *And yet we as Catholics know that this cannot be!* So we seemingly have to devise strange theories to attempt to explain the seemingly impossible in order to save our Faith from utter destruction, or worse, we lose the Faith altogether and become part of the crisis. In the reign of Pope Paul VI, for example, we had to endure the widespread rumor that the “real Pope Paul” was being held prisoner in the Vatican and that the Church was being governed by an “impostor pope”, all complete with so-called photographic proof (which was anything but), in a vain attempt to explain the strange and contradictory actions of that Pontiff. Others have adopted the party line of “evolution of doctrine and tradition” revolting against reason itself in order to prove that contradictions do not contradict. Some have twisted Infallibility into Impeccability -- to such an extent, in some cases, that one well-known writer thought it prudent to invent the novel hypothesis that the “Cephas” (*cephas* = peter = rock) that was publicly rebuked by St. Paul was not St. Peter, the first Pope, despite the unanimous tradition to the contrary! Others take this extreme position in the other direction, saying that the Pope cannot err; but the Popes of Vatican II *have* erred; therefore these Popes cannot be valid Pope(s), and therefore, either (a) the Church has been headless for (fill in the blank) years, or (b) we must gather all Real Catholics and elect a Pope, or (c) we must follow (fill in the name of one of the thirty-plus claimants to the papal throne whose followers have already been there and done that). There are many other strange theories as well, all of which can be defended to the satisfaction of those inclined to accept them, but none of which can be proven conclusively. But what if the contradiction all these well-meaning people are trying to deal with is not a contradiction, but rather a paradox?

In the midst of the paradox that is the Mystical Body of Christ at the turn of the Second Millenium, this writer proposes another paradox -- one that was faced by the Mystical Body of Christ in its infancy: *God cannot suffer or die.* But God *did suffer and die!* The Apostles saw the proofs of Our Lord’s Divinity. But when they saw the proofs of His Humanity, as His Passion began, they all fled. One seems to have lost the Faith, and, possibly, his immortal soul, forever. Another had to be nearly forced to believe again. Another came back to stand with Our Lady, whose Faith never faltered. The rest, including the first Pope, sat out this most critical chapter in the Life of their Master hiding, cowering, trying to act as though they had never known Jesus of Nazareth. Are Catholics today re-enacting the roles played by the Apostles in those days of crisis? If so, what can or should be done about it? Please keep these thoughts in mind as you read the following observations.



LAMENTATIONS

for the Church in Our Time



by David Melechinsky

Sacred Scripture includes, as one of its most interesting and mysterious books, the *Lamentations* of Jeremias the Prophet. Composed shortly after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of its Temple that occurred in 587 B.C., it is an eyewitness account of the devastating horrors of that terrible chastisement of the chosen people of old at the hands of their pagan enemies, as a punishment for their unfaithfulness. It is also seen as a prophecy of the desolate condition of the Jews following their rejection of their Messiah, culminating in the later destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. In this it is also taken as symbolic of the sufferings of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Who took upon Himself the sufferings that are the penalty for Man's revolt against God, otherwise known as sin. For this reason the Church chants these Lamentations every year during Holy Week, at the Office of Tenebrae.

It was at the chanting of this Office in St. Mary's, Kansas (a sublimely beautiful part of the Liturgy of the Church which I recommend to all who have an opportunity to attend it), that this writer was first acquainted with what the text of this particular Book of the Bible actually had to say. A chill ran down my spine and tears came to my eyes as I realized what a perfectly precise and accurate description I was reading of the condition of the Holy Catholic Church since Vatican II, in the 2,500 year-old writings of this great Prophet! Just substitute "Catholic Church" for "Jerusalem", and "Rome" for "Sion", and there's not much left that has yet to be fulfilled (and what has not yet come to pass is even more terrifying)! Did Jeremias intend to warn us Chosen People of the New Testament of what is actually taking place today, in the New Jerusalem? This writer is no theologian, and is not competent to make such a judgment, and submits all that follows to the future judgment of the competent Authorities of Holy Mother Church. Nevertheless, there have been reputable writers, including Father Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., who have explored the concept that the Mystical Body of Christ, the Catholic Church, is destined to follow in the Divine Footsteps of the Physical Body Of Christ Her Master, reproducing in Herself the Life, Teachings, Miracles, Example, Persecution, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

