

Da Vinci: Read Between the Lines

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If you're one of the forty million who are fascinated with *The Da Vinci Code* book or know someone who is, this article is for you! This piece will provide you with a reflection on Dan Brown's book which will help you "read between the lines" of *The Da Vinci Code* before the movie comes out on May 19th.

It is amazing that both practicing and non-practicing Catholics are pulled into the popularity of this book, and I have heard numerous Catholics say things like, "Wow, I *finally* understand what the Church has been up to all these years!" and "Now I know why the Church hates women" or any manner of strange reflection like that about our faith.

My purpose here is to present to you a clear understanding of why this book is dangerous to your soul and the souls of your loved ones. I want to show you that we cannot be neutral to its content. After presenting my main thesis about the book I will then describe the three main points supporting that thesis, and finally I will give you Dan Brown's own words so you don't think I am just making this stuff up! I hope you can keep an open mind about what I am going to say because the spiritual stakes are high. My purpose as a Catholic priest is to serve you and your spiritual welfare with a solid reflection on a powerful cultural phenomenon. I am also praying for all the people who will read this article or listen to the recording!

I want to emphasize before I proceed that I am not asking listeners to do anything that I have not done. In saying that we should not give anti-Catholic bigots like Dan Brown any money by buying his book or seeing his movie, I have followed my own advice. I got my copy of *The Da Vinci Code* at a used book store so that he does not profit off my critique. Nor do I plan to see the movie, but I may be standing out in front of a few movie theatres handing out this tape on May 19th!

Also, I wish to state what this article is not: it is not an attempt to analyze every historical claim in the book—other books have done that much better than I could do in a relatively short presentation. The sheer complexity of the images, claims and content of the book is part of the seduction of it. I propose to present select evidence from the book to back up my claim that this book repeats the pattern of the godless revolution that brought us the culture of decadence and death that we are now in. Dan Brown's own words are the best evidence against him.

I. The Main Thesis

My main thesis is simple: *The Da Vinci Code* is a piece of clever propaganda that repeats the strategy used by the radical feminists in the sixties that imposed upon us the culture of death. Let me restate my thesis this way: this book (and hence the movie) is a piece of propaganda which follows the same pattern as the revolution that gave us abortion and the rest of our promiscuous culture. The fallout of that revolution has led to the deaths of millions of innocents, and I fear that the fallout from the *Da Vinci* onslaught could lead to the spiritual deaths of millions more.

Let me explain first what I mean by the feminist strategy to impose the culture of death in the sixties. The architects of the strategy were godless cultural elites who sought to subvert the basic Christian value structure of our country and create a totally secular state where God and basic Christian values would be supplanted or even outlawed. Their strategy had three parts: first, they had to undermine authentic religious faith because the objective moral principles of Christianity stood against their agenda; they did so by attacking the Catholic Church as outmoded, out of touch, unjust and its leaders as evil. Secondly, they then replaced the belief system of authentic religious faith with an imitation-faith—"another gospel" as St. Paul would say—made up of clever slogans and seductive ideas that people would readily believe in. And finally, paying lip service to women's concerns, they used women as the instruments of their agenda and ultimately left all women desolate and wounded by the side of the road when their agenda was accomplished. This was the successful three-pronged strategy of the culture of death: kill real faith, replace it with propaganda and use women to do it.

II: *Da Vinci's* Three-Pronged Strategy

Friends *The Da Vinci Code* does this very thing. First, it wants to undermine the belief system of Catholics by attacking our Church with arguments that the average person just can't verify. Dan Brown peppers his book with anti-Catholic screed dressed up as pseudo historical research, and even most strong Catholics

will find it hard to refute because the lies and distortions seem believable. Weak Catholics will take it as confirmation of their basic prejudices against their own Church. Can you imagine Dan Brown doing a hatchet job on Islam and getting away with it?! Your average Muslim would not say, "Wow, now I finally understand why the Prophet Mohammed hid so much from his followers!" but Catholics seem to have no hesitation in saying this type of thing about the Truth of Christ!

Dan Brown mimics the second strategy of the anti-life revolutionaries by attempting to replace our transcendent belief in immutable truths with an alternative value system based on paganism. He even goes to great lengths to stigmatize the Catholic Church for unjustly "outlawing" and persecuting paganism, and painting pagan concepts and practices in the most favorable light. Further on I will describe for you a literal satanic sexual ritual that Dan Brown praises as holy and criticizes the Church for standing against it. He disingenuously claims that the Church's only reason for banning satanic rituals of this sort was because the nasty priests and bishops knew that Jesus was secretly married to Mary Magdalene and the Church wanted to cover it up so that they would not lose their all their political privileges through the ages. Hardly!

Finally, Brown follows the abortion revolutionaries in one of their most effective and destructive strategies: namely, getting women to do the dirty work of driving the nails into their own coffins. That is what the culture of death does after all. Women who sowed the seeds of the feminist revolution with its slogans of "reproductive freedom" and "women's choice" are now the ones who are reaping the whirlwind of destroyed bodies, children, marriages and lives. In addition to this, the men they set themselves up in competition against have allowed them to ruin their lives in these ways and have walked away from the battle without a scar. Never in the history of our country have men been allowed to be as irresponsible as they are today and get away with it. It is hard to think of a greater deception of women than the culture of death offers.

