

# ENCIRCLING PROVIDENCE

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# Encircling Providence

Lecture Number

636

*in the series*

Procession of Doctrine

*by*

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*Published by*

Burnell Foundation  
290 West Foothill Boulevard  
Arcadia, California, U.S.A.

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## \* Encircling Providence

This second Sunday after Easter makes us aware of the manner in which God has anticipated man's every need. By means of parabolic illustration, we are informed concerning these needs and the providence that has cared for them.

By eternal truth man is established in his perfection. And by this unchangeable truth man has also the wonderful preservation of teaching authority whereby he is kept in and aware of the truth of his perfection. Our Lord is this truth; for He said, I am the truth. He is also the way which He has established. For

\*(Class lecture, April 15, 1956)

convenience this way is termed the "Magisterium" and is the teaching authority. Sometimes it is more formally called the "Church."

We must be careful when we apply words to truth and name their meanings, lest we become diverted by the names and by the words. The tendency always is for the mind to make materialistic pictures of these finite forms of expression; as, when we speak of a church, we are apt to think of a stone building with spires, altar, and aisles. In other words, we make a mental picture of a superficial structure. To circumvent the mental pictures, we speak, instead, of the Magisterium, the teaching authority.

This particular Sunday, which is the second after Easter, we take especial note of the way providence has preserved man in God's eternal truth. Because it is a *second* Sunday, it has the specific significance of conveying a subsistent message; hence the Gospel account tells us of a miraculous feeding, the feeding of the mystical body of our Lord, which is the Magisterium—in other words, dispensing the teaching author-

ity to the church. The church, which consists in the body of the faithful, is also called the spouse of God, or in a more strictly personal way, the mother. Yet all of these names are mere words which can conceal or reveal truth, as the case may be.

Our need is to be able to translate these symbols, these words, not *into* materialistic pictures, but *out* of the materialistic pictures that immediately leap to the mind; to translate them into the spirit of reality which is being generated in you. Truth is to be translated into Spirit rather than into materialistic pictures. Of course we have need of words; they are our means of communication; but the words, like symbols, must no longer conceal but must reveal God, eternal and unchangeable Truth.

Today when the Lord calls Himself the "Good Shepherd," He is conveying the idea of the protection and the guidance, both of which go with the spirit of shepherding. Every good shepherd provides subsistence, as well as protection and guidance, to his sheep.

The teaching authority of the Magisterium

rests upon a rock, signifying its stability. Real authority is stable; it is not built on the shifting sand of mental opinion. When the storms of dissention come, the foundations do not dissolve in doubts. Hence the figure of speech called "the rock" is used to show that the foundation is strong and firm. If we are to have an authority of teaching which offers guidance and protection, it must be strong indeed—sure and true and able to meet all needs.

The character of Peter personifies this, for the Lord called him a rock. Consequently, Peter represents a fundamental; he personifies faith, rocklike faith; because it is true faith that rests upon the unshakable, rocky foundation of reason.

Our hope is to translate these figures of speech out of the materialistic pictures into their spiritual meanings, so that they stand forth with real significance; and no longer will the signs and symbols conceal, but they will reveal the heart of Truth Itself. Only the Spirit can unveil the heart. It is the spirit of Truth that unveils for you the heart of God. Let this

spirit be your power of translation from symbols to reality. The historical pictures presented today must be translated into personal realities, otherwise their true significance is lost.

Now, we present the narrative picture of Peter's humiliation—and it was humiliation rather than humility, because he had proudly boasted of his faithfulness even before the true spirit of faith had been born in him. Peter was indignant when the Lord predicted his three-fold denial of affiliation. Cock crowing leads to humiliation, whereas humility denies the spirit of presumption and receives the gift of fortitude.

The Lord knew Peter as the rock in spite of his three denials, even before the true foundation of his nature had been confirmed in him; even while Peter seemed weak in his human nature, the Lord saw the rocklike spiritual strength ready to be confirmed in him when presumption had met its final humiliation. Each cock crow revealed to Peter his own human weakness, until finally he was stripped of his own egoism by the force of his denials. At last

humiliation had reduced him to nothing in himself, and humility healed humiliation. It was to Peter's humility that the successful testing of his love was applied. And for every denial came an affirmation of enduring love.