What follows, in three parallel columns, is this writer's attempt to compare portions of the text of the Lamentations (first column) to events in the Passion of the Physical Body of Christ (second column) and also events in today's (hypothetical?) Passion of the Mystical Body of Christ (third column). I have not included every verse, primarily because to do this would involve much repetition, or would perhaps involve speculation regarding events in the life of the Church that still lie ahead. I am certain that others could do a better job with this concept, but, to my limited knowledge, no one has yet attempted it. If someone has done so, or could be prompted by reading this to do so, I, for one, would be glad to see it published far and wide. In the meantime, I have submitted this little study to publication because, as I hope to demonstrate, Catholics faithful to Tradition can find much reason for consolation in the observations contained within.

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

Chapter 1

1. How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is the mistress of the Gentiles become as a widow: the princes of provinces made a tributary!

2. Weeping she hath wept in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks: there is none to comfort her among all them that were dear to her: all her friends have despised her, and are become her enemies.

3. Juda hath removed her dwelling place because of her affliction, and the greatness of her bondage: she hath dwelt among the nations (i.e., the heathen -- author), and she hath found no rest: all her persecutors have taken her in the midst of straits.

4. The ways of Sion mourn, because there are none that come to the solemn feast: all her gates are broken down: her priests sigh: her virgins are in affliction, and she is oppressed with bitterness.

5. Her adversaries are become her lords, her enemies are enriched: because the Lord has spoken against her for the multitude of her iniquities: her children are led into captivity: before the face of the oppressor.

6. And from the daughter of Sion all her beauty is departed: her princes are become like rams that find no pastures: and they are gone away without strength before the face of the pursuer.

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

1. Our Lord, once surrounded by throngs of admirers, is now abandoned by all-- even His Apostles, and is made subject to His enemies, whom He created.

2. Those who had cheered and acclaimed Him on Palm Sunday now see Him in His Passion, and jeer at Him, calling for His crucifixion, preferring Barabbas the murderer to be released.

3. Our Lord is taken prisoner and brought among His pagan enemies to suffer and die for the sins of His people.

4. Betrayed, Our Lord is abandoned by His friends. His defenses are down and He is taken captive. His Apostles and friends are scattered, confused, sorrowful and bitter.

5. Our Lord is left without friends or possessions, under the power of His enemies, to pay the price for the sins of His own Nation by taking on Himself the just Wrath of His Father.

6. Our Lord in His Passion is disfigured beyond recognition. His Apostles, in cowardly flight, wander aimlessly in the midst of His faithless enemies, trying not to look like His disciples, out of fear of sharing His punishment.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

1. Once-filled Churches where the Holy Sacrifice was once offered are now nearly empty, or themselves abandoned. Millions of souls, once Catholic, have abandoned the Church and subjected themselves to false religions.

2. Foes of the Church that once at least admired and respected her constancy and beauty have lost that respect, and now hold the Church up to ridicule and contempt, no longer able to recognize her.

3. The Church hierarchy has abandoned Catholic ways and has adopted the ways of the pagan world, enslaving the Church and her members to pagan ideas and practices.

4. Church attendance is in steady decline. Churches are closed. Altar rails have been removed from the sanctuaries. Her priests are left confused as to what their priesthood is about. The nuns are confused as to their vocations, and are abandoned in their old age. The Faithful no longer know their Faith.

5. Catholic churches are mortgaged to banks owned by non-Catholics. Catholic children are instructed in public schools controlled by enemies of the Church, with money forcibly taken from their Catholic parents, who are made to abide by laws made by enemies of the Church. All as a chastisement because Catholics did not insist upon the Social Kingship of Christ, but chose to compromise.