Brown's book, again, repeats the lie. He celebrates what he calls "the divine feminine," by which he means a New Age/pagan/satanic concept of female reproduction. First of all, this very concept does not divinize women because it reduces them to their sexual dimension alone. That's apparently how Dan Brown views women—frightening. Second of all, Brown uses this concept as a way of manipulating our emotions, just like the feminists do with their pro-choice propaganda. He makes us think that the Church historically degraded women and that it was a secret pagan cult that kept the true dignity of women alive for the past 2000 years while the Church persecuted women and tried to suppress knowledge of the divine feminine. What a stretch!

Finally, this book that claims to exalt women has only three female characters, one of whom is an empty-headed shill for the multiple haughty male characters who have to teach her everything she knows, another of whom is described as an overweight cultic prostitute and the third is a liberal nun who is brutally murdered in a church. Like the purveyors of the culture of death, Brown pays lip service to women's wellbeing while writing them into his script as dodos, prostitutes and fodder for male violence. So much for Dan Brown's commitment to the divine feminine, right?

In sum, the culture of death gained its power in our society by means of a three-pronged strategy; its proponents stigmatized the Church and religious belief; they replaced immutable truths with pagan-feminist propaganda; and they used and abused women to get what they wanted. Dan Brown's *Da Vinci Code* does all the same.

III: In Dan Brown's Own Words

Now let me proceed to a deeper analysis of this three-pronged strategy using some select quotes from the book to help you understand the agenda of *the Da Vinci Code*.

Strategy 1: Attack the Church

Let's start with his attempt to undermine the Church and discredit the moral authority of its leaders and doctrine.

Dan Brown is obviously a world-class propagandist trained in the fine art of smear campaigns. In his desire to convince a largely Christian audience of things that are fundamentally anathema to their value systems, he must first deconstruct the bases upon which the value system rests and then proceed to replace the values with their militant opposites. That's hard to do, but Brown has 454 pages in which to

make the effort. Let me describe the process of how this takes place and then give you the evidence of this in Brown's own words:

First, the propagandist must present his readers with the new ideas he wants to indoctrinate them with; then, if his ideas are to be accepted, he must misrepresent, stigmatize and ridicule the contrary teaching and set up a bogey man to attack and defame. He does this by sowing doubt in the reader's mind about the authority that represents the contrary teaching always describing that authority in the most negative light and imagery to cause the reader to feel antipathy toward it. And then to fully penetrate the consciousness of his reader, he ceaselessly repeats the new ideas with increasing intensity as the story line develops, always presenting this new reality in the most positive light, making it seem "cool" and relevant and then connecting the reader with a sympathetic character in the book who will create empathy for the new ideas. Brown's book is a classic work of brainwashing for the unsuspecting reader.

What new theory are we being indoctrinated with in Brown's book? It's simply that Jesus was married to Mary Magdalene. It is not a "new" idea because heretics for centuries have tried to convince people of this, but it may be a new idea to most of his readers. The re-packaging of heresies has happened continuously throughout the history of the Church, so the heretical idea will not be new to the Church. It is probably new to the 40 million people who bought his book however. The swaying of the masses is his purpose.

And why should this absurd idea be a threat to the Christian values of the reader? Mostly because the heresy is a vehicle by which Dan Brown does so much other damage to the core values of our faith. This theory of Jesus' marriage to the Magdalene allows him to undermine the apostolic tradition of the Church by claiming that the true authority of Christ was passed down through a blood line not through the Church guided by the Holy Spirit.

This theory gives him a stick with which to beat the Catholic Church for allegedly being anti-woman, anti-sex, anti-democratic, anti-pagan and anti-modern and for supposedly persecuting all the valiant heroes who tried to expose this secret to the world for the last 2000 years. It affords him endless opportunities to demonize, ridicule, mock and present the Church as a sinister and dark institution of evil men, all of which lends support to the new religion that Brown is preaching.

Finally, this theory allows him to create that whole new religion of pagan concepts which could look attractive as an alternative to what he has painted as an outmoded, misogynistic value system espoused by that hateful Catholic Church. It allows Brown to colonize our minds with seductive ideas like "the divine feminine," "sacred marriage" and an endless array of New Age and even satanic concepts.

A brief note on Brown's propaganda technique: the first 100 pages or so of the book are full generous amounts of superficially exciting narrative by which Brown attempts to bind the reader to the main characters and their persons. This classic propaganda strategy seeks to provoke an emotional response toward one or more characters in the book, in this case the main female character, so that the reader will empathize with her as she engages in the process of modifying her antiquated value system from her Christian upbringing. It is similar to the "role-playing" technique which is always part of values and behavior modification programs.

The opening section contains very few of the explicit anti-Christian ideas that Brown later uses because he does not want to alienate his reader at the beginning. Only after the first quarter of the book does Brown begin to explain in detail the more satanic concepts in order to sanitize them and make them acceptable to the reader. He usually indoctrinates his audience in a classroom setting of some type in the book where the mind-numbed students are willing to be re-oriented to the new ideas. Half-way through the book he shows the main character witnessing a satanic ritual but does not allow the reader to actually "see" it. The uncritical reