

St. Therese Catholic Church

Religion of the Day
Session III

March 5, 2024

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Overview

Religion of the Day	
Session I	Introduction and the Religion of the Day
Session II	Twelve Aspects of Modern Religion (Points 1 - 6)
Session III	Twelve Aspects of Modern Religion (Points 7 - 12)
Session IV	Further Notes on Progressive Religion
Session V	Catching the Diseases of the World
Session VI	The Winning Stance
Session VII	Conclusion: The Kingdom, the Tribulation, and the Patient Endurance

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Overview

Review	
Quality I	Human tragedy of alienation; acknowledges brokenness
Quality II	Salvation is possible; we can do something about brokenness
Quality III	The transformation of our humanity; we can bring about renewal
Quality IV	The source of alienation is not within us; original sin is in the world
Quality V	Tragic hostility toward God; anger toward oppressive structures
Quality VI	A high but ambiguous call; claims the high ground of morality

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Aspect VII

- **Salvation Comes Through Human Effort Alone.**
 - *In progressive beliefs, the salvation that comes through a radical reordering of the external world is brought about by solely by human efforts.*
- For Christianity, it is God himself who brings about the complete transformation of the individual and of human society. Of course, he does so through human beings.
- However, God does so in a manner that accomplishes the healing of the root problem of our alienation, namely our human pride (32).

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Aspect VII

- Christians “wait on the Lord” with perseverance, trust, patient endurance, obedience, and humility as God deals with the human wound of pride (32).
- The Progressive believer is promised liberation not by waiting on God and learning the patient lessons of humility, but by seizing the means and the task of curing the world’s ills by energetic action (32).
- As humanity has come of age, now is the time for the human race to rise up and grasp our destiny with our own hands.

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Aspect VII

- It is difficult to believe – with the wonders of modern science and the wealth of social and psychological learning we have been accumulating – that we do not have the ability to set the world right through our own efforts (32).
- Nominally Christian societies are ripe seed-beds for Gnostic belief systems that emphasize self-redemption rather than salvation by God in Christ (32).



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Aspect VIII

- The Application of a Technique (Gnosis) to Bring about Salvation.
 - *The Progressive method of accomplishing the re-ordering of the world is the application of a particular technical knowledge – gnosis – to the problems of existence.*
 - For Progressive believers, “knowledge saves.” Salvation is to be achieved, not by inner moral regeneration – there is no need for that - but by the application of a technique, whether spiritual, political, social/cultural, psychological, biological, technological, or maybe all of them at once, a technique that alters the world or our relationship to it and that undoes the evil that is alienating us. Hence, the aptness of the term *gnostic* to describe Progressive salvific faiths (33).

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Aspect VIII

- For Gnostic believers, salvation is brought about by technical power, a power that gives its holders control over the ways of the world and that places the initiative in bringing about a morally new world order in humanity’s capable hands (33).
- Part of the air we breathe, one of modernity’s unacknowledged first principles, is the faith that technical scientific and social-scientific knowledge – often divorced from moral constraints – will save the world (34).

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Aspect VIII

- All will be well “if...” Progressive religion tends naturally to a world run by “experts,” those special people who possess the silver bullet, the applied technique that will slay the evil in question and bring about the desired goal (34).
- This simplistic way of proceeding makes sense when servicing automobiles or air conditioners. It runs serious problems when the same mentality is applied to mysteriously complex matters of human psychology, social relations, and the immortal soul’s quest for its eternal destiny (35).

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Aspect IX

- **A Dualistic View of History.**
 - *Progressive religion proclaims a dualistic view of history and holds out a promise that the coming new age of freedom will decisively triumph over the past age of darkness and oppression.*
- Christians understand that the daily struggle against evil and the daily fight for goodness and justice are the necessary conditions of humanity in this age, important elements of a time during which God is testing and sifting human souls to make them worthy of their true home (35).

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Aspect IX

- No humanly devised formula, policy, or technique will enable us to dodge the necessity of that divinely ordained sifting process (35).
- For Progressive believers, the goal is a world substantially freed from evil. What emerges in every Progressive religious scheme is a dualistic vision of two completely different ages (35).



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Aspect IX

- By applying the requisite saving technique, the human race will escape from the age of *necessity*, an age of repression, darkness, alienation, and injustice in which virtually everything is bad, and will burst forth into the age of *freedom*, an age of light, harmony, justice, and peace in which nearly everything will be good (35).
- The break between the two ages is radical and total, and it will result in a complete transformation of human life within the confines of time and history. Anything existing in the current age of oppression can be sacrificed or destroyed for the sake of the coming age of freedom (36).