6. The Church and Her Liturgy are stripped by Her enemies of all Her beauty. She is unrecognizable by friend or foe. Her prelates flee from the dogmas and traditions of Her past, parroting the platitudes of the World, and trying not to look too Catholic, out of fear of ridicule.

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

7. Jerusalem hath remembered the days of her affliction, and prevarication of all her desirable things which she had from the days of old, when her people fell in the enemy's hand, and there was no helper: the enemies have seen her, and have mocked at her sabbaths.

8. Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore is she become unstable: all that honored her have despised her, because they have seen her shame: but she sighed and turned backward.

9. Her filthiness is on her feet, she hath not remembered her end: she is wonderfully cast down, not having a comforter: behold, O Lord, my affliction, because the enemy is lifted up.

10. The enemy hath put out his hand to all her desirable things: for she hath seen the Gentiles enter into her sanctuary, of whom thou gavest commandment that they should not enter into thy church.

11. All her people sigh, they seek bread: they have given all their precious things for food to relieve the soul: see, O Lord, and consider, for I am become vile.

12. O all ye that pass by the way, attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow: for he hath made a vintage of me, as the Lord spoke in the day of his fierce anger. . . .

Chapter 2

1. How hath the Lord covered with obscurity the daughter of Sion in his wrath! how hath he cast down from heaven to the earth the glorious one of Israel, and hath not remembered his footstool in the day of his anger!

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

7. Our Lord, stripped of His garments, is mocked and ridiculed by His enemies.

8. For the sins of His People, Our Lord, Who had commanded the sea and weather, and life itself, suddenly is disfigured, silent and powerless. Those who had honored Him on Palm Sunday now despise Him. He offers no resistance.

9. For the sins of His People, Our Lord, ascending Calvary, falls under the weight of the Cross and is lashed by His enemies.

10. Our Lord's Gentile enemies cast lots for His clothing, and divide it among themselves. A Gentile soldier thrusts a spear into His Sacred Heart.

11. Our Lord suffers hunger and especially thirst upon the Cross, where He is sentenced as a criminal.

12. Our Lord, having taken on Himself the sins and sorrows of His people, sees their desolation and makes it His own, as He sheds all His Precious Blood, poured out like wine.

1. Our crucified Lord is plunged into darkness and expires, having experienced the full measure of the wrath of His Father.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

7. The Church is stripped not only of Her beautiful vessels, vestments, and statues, but also of the purity of Her Doctrines and Sacraments. Her people have become enslaved by the pagan world and its ways. The world profanes Sunday with shopping, noise, servile work, and impurities.

8. For Her children's compromises with the pagan world, the Church, once the immovable Rock, now appears unstable. Those who had honored Her stability see this and they despise her.

9. Corrupted by compromise with the world, the hierarchy of the Church no longer remembers its mission of teaching True Doctrine and saving souls. Thus the Church loses Her relevance, and is supplanted by the false religions of Her enemies.

10. Enemies of the Catholic Church gain possession of Her Buildings and other treasures. They melt down sacred vessels for jewelry. The Papal Tiara sits in a museum. Members of false religions now preach from Catholic sanctuaries, and non-Catholics are permitted to receive the Sacraments.

11. The Faithful sigh, hungering and longing for true Doctrine and true Sacraments, but receive stones instead. Some travel great distances at great cost to obtain these things

12. The Holy Bride of Christ cries out in desolation at the sins of Her children, and at the public humiliation She is made to suffer for them.

1. The Church, once the resplendent light of the world, is hidden in obscurity. False shepherds have hidden Her saving light under the bushel-basket of ecumenism, bringing Her down to a level of equality with the false worldly religions of men. The Church seems as if abandoned by God.