We are informed of Peter's special commissioning in the gospel of Saint John. After our Lord's resurrection, He met the disciples at the Sea of Tiberius. It was at this time that He said to Peter, "Peter, lovest thou me?" And Peter responded, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." And the Lord commissioned, "Feed my lambs." Then again Peter was asked the same question, "Lovest thou me, Peter?" Again Peter answered, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest I love thee." And again the Lord said, "Feed my lambs." This had canceled two denials, but there was still a third; so once again our Lord said, "Peter, lovest thou me?" And a third time Peter affirmed his great love. This time our Lord gave a wider range to Peter's commission, for He said, "Feed my sheep." No matter what conditions arose, the lambs and

the sheep of the Lord's flock were to be fed by the love of God.

Today is the Sunday of the feeding of the lambs and of the sheep. The lambs are fed by the Lord's ministers, as personified in Peter. But what of those who are neither lambs nor sheep? Love cannot stop there—not with such love as is revealed in the providence of God. We feel confident that the lambs and the sheep, those of the Good Shepherd's flock, are satisfactorily provided for with supersubstantial bread. But what of those who know no shepherd, who are outside the flock? Are these unprovided for, are these excluded from the bountiful heart of God, are these neglected and forgotten?

God has provided for these also through the love and mercy of His Magisterium. And just what is the living symbol of God's love and mercy towards the wayward souls? It is the mother. By the term "mother," we mean the true mothering heart of the Magisterium—the heart of God in its most sacred protectiveness. There is a certain sense of justice that has pro-

vided for the sheep and the lambs—members of the flock. Ordinarily there is little question regarding these who belong to the fold. But as we said before, the Lord has anticipated every need in this world; and He has left no one out in His program of salvation. His very position on the Cross, with his arms outstretched, encircled the world—His saving arms cover all. And consequently He has anticipated every need in humanity. He has provided for even more than His lambs and sheep; He has provided also for His goats. Even these are not neglected by the providential love of God.

The wondrous and healing circle of truth includes all. No one is excluded from the benediction of the Magisterium. The mind puts direct questions: What about this person, what about that person? This person has no religion; that person has never even accepted the idea of God. What chance has he for salvation? Certainly he has done nothing to justify God's protection. How can one who denies God ever be saved by God?

Remember, when you are forming human

judgments regarding others, that even Peter denied his Lord three times. And the Lord took his very denial and converted it into an affirmation of love. Peter personifies the teaching ministry that is aware of human weakness and is merciful towards it.

A goat, you know, is symbolic of the sinner, the one who is seemingly outside the circle of redemption. Let us see what provision is made for the goats. There is very definite teaching authority regarding their salvation; it is called the tending and feeding of the goats. Of course it is not necessary to be a goat in order to receive spiritual help. But suppose you are concerned about your own or another's goatishness, and you don't want to be left out. The Lord in His providence has left nothing out. His government extends to cover every need that can be imagined. Nothing has been left out in His shepherding; for shepherding signifies God's providence, protection, guidance, and feeding.

When we consider the establishing and consolidating of this Magisterium, the society of the faithful (the so-called elect), we are speak-

ing of the Lord's mystical body. This, though termed "mystical," is none the less real. And even as the Lord appeared in the form of flesh, so the Magisterium has its outward form called the church of God. The church is not an organization, but the living organism of spiritual truth.

Now, the picture presented implies those who acknowledge the rich treasure of the living word, and others who persist in being spiritually impoverished. Who is to care for those who cannot care for themselves?

The Lord, when He was on the Cross, gave the testament of His own will. He bequeathed to humanity, His mother, the one who had nourished and protected Him as a child—His mother. His great gift to a needy world was the mothering congruity of His own mother. To the beloved John who represented God's love for man, our Lord said, "Behold thy mother," and to the divine mother, "Behold thy son." This great grant of protection, made as a covenant of the Cross, is all men's salvation. None

are excluded from the benedictive mercy.

Let us not be diverted from a spiritual truth by the familiar term "mother." This does not mean a mere female parent, not a purely human mother limited to relationship of flesh. We must translate the term into its spiritual meaning, to discover this wonderful mother principle which has received the authority of mercy from God.

We speak of God the Father, but the idea of God as a purely male parent must be transcended. Even to think of God under the entirely male aspect implies a hardness which is even a bit tyrannical. The Old Testament represents God as tyrannical, a God of justice. But with the New Testament there began a clearer view of God, a recognition of His love and mercy. The evolution of religious perception begins with an anthropomorphic concept of God as a glorified human father; then with greater maturity, comes a religious adolescence in which the mental trend is toward metaphysical ideas. Here Jesus is looked upon only as the historical teacher of Christian principles. But in full de-

velopment of religious consciousness, the adolescence must give place to adult understanding wherein the symbols reveal meaning, and Christ Jesus is recognized as Very God and Very man. The historical Jesus has ascended to confirm our spiritual enlightenment. It is in spiritual enlightenment that the Magisterium presides—the Logos and the Sophia, one teaching authority. There is no effeminate masculinity nor masculine effeminacy, but a perfect harmony of justice and mercy—that wonderful union of the condignity and the congruity, which constitutes the Lord and His Magisterium.

God, purely masculine, is considered hard and just, but without mercy. An entirely feminine idea of deity would be too sympathetic. But the Father-Mother revelation, provided through Jesus Christ and His mother, shows the union of justice and mercy as complete. The mercy of God is personified in the holy mother, the true congruity. The justice of God is preserved in Christ Jesus, the Word made flesh. We are not talking about mere personalities, but truly personal situations. Let us not be ob-

scured by a finite and human picture of our Lord and His mother, but let the spirit in us translate these projected symbols into a personal relationship with God's providence.

The church which represents the embodiment of teaching authority, the Magisterium, is frequently referred to as "mother," the "mother church," the "mothering principle." Who is your spiritual mother? Who is it that guides your ways, nurtures your soul, and feeds you supersubstantial bread? It is your instruction. Your instruction, then, is your mother; your guidance and your protection are preserved therein. This mother of your second birth is invisible to you except as the spirit in you makes recognition possible. The instruction is your mystical body, none the less real because it is invisible—in fact, more real because it is witnessed to by the very spirit of truth.

The apostles and the disciples of our Lord saw His visible body and believed the invisible one. They had faith, and they used their faith as evidence of the unseen body of the Magisterium being then established. While the in-

visible body was being established and consolidated as the Magisterium, the disciples saw the risen Lord; they accepted with faith this mystical "One" that they could not see. In the same way, they could see the visible form of the Lord's mother; but faith only could reveal to them the establishment of the mothering instruction prevailing in the Magisterium.

In the Book of Revelation, the Apocalypse, the congruity of the feminine is signified—like a great mothering principle—as the rainbow encircling the throne of God. She, the mother aspect of God's love and mercy, is a covenant, the promise of peace, of hope, of protection, the encircling mercy of salvation. But, symbolized as "mother" or "rainbow," it is the spirit of meaning that really matters to us personally.

All of these pictures are brought together in the hope of somehow transmitting the true personal meaning of spiritual instruction. We of this Instruction do not have a church built out of stone. We do, however, have an "upper chamber," which we like to call this room from which radiates the spirit of Truth. Our

"church" is indeed invisible, and yet it is none the less real; it is the body of instruction in truth. Like the rainbow 'round the throne of God, it is a covenant of congruity in your life. You do not see the throne of God, you do not even see the rainbow, but you can believe in it. It is a covenant with God for your protection, for your salvation, the promise of salvation, a promise which truth has already fulfilled; for all the promises of God are eternally fulfilled even before they are announced.

Nothing is left out of this wonderful circle of mercy. Mary, the holy mother, personifies this circle. She is called the encircling nature of God's mercy; she is called the congruity wherein providence manifests. The condignity and justice of the Logos is maintained; but the Sophia, wisdom of congruity, is the mirror of revelation wherein the reflection of the condignity is omnipotently dispensed. Congruity has also an omnipotent action, but one provided through the condignity of the Lord's omnipo-

tence; the omnipotence of congruity is one of grace or reflection.

