



THE NEW PAGANISM II

This new paganism has assumed a variety of names each understandably beginning with the adjective “new.” Here are some samples: It is call the *New Theology*, *the New Age*, and *the new Creation*. It is a religion. It has worship and ritual in order to create the new man. Why? **So this new man can create the new world!**

We can say that the new paganism is not really new. It has deeply penetrated into orthodox Christianity. It is in this sense that the United States has become a vast mission country. We need missionary’s right in our own backyard. Under Pope St. Pius X, at the turn of the 20th century, this new paganism is called Modernism. I wrote a two-part series on Modernism months ago for this column. Note the focus – Modernism! Something new! Read the papal encyclical “Pascendi Dominici Gregis.” Every Catholic should read it!

What is the root of this new paganism? It is pagan because it is idolatry. **The essence of idolatry is worshipping a creature as though it were God.** It is giving divine honors, divine respect or sacrificing to a creature. So the root of this new paganism is what Fr. John Hardon calls **self-idolatry**. Some might say that this is a fascinating idea. but there is a danger in that. Self-idolatry is a pervasive reality.

What form does this self-idolatry take?

This new paganism idolizes each person’s own mind and will. We can legitimately say that the new paganism is a **religion**. The great minds that have shaped our new pagan culture in America (they are great minds!) have developed a whole “Summa” except that the god is no longer the Infinite Creator of the human race. It is now **man himself**. I would identify John Dewey who had a great, evil mind, as thinking through this in his lifetime (structured and organized it) and developed a system of thought which has penetrated all American education. John Dewey defined religion as “that way of life that each person determines to follow.” Religion on these terms is loyalty and consistency to one’s own thoughts and one’s own decisions. The essence of religion on these terms re-defines the meaning of truth. Truth, even way before the time of Christ, was considered by those such as Aristotle, Plato and Socrates as the **conformity of the mind with objective reality**.

Let’s explore that. What is Truth?

It is that which my mind thinks or conceives about something. If what it conceives or has in its mind agrees with the reality of it, then the mind possesses Truth. For example, I wear a watch. The reality outside my mind is that what I wear around my wrist is a watch. It tells me the time. Therefore I have the truth that I wear a watch. I think I have a glass of water on my desk. I take the glass and drink it. It IS water. Therefore I have the truth. If my mind thinks the same as what the reality outside the mind is then the mind possesses the truth.

What about the New Paganism? Truth in the new paganism is not conformity of the mind with reality; **it is the mind producing reality**. It is the mind determining what is real; it is the mind deciding what reality is. In other words the new paganism truth is defined *what I think is true*.

The same applies regarding that which is good. In all sane society over the centuries *the good* is that which each person *needs*; what each person needs to be truly satisfied. Good is what makes a person truly happy. The word *truly* is crucial. I mean what really makes a person *truly happy*. That’s the good.

In the new paganism, what is the good? Good is what I **want**. What I **desire!** It’s what I choose with my free will. In both cases, what is determining what is true and in deciding what is good? It is each individual, each person’s mind from within that determines and declares what is true and good. I think it was the 3rd edition of Webster’s International Dictionary that stated it is no longer possible in the English language to give the meaning of a single word because the meaning of the words has to be determined by individuals each for themselves. Stay tuned folks!