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

2. The Lord hath cast down headlong, and hath not spared, all that was beautiful in Jacob: he hath destroyed in his wrath the strong holds of the virgin of Juda, and brought them down to the ground: he hath made the kingdom unclean, and the princes thereof.

3. He hath broken in his fierce anger all the horn of Israel: he hath drawn back his right hand from before the enemy: and he hath kindled in Jacob as it were a flaming fire devouring round about.

4. He hath bent his bow as an enemy, he hath fixed his right hand as an adversary: and he hath killed all that was fair to behold in the tabernacle of the daughter of Sion, he hath poured out his indignation like fire.

5. The Lord is become as an enemy: he hath cast down Israel headlong, he hath overthrown all the walls thereof: he hath destroyed his strong holds, and hath multiplied in the daughter of Juda the afflicted, both men and women.

6. And he hath destroyed his tent as a garden, he hath thrown down his tabernacle: the Lord hath caused feasts and sabbaths to be forgotten in Sion: and hath delivered up king and priest to reproach, and to the indignation of his wrath.

7. The Lord hath cast off his altar, he hath cursed his sanctuary: he hath delivered the walls of the towers thereof into the hand of the enemy: they have made a noise in the house of the Lord, as in the day of a solemn feast.

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

2. Our Lord falls under the weight of His Cross, His Face disfigured by blood, spittle, and dirt. His Virgin Mother meets Him, sorrowing at the suffering He is made to endure by the machinations of His own High Priests.

3. Our Lord's power to hold back His enemies is withdrawn, and He submits to being consumed by the wrath of the powers of darkness.

4. The wrath of the Father is turned from His enemies to His Only-begotten Son, Whose beauty and majesty are seen to vanish in the conflagration of Divine Anger.

5. The Apostles, who had pledged to defend Our Lord, at first sign of danger from the minions of the world, flee and scatter in terror and confusion, leaving Him to the enemy.

6. Our Lord is torn from the midst of His disciples and consigned to the dungeon. Those who followed and acclaimed Him have forgotten Him. He, the Eternal High Priest, is delivered up to reproach in the place of His people.

7. Our Lord, forsaken by His Father, is nailed to the Cross by His enemies, and loudly jeered by the celebrating mob, and by His High Priests.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

2. The beauty of the Church's ageless liturgy is cast down in favor of the banality of the new. Churches and convents are torn down or put to profane use. Princes of the Church foul their pulpits and the ears of the Faithful with the errors of the pagan world. The Church is thus done to death by Her own High Priests.

3. The loving and protective condemnations of the errors of men no longer flow from the lips and pens of the pastors, leaving the flock undefended, to be massacred by the ravening wolves.

4. Despoiled of the ramparts torn down by ecumenist practices, the errors of the world invade the Sanctuary, brought in by the very priests of God, casting out all that is beautiful and consigning it to the flames.

5. Altar rails are torn from churches. Members of false religions are now, for all practical purposes, no longer barred from Catholic Sacraments. Catholics are no longer barred from non-Catholic worship. The Index of forbidden books is gone. Catholics are scandalized and afflicted.

6. Tabernacles are torn from the Sanctuary. The Blessed Sacrament is reserved in an obscure place, no longer the center of attention. Many Feasts and Holy Days are no longer observed. Priests and other leaders act scandalously and are publicly scorned and ridiculed.

7. Catholic altars of Sacrifice are smashed and removed from the Sanctuary, replaced by tables that signify dining. The high positions of Ecclesiastical Authority are given over to compromisers, despisers of Catholic Tradition and enemies of the Faith. The destruction is celebrated with loud proclamations of "Renewal!".

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

9. Her gates are sunk into the ground: he hath destroyed her bars: her king and her princes are among the Gentiles: the law is no more, and her prophets have found no vision from the Lord.

10. The ancients of the daughter of Sion sit upon the ground, they have held their peace: they have sprinkled their heads with dust, they are girded with haircloth, the virgins of Jerusalem hang down their heads to the ground.