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Aspect IX

- An important dogma of modern Progressive belief is the claim that we are now living in a unique time called the “modern age” (36).
 - There are no universally valid truths, whether moral or rational, that apply both to the age of oppression and the age of freedom (36).
 - Traditional values, traditional modes of rationality, and long-standing customs should not be consulted as a guide (36).

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Aspect IX

- Traditional philosophies, beliefs, or moral norms are labeled as outdated, oppressive, reactionary, or obscurantist, and therefore unworthy of serious consideration, needing to be shouted down or cancelled (36).
- In contrast to Christ who insisted that he has not come to destroy the order of creation but heal it of its corruption and bring it to its true and intended state, Progressive religion seeks to annihilate or cancel all that is opposed to its goal of complete transformation of human life.

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Aspect IX

- Progressive religion's doctrine of the radical distinction between the two ages helps explain its love for the mythic reconstruction of the past versus the present (and future) into a dualistic picture of good and evil (36).
 - **The Past:** The supposed age of darkness and alienation – is painted in the bleakest colors possible. The Progressive view of the Medieval period is insistently one of barbarism, ignorance, intolerance, and violence (38).
 - **Emerging Age:** The horrors of the emerging age of freedom such those in Soviet communism are downplayed or swept under the rug (38).

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Aspect IX

- The Progressive belief that the application of the right salvific practice will bring about an entirely new age of freedom, justice, and human flourishing is not the result of logic or scientific demonstration; it is a doctrine taken entirely on faith, and it should be noted that it is a very blind faith (38).
- Whenever Progressive dogma collides with unfavorable scientific data, it is the data that gets ignored, or shouted down, while the dogma is proclaimed as the ultimate reality (39).

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Aspect X

- Two Different Kinds of Humans
 - *In a Progressive religious scheme, two distinct and antagonistic types of humans emerge: those who have embraced the new age of freedom, and those still tied to the old age of oppression.*
- There are the enlightened and unenlightened (the “new humans” as the Communists often used to call them) (39).
- While the names of the antagonistic groups may change, the underlying structure is similar.

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Aspect X

Two Antagonistic Groups	
Revolutionaries	Reactionaries
Progressives	Obscurantists
Tolerant	Hatemongers
Feminists	Sexists
Victimized	Privileged
Racists	Egalitarians
Greens	Climate deniers

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Aspect X

Enlightened	Unenlightened
Can be trusted with power	Cannot be trust with power
Mistakes and foibles are minimized	Similar crimes are unforgivable
Assumed to be well-meaning, honest, accurate, and impartial in their assessments, research, and reportage	By necessity biased and tainted

- **Key:** These categories are not the result of careful observation of data; they are doctrines taken on faith (40).

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Aspect X

- The Progressive division of the world into absolute categories of good and evil people corresponds to and borrows from the Christian division of the world into the (ultimately) saved and damned (41).
- This good and evil cannot be mapped into discrete groups of people in this age of the world; the line that divides good from evil runs through every human heart and is found in both inside and outside the Church (41).
- Further, the final division of the human race will not definitively happen until the end of the ages, a responsibility that belongs solely to an all-knowing and all-just God (41).

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Aspect X

- For Christians, our primary opponents are not other humans but non-human, demonic powers. We have a genuine love for (human) enemies and hope for their rescue, and to reserve their hatred for evil spirits who oppress the world (41).
- Progressive religion, on the other hand, claims to be able to divide the human race between the good and the evil *in the present*, and it places the authority to make judgments in the hands of other (enlightened) humans. And since Progressive religion denies the existence of evil spirits, it becomes necessary to demonize whole segments of the human race who are then marginalized and, if necessary, educated for the health and salvation of the world (41).

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Aspect X

- In this light, it makes sense why it is all-important that members of the enlightened (new humanity) choose modes of dress, manners of speech, use of symbols, communal expressions of religious belief, patterns of diet, books and news sources, bumper stickers and yard signs, and even opinions about trivial matters all take on an importance entirely out of proportion to their intrinsic insignificance (42).
- In short, Progressive believers use “virtue signaling” to identify themselves with the saved and separate themselves from the damned. Despite much rhetoric about diversity to the contrary, Progressive religious enclaves tend to be highly monocultural and homogenous (42).

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Aspect XI

- Revolution as the Process by which Salvation is Achieved.
 - *Revolution – the annihilation of the structures of oppression – is the privileged means by which Progressive belief will bring about the new age of freedom.*
- For Christianity, “reform” is the gradual process process of re-aligning the patterns of personal and social life to perennial and spiritual realities, an activity that can often be unsettling but tends to purify and re-vivify rather than destroy (43).