To understand this, recall the first miracle in Cana of Galilee. The sympathetic mother knew, without being told, of the shortage of wine at the marriage feast. She always knows what is needed. She was not the one who performed the miracle; but it was at her intercession, at her request, that the miracle of the translation from water into wine was performed. She did not herself perform the miracle, but she interceded at the time of need and made the miracle available. She stood beside her Lord and Master, her Son, and was the advocate of the needy. Her position was thus established as the advocate for everyone in need. This is her spiritual meaning—more than a mere human personality, she is actually the very principle of fitting the miracle to the need. Providence is your guidance, your protection, your instruction in truth, reflected as an answered prayer according to your need.

The prayer of instruction does not draw a circle that excludes anyone; it is a circle of love.

We, as the spiritual children of Mary, by love rather than by flesh, receive the action of her mercy to overcome our shortcomings. She does not exclude anyone; therefore she has the special title of "advocate of sinners,"—of those who have missed the mark somehow, somewhere. And who cannot qualify in some regard for her protection?

In the first chapter of Canticles, there is the prophecy for the salvation of the goats. A special office created by the Lord for His mother: "Feed my goats" was the decree by which she was ordained. Feed my goats—feed them with the Word of Truth. Feed my goats, was the command which foresaw the divine mother's office. He, the Lord of all, knew all, and provided for all; then He Himself confirmed all by the authority of His own personal presence. Eternally He had foreseen the office of His mother, and then He confirmed her officially as His mother by deigning to be her son and accepting her as His mother. Will you let her be to you your salvation, your mother in the spirit of love? Feed my goats, was the Lord's

command in creating her the mother of mercy.

Every need was anticipated even before the need arose. The whole plan was provided for and carried through. So, in a certain sense, man is saved even before he needs saving. God's mercy is available even before man needs it and calls upon it. Divine anticipation of every need is the work of providence. "Feed my goats" takes care of those who are neither lambs nor sheep. He created the mother nature for this purpose. God ordained the office of ministry to feed His lambs and His sheep, so He foresaw the need for His goats. He is the universal saviour even for the goats, so "Feed my goats" became the office of the mother of mercy.

Symbolically speaking, goats are the sinners—but just what are sinners? Sinners are explained as those who miss the mark, those who fail to fulfill the aim and direction of their nature. Therefore by the term "goats" we are to understand the meaning to be "sinners." Goats seem to suggest an innate stubbornness; for example, we say, "stubborn as a goat." Sinners too are most stubborn in their perversity. Only

their stubbornness keeps them from accepting truth.

The scapegoat is traditionally the victim of sin. But our Lord was not ashamed to seem a scapegoat, for He had accepted the likeness of sinful flesh although He did not accept sin. He let all the denials of God be thrust upon Him, Who was in Himself the supreme evidence of God. He was the scapegoat for the denials of God. All such blasphemies were expiated through Him Who is God.

"Goats" signify sinners—those who are depicted in the last analysis of judgment as being relegated to the left side of the throne of righteousness, while the elect are placed on the right side. What do we mean by talking of a left side and a right side of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent God? Do you think God is divided into right and left? Not if He is omnipresent. Omnipresence includes right and left. What, then, is the significance of a right and a left? It is said that the Lord Himself is at the right hand of God. But the congruity of the divine mother is represented

as the rainbow of eternal promise encircling the throne of God. Her merciful heart includes the goats. His encircling mercy draws to the center all that is left. A true circle has no left nor right, no up nor down; in this way, the circle of omnipotence reflects omnipotence itself.

How do we translate this mother picture into a personal perception, one not limited by material concepts? We are talking spiritually of the principle of mercy and protection which belongs to the teaching authority of your Instruction. Your Instruction is your spiritual mother who provides your second birth. The period of study is your spiritual gestation; the womb in which your candidacy is harbored is your own lecture room. From this mothering Instruction you are born forth into full revelation of truth which is your true being.