11. My eyes have failed with weeping, my bowels are troubled: my liver is poured out upon the earth, for the destruction of the daughter of my people, when the children, and the sucklings, fainted away in the streets of the city.

12. They said to their mothers: Where is corn and wine? when they fainted away as the wounded in the streets of the city. when they breathed out their souls in the bosoms of their mothers.

13. To what shall I compare thee? or to what shall I liken thee, O daughter of Jerusalem? to what shall I equal thee, that I may comfort thee, O virgin daughter of Sion? for great as the sea is thy destruction : who shall heal thee?

14. Thy prophets have seen false and foolish things for thee: and they have not laid open thy iniquity, to excite thee to penance: but they have seen for thee false revelations and banishments.

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

9. As Our Lord suffers for the sins of idolatry of His people at the hands of the enemy, His first Vicar, Simon Peter, sits among the gentiles warming himself by their fires, denying his Master. His Apostles, also scattered among the gentiles, are confused and directionless.

10. Our Lord is silent in the face of His tormentors as He does penance for the sins of His people.

11-12. Our Lord's eyes are filled with bitter tears for His people who reject Him. He looks for someone to have pity on Him, and finds no one.

13. Who or what can be compared to God-made-Man on earth? How can the enormity of the crime of Deicide be measured? Who but God Himself can make reparation?

14. Our Lord's High Priests bring false testimony against Him, and are blind to their own sins. They urge the mob to press for the release of a murderer, but condemn Innocence Personified to a criminal's death.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

9. With the traditional ban on taking part in false worship removed, priests, bishops, cardinals, and even the Successor of St. Peter, are all found meeting with heads of false religions and encouraging them to pray to their idols for "peace". In such displays of "unity in diversity" they place their hope for peace. But there is no peace.

10. The modernist priests and prelates of the Church attach themselves to worldly concerns, and fail to speak out against the sins of mankind. Nuns are in distress following the abandonment of the ancient rules of the Religious Orders.

11-12. The children of the Church weep over Her sorry condition. Nearly everything Catholic lies in ruins, and the "reformers" are clearly not finished with what remains.

Everywhere in the world, the children of the Church are falling into the same sins and errors as the rest of the world, and lose their souls. They ask for the bread and wine of sound Doctrine and true Sacraments, and find none, and many are lost.

13. What other religion can be compared with the Catholic Church--the one and only Religion founded personally by the God-Man Himself? Her greatness is such that, if She were destroyed, the world itself could not survive the resulting devastation, much less repair the damage.

14. Modernist theologians have promoted false and foolish ideas that were previously and repeatedly condemned by the Church. They claim that old Doctrines are now irrelevant, and that sin and error should no longer be condemned. Yet they do not hesitate to condemn those who hold fast to sound Doctrine and Practice, in opposition to the false reformers.

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

15. All they that passed by the way have clapped their hands at thee: they have hissed, and wagged their heads at the daughter of Jerusalem, saying: Is this the city of perfect beauty, the joy of all the earth? . . .

Chapter 4

1. How is the gold become dim, the finest colour is changed, the stones of the sanctuary are scattered in the top of every street?

2. The noble sons of Sion, they that were clothed with the best gold: how are they esteemed as earthen vessels, the work of potter's hands?

3. Even the sea monsters have drawn out the breast, they have given suck to their young: the daughter of my people is cruel, like the ostrich in the desert.

4. The tongue of the suckling child hath stuck to the roof of his mouth for thirst: the little ones have asked for bread, and there was none to break it unto them.

5. They that were fed delicately have died in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet have embraced the dung.

6. And the iniquity of the daughter of my people is made greater than the sin of Sodom, which was overthrown in a moment, and hands took nothing in her.

7. Her Nazarites were whiter than snow, purer than milk, more ruddy than the old ivory, fairer than the sapphire.

8. Their face is now made blacker than coals, and they are not known in the streets: their skin hath stuck to their bones, it is withered, and is become like wood. . . .