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Aspect XI

- Progressive faiths view the idea of revolution differently and far more positively. In Progressive belief, revolution is salvific; it is the act of overthrowing and annihilating the oppressive structures of the current evil order and setting the stage for an entirely new and liberated order, a transformation that will necessarily and spontaneously take place once the old order has been destroyed (42).
- Despite all the evidence to the contrary, Progressive believers maintain a confident hope in a glorious future state that will come about – no one quite knows how – by the complete destruction of what currently exists (42).

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Aspect XI

- In Progressive religion, violence is thus not an accidental event or an unfortunate corruption of high ideals. When applied to the annihilation of the perceived structures of oppression, violence is a morally good activity, a positive and praiseworthy act (44).
- For Progressive believers, the age of oppression needs to be blotted out and denied existence entirely, lest it continue to taint the age of freedom (44).
- That said, we see the emergence of “cancel culture” so prevalent on Progressive believers today.

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Aspect XI

- Historically, what begins with the tearing down of statues, burning of books, eliminating uses of language – as power is gained – leads to eliminating living humans (44).
- The 19th century German Jewish poet Heinrich Heine once remarked, “Where they burn books, they will also ultimately burn people.”
- Progressive believers use either sharp and decisive revolution (French, Russian, Nazi Revolutions) or longer and gradual methods.

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Aspect XI

- Additionally, rooted in our awareness that evil must be battled and that something must die if the guilty human race is to be purified, there is a need for sacrifice.
- This can be offering sacrifices and animals and food to the gods, human sacrifice, or for Christianity, the extraordinary sacrifice of Christ on the Cross – which was God himself (46).
- With the neo-Gnostic denial of the Fall, the instinct for sacrifice and blood-letting has not disappeared, but has turned outward, away from the mitigation of personal guilt toward the elimination of the demonized non-believer (46).

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Aspect XI

- Furthermore, as Christianity has a missionary impulse to evangelize, the same is true for the Progressive believer. The foremost strategy is anger – anger over the evil structures which inhibit the new age of freedom (46).
- The process of raising awareness of the need to deconstruct or tear down evil oppressive structures via anger, rage, resentment is sometimes called “consciousness-raising” (47).
- Today, the term “woke” is sometimes used to express someone who is informed, educated, and conscious of social injustice and racial inequality.

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Aspect XII

- The Necessary Failure of Modern Religion
 - *The Progressive revelation always ultimately fails, because Progressive belief is founded on a radical departure from reality. Paradoxically, the more completely a given revolution succeeds, the more complete will be its resulting failure.*
- Because they are founded on erroneous views of God, the world, and humanity, Progressive faiths always fail in bringing about their promised liberation (48).

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Aspect XII

- They are not only incapable of effecting serious improvement, but by destroying much of the institutional and cultural fabric necessary for any reasonably happy and sane human life, such revolutionaries leave desolate human wastelands behind them (48).
- Progressive religion is attractive in that it can point to obvious evils in the existing world and instill a hope for overcoming those evils in the future. Appealing to good human desire and denying any personal guilt, it appeals especially to the young who have little experience of themselves or the world (48).


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Aspect XII

- If Progressive religion were able to maintain itself forever in the pre-revolutionary phase of hopeful anticipation, its attractiveness might be sustained (48).
- But the greatest blow to Progressive faith occurs when the revolution succeeds. Progressive believers then take hold of the power they have sought to usher in the new age, when the time has come for the fulfillment of their bright promises (49).
- Due to the impossibility of making good on those promises, the hoped-for paradise never arrives (49).

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Stages of Failed Revolution

Stages	
Stage I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revolution has not gone far enough; counter-revolutionaries are betraying the cause, • Revolution has made everyone happy; counter-revolutionaries are bullied or silenced
Stage II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight of dismal reality can no longer be supported and propaganda becomes increasingly discredited.

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Responses to Failed Revolution

Stages	
Response I	Simple disillusionment - fall into cynicism and despair leading to escapism, addictions, suicide; or the philosophy of nihilism (no meaning).
Response II	Seek another expression of Progressive faith – deeper revolution that promises to get the job done better; shift from one religion to another
Response III	Conversion - Re-evaluation of the underlying structure of Progressive belief and provoke a desire to find a completely different way forward

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Summary Comment

- Like many deceptive or problematic things, Progressive religion's darker side is not immediately apparent and often becomes clear only over time.
- A good understanding of the attractiveness of Progressive religion is a necessary first step in countering its influence, whether in the wider society or in our own lives (52).



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Structure of Modern Progressive Religion

- Read chapter III
- Some furth notes on Progressive Neo-Gnostic Religion
- Pages 53 - 66