If the "goats" are to be at the left side of God and the elect on the right, how can those who are "left" ever be on the right side of truth? Is there an ambidextrous action that can deliver a righteousness to the "left-outs?" This

deliverance is the great work of the mirror of negation, the Mary nature. Reflection in a mirror reverses the position of right and left without really causing any physical alteration; only the relative aspect is converted. Omnipresence and omniscience of God are eternally right because His eyes are too pure to behold iniquity. Therefore, for a relative judgment in the world, He has provided an advocate who encircles with her rainbow of promise—a merciful deliverance which leaves no one out.

The mind continues to make pictures. Do not become lost in them; rather, through the spirit of truth in your own heart, translate the pictures into their living significance. A picture of God sitting on a throne, with an active right hand and a left hand, and with a rainbow encircling His throne, confuses and conceals the spirit of truth. But without a picture, truth seems abstract and metaphysical. The pictures, therefore, are offered for your spiritual translation—the goats on the left side, the elect on the right.

The "Mary" picture is also to be translated

into the spiritual mercy which is already fulfilled. The mother of mercy feeds her goats. Those who think of themselves as being left, or who maybe are not even aware of themselves enough to recognize that they are left—even these “goats,” God’s principle of mercy protects. Ignorance is no excuse for goatishness; for our Lord said from the Cross, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” And through His prayer, ignorance became innocence.

Here is the picture: sinners are depicted as goats, the elect as the sheep and the lambs. The sheep and the lambs are on the right side and stay on the right side, you know; they maintain righteousness. The goats, on the left side, lack righteousness. But these goats need not be without hope, for they have been entrusted to that wonderful principle of mercy called “the mother.”

Now, let’s be a little more specific and translate the picture into its spiritual meaning. Who is the mother, but the Magisterium? That mothering aspect of the teaching authority, the con-

dignity, provides the word of authority; but congruity is the mothering aspect of this Word, the protectiveness of love in action, covering even the goats. These most in need are entrusted to the care of this mother principle pervading the Magisterium.

O Great Mother,  
that thou mayest translate  
these goats into sheep and lambs!

Their sins, their failures, their dispositions, may make it seem that they deserve to be left; they may seem to deserve no mercy, because of their stubborn dispositions, their goatlike characteristics. But this mother of mercy, this mothering heart of love, has a wonderful ability to disentangle truth from falsity; she has the healing art of forgiveness; she knows how to discern the lie from the integrity of personal nature, the sin from the person. She is God’s wonderful clearinghouse for all misfortunes, omissions, and conditions of life that would seem to leave us out of truth.

Looking at it from a merely human view-

point, we are apt to say, "These people who are hostile to truth certainly deserve to be left out; they deserve to be abandoned to their own perversity." But it is the office of this great spiritual mother, instruction in the word of truth, which is an embodiment in this world of a discernment. By the intercession of spiritual discernment, even the goats are saved from their stubborn perversity. Their salvation is not according to their own righteousness, which they have not, but according to the infallible righteousness of the Magisterium.

We are informed with authority that outside the bosom of this great mother there is no salvation. But this statement is not bigotry, exclusiveness, nor smugness. Her bosom is not an inner circle of the virtuous only, excluding to an outer circle all those who have erred in their ways. If you think her bosom excludes the ones who really need her, you, yourself, have erred and need her help. The office of this great mother Magisterium never treats of war and vengeance against anyone, but only of peace and forgiveness for all. There are no "black"

sheep, "lost" lambs, nor "goats," to our mediatrix. Her benedictive bosom encircles all within the rainbow 'round the throne of God. Nothing is left out of the bosom of her love. Her heart expands in love to the needs of all. She is the spiritual mother of God's children. What true mother seeks vengeance and war against any of her children?

Officially, your instruction in truth carries out this same benedictive healing. There is no vengeance nor warring against those who are hostile to God's word, only a benedictive healing in the form of forgiveness of their ignorance. The instruction is not condemning, but saving. This discerning wisdom is within the bosom of your instruction.

One cannot say, *I* belong to this Instruction, as though he were excluding others. Do you really appreciate that the heart of your Instruction leaves no one out? The goats of your Instruction are for healing and saving, not for vengeance. Who is to distinguish the right from the left in the bosom of that wonderful healing perception of omnipresence? God's right must

be an omnipresence because He, Himself, is omnipresent. What, then, is the left hand of God? It is the reflection of the right—not opposed to the right, but obedient to the action of the right. Instruction in truth is that wonderful reflection of omnipotence that gathers all, consolidates and establishes all in divine love and universal salvation.