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

15. Our Lord, in His scourging, and on the Cross, is mocked, with the words, "If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross and we will believe!"

1-2. How is it that the Immortal God is made mortal and put to death, the All-Beautiful one is made ugly, the Innocent to be condemned as a criminal?

3-4. Even the Gentiles treat their own better than God's Chosen People treat their own Messias!

5-6. The Son of God and King of Kings, possessor of all wealth, is crushed to the earth and made to endure a punishment exceeding, in cruelty and ignominy, the worst punishments meted out to the worst evildoers.

7-8. The Nazarene was "white and ruddy" (Cant. 5,11). Now He is so disfigured that His own Mother can scarcely recognize Him.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

15. Enemies of the Church, seeing Her present disarray, laugh at Her and say, "Is this the infallible and unspotted Bride of Christ?"

1-2. How has the spotless Bride of Christ been blemished with heresy and ugliness of every kind? How has Her infallible Vicar been the vehicle for the spreading of error? How has the indestructible Church been so thoroughly shattered? How is it that Her priests, schooled in sound Doctrine, now repeat the foolish errors of the world, and are looked upon by the world as buffoons?

3-4. Even the pagans display more solicitude for those in their care than the negligent modern pastors show for the sound education of their flocks. Those faithful and priests who still seek and teach sound Doctrine are made outcasts. Young souls thirsting for Truth are denied it. Souls crying for the Sacraments are given parodies of them, or cannot find any Priest to administer them.

5-6. Countless souls raised in the True Church have adopted the pagan errors and ways of the world and perished in their sins. Priests carefully trained in sound Doctrine have embraced fables, and preached them as gospel. Worse, their ranks are infiltrated by sodomites who corrupt the young and are a scandal to all. Many Faithful are subjected to persecution more humiliating than that reserved for the worst sinners.

7-8. The priests of the Church who were once shining examples have reduced themselves to appear, in both behavior and dress, as other men, indistinguishable from others on the street. Their names now commonly appear in scandalous news stories. They are held up to public reproach and ridicule, along with the Church they represent.

Text of the LAMENTATIONS

12. The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world would not have believed, that the adversary and the enemy should enter in by the gates of Jerusalem.

13. For the sins of her prophets, and the iniquities of her priests, that have shed the blood of the just in the midst of her. . . .

PASSION of OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

12-13. The Pharisees had been baffled as to how to put Jesus to death, until, to their great surprise, one of His own Apostles offered to betray Him into their hands.

PASSION of THE CHURCH

12-13. World leaders are astonished as Church leaders, at Vatican II, draw up plans to dismantle the last remaining Catholic States, and to virtually abandon all effort at seeking further conversions to the Catholic Faith. Surprises continue, as pagans are invited to preach from Catholic pulpits, while faithful priests are persecuted by Church Authorities.

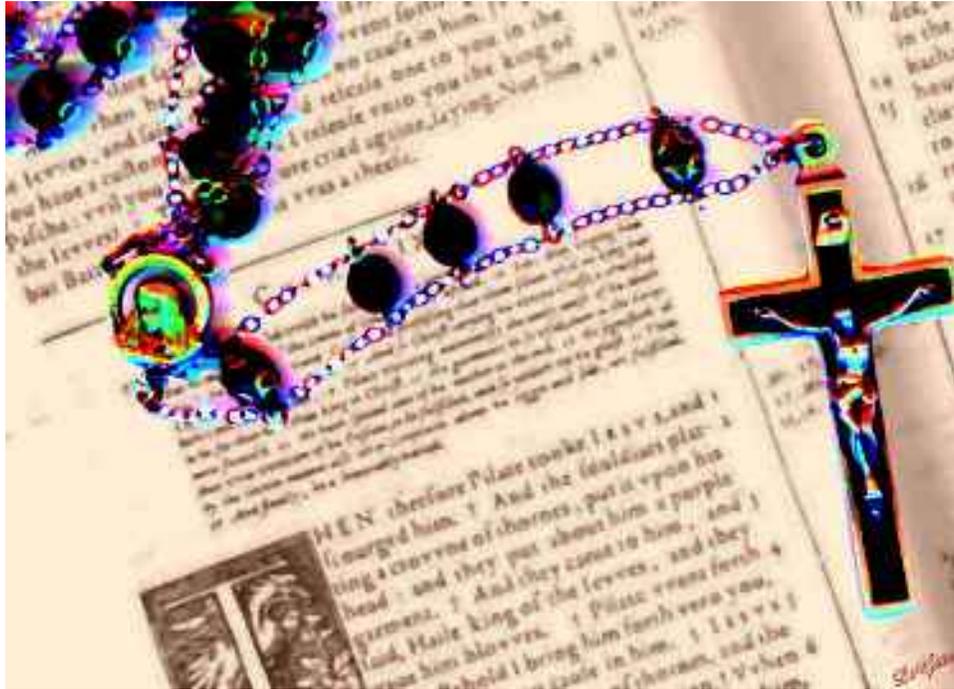
As stated at the outset of this article, not all of the text of the Lamentations is included here. This is not, however, because of any lack of apparent connection to the subject matter being explored in this little study. I invite the reader to look up the Lamentations for himself, and read the entire five chapters. They are very brief, but amazingly detailed. I think it would be difficult to claim that there is no similarity between the destruction of Jerusalem and the current condition of the Mystical Body of Christ. In fact, there is much more that could be presented of recent events that would further bolster the contention of this article, which is that the mysterious events in the recent life of the Mystical Body of Christ are but a mystical reenactment of the Slaughter of the Divine Paschal Lamb, the Physical Body of Christ, by His own High Priests; and that Vatican II, far from being the “New Pentecost” its supporters would have us believe it to be, could more accurately be called the new Wednesday of Holy Week (the day when Judas agreed to betray his Master into the hands of His enemies), owing to that tragic Council’s betrayal of the Mystical Body of Christ, by its many compromises with the enemies of the Church. Perhaps we could go so far as to see in the three Popes of Vatican II (John XXIII, Paul VI, and John Paul II) a symbol of the three denials of St. Peter, the first Pope! Can it not be said, in all truth, that each of these Popes has shown a certain reluctance to be associated with various traditions of the Mystical Body of Christ?

But the reader may ask what is the point of such a study. Is its purpose to discourage faithful Catholics and give them a fatalistic attitude? Can nothing be done about it by the simple Catholic Priest or layman? Must we sit by and watch, helplessly, the conclusion of this dreadful scenario, as our beloved Church is crucified and buried by the modern “Pilates” at the instigation of Her own priestly hierarchy? Not at all! In fact, there is much in this scenario from which we can all draw instruction and consolation. Firstly, is, of course, to remind ourselves that Our Lord rose from the dead, more glorious than ever. That, plus Our Lord’s infallible promise to be with His Church forever, should be our assurance that His Mystical Body, too, will inevitably enjoy a glorious Resurrection. But we do not know when or how that will happen. What to do in the meantime?

We must take our cue, I think, again from the Scriptures, which inform us that not all Our Lord’s disciples abandoned, betrayed, or denied Him in His Passion and Death! There were that tiny handful standing faithfully at the foot of the Cross, comforting Him in His last mortal hours.