The Word of Truth does not quarrel with lies; rather, truth reveals truth even in the midst of lies. Instruction in truth fulfills this particular office of discerning reality even when unreality seems to prevail.

How wonderful it is to discover an instruction that knows how to simplify the mystery of an omnipotent, omnipresent God, with His active humility, His meekness, softness, and sweetness, personified as the mother. Living providence is the working model of truth. There is providence in your subsistence. You are to be fed whether you are a sheep, a lamb, or a goat. You are to be fed, even hand fed, by this love which is both condign and congruous.

We do not separate being from action, any

more than we separate the word of truth from the dispensing of this word of truth. There are some who receive, others who instruct; but there is no separation between these two; actually they are one body. This word of truth and the dispensing of this word of truth are a double aspect of one indivisible life. Nourishing, even in the process of gestation, is spiritual. This Instruction blesses all who contact it.

Do you feel that life beat of truth in you? Are you aware of its action, its spiritual action as one that does not separate condignity from congruity, but they become one wonderful revelation of justice and mercy? The working principle, the working knowledge, the working model of this Instruction is that perfect union of the authoritative word with its dispensation; the treasure chest of God provides the riches of truth for the needs of humanity. Our Lord and Creator anticipated every good in creation. Even in His providence He made everything right. Those who feel they are out of the inner circle of God's love, have only to reflect in the mirror of perfection to discover the justice of

His right hand mercifully dispensed through the mothering providence. This is His healing salvation; this is the work of instruction.

Where is the line drawn between the lambs, the sheep, and the goats? All belong to the Lord, and all are mothered. She does not leave out any of God's children; she feeds them all. She is the shepherdess of all. Yet in her special office, she protects the otherwise unprotected.

It is by Thee, O Lord,  
that we discover our world  
filled with Thy glory.  
Even as the heavens have been established,  
so is the earth.  
O, Jesus, Our Divine Shepherd,  
we bless Thee, we give Thee thanks.  
It is by Thee that  
our great mother has been established  
and confirmed in her  
office of healing grace.  
By Thy presence truth is revealed.  
By Thy providence  
the office of ministration is founded,

whereby truth subsists and lives  
through every age.  
Nothing can destroy it.  
The gates of hell cannot prevail against it;  
because truth is infallibly what it is,  
founded upon the rock of authority—  
not a hard stone, but a rocklike  
foundation of security.  
Nothing can prevail against truth.  
Truth subsists and lives  
through every age,  
visible or invisible;  
it continues, saving all that  
put themselves under this ministering  
guidance.  
Even those who are seen as goats,  
who seem to be left out according  
to justice,  
unknown to themselves are  
protected and fed  
through the loving dispensation of mercy.  
The Mother of Mercy  
receives her authority, her strength,  
even her mercy,  
from Thee, O Lord.

She does not claim anything for herself.  
This is her modesty, that she  
refers all to her Lord and Master.  
It is in Him that she glories,  
not in herself.  
Therefore her glory is His glory.  
Her authority, her strength, her unity,  
are all the Lord's.  
We likewise bless and thank Thee, Lord,  
that Thou hast secured this authority,  
this strength, this unity,  
by giving us Thyself.  
To Thee, the sheep and the lambs  
owe their obedience.  
They hear Thy word and know  
the voice of their Lord;  
they hear it, they recognize their Shepherd.  
They know their Shepherd is the Lord,  
as the Shepherd knows them.  
But even more than that,  
even those who seem to be not known  
are yet known through the office  
created for this special purpose.

O Great Mother of Love and of Mercy,  
feed thy goats.  
These are especially entrusted to thee  
that thou mayest convert them into  
sheep and lambs.  
Even though by their sins  
they may deserve to be driven to the left,  
they will, by thy intercession,  
be placed on the right.

The earth is full of the mercy of the Lord.  
By the Word of the Lord the  
heavens are firmly  
established [and these heavens are firmly  
established on earth].  
In the Lord we trust.  
Praise the Lord forever.

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