Who were they? Firstly, Our Lady, His Holy Mother, whose faith remained unshaken in this darkest hour. And then, the faithful and devoted penitent, Mary Magdalene doubtless repeating her loving act of washing His Feet with her tears, and drying them with her hair. Plus a few other holy women. As for men? Only one dared to be present at this terrible scene, the beloved Priest/Bishop, St. John the Evangelist. Only one Priest to stand at the Altar of the Eternal High Priest, assisting at that Original Mass of which every Mass is a reenactment! What shining examples are presented to us present-day disciples of this same Lord and God by that tiny but precious handful of faithful and courageous souls standing on Calvary. Let us look at them again. See the sorrowful Virgin Mother, patiently sharing the sufferings of Her Divine Son as Co-Redemptrix. By faithful daily offering of the prayers of Her Holy Rosary, we make ourselves one with Her, and offer consolation to Her and to Her Son. Behold Saint John, the “disciple whom Jesus loved”, who overcame the initial fear and confusion that caused him to flee with Peter, to return to his post, even if Peter had not the courage to return with him yet. Bishops and Priests who faithfully offer the traditional Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, and those faithful laity who regularly assist at their Masses, are those who stand with St. John at the Foot of the Cross. Look at St. Mary Magdalene weeping for her sins, and at the other holy women, suffering in silence, who were to assist Our Lady in His burial. By weeping for our sins and doing penance for them, by patiently and virtuously fulfilling the daily duties of our state in life, by almsgiving and acts of Charity we, too, can claim places at the Foot of the Cross. But what else do we see? Sadly, we see a glaring absence. Someone is not there, who ought to be, namely Peter, and the other Apostles, as well. They are hiding in the midst of the Gentiles, trying hard not to look or sound like disciples of Jesus Christ. Peter has even gone so far as to deny ever having known Him! Observe the little Group on Calvary again. Are they standing with Peter? No. Peter is in the wrong place! He has left his post! Do Our Lady, St. John, and the others therefore deny the authority or primacy of Peter? Not a bit! They are doubtless praying for his conversion! Will any Catholic dare to accuse them of “sede vacantism”, or “schism”, or disloyalty, or disobedience to the Church? Let us hope not! Indeed, these are the most faithful of Catholics! Let us claim these as our models in this Passion of the Mystical Body of Christ, and let us not worry what others may call us, or do to us, for having done so! Let us be found standing with them at the “Foot of the Cross”, praying for the return of our own “Peter” and lost Shepherds and sheep. And let us make our own the prayer of Jeremias the Prophet, as it appears in the last chapter of his Lamentations, and with which I conclude, offering no further commentary.

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us: consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned to aliens: our houses to strangers. We are become orphans without a father: our mothers are as widows. We have drunk our water for money: we have bought our wood. We were dragged by the necks, we were weary and no rest was given us. We have given our hand to Egypt, and to the Assyrians, that we might be satisfied with bread. Our fathers have sinned, and are not: and we have borne their iniquities. Servants have ruled over us: there was none to redeem us out of their hand. We fetched our bread at the peril of our lives, because of the sword in the desert. Our skin was burnt as an oven, by reason of the violence of the famine. They oppressed the women in Sion, and the virgins in the cities of Juda. The princes were hanged up by their hand: they did not respect the persons of the ancient. They abused the young men indecently: and the children fell under the wood. The ancients have ceased from the gates: the young men from the choir of the singers. The joy of our heart is ceased, our dancing is turned into mourning. The crown is fallen from our head: woe to us, because we have sinned. Therefore is our heart sorrowful, therefore are our eyes become dim, For mount Sion, because it is destroyed, foxes have walked upon it. But thou, O Lord, shalt remain forever, thy throne from generation to generation. Why wilt thou forget us for ever? why wilt thou forsake us for a long time? Convert us, O Lord, to thee, and we shall be converted: renew our days, as from the beginning. But thou hast utterly rejected us, thou art exceedingly angry against us.



This article is © 2006, 2004 by David Melechinsky.
Permission is granted to print and/or distribute this article without changes.

The author wishes to know of any inaccuracies in need of correction. He may be reached at:
Rosary Graphics, P.O. Box 73, St. Mary's, Kansas 66536, U.S.A.

Distributed as a public service by

ROSARY
GRAPHICS
P.O. Box 73
St. Mary's, KS 66536
Tel./Fax 785-437-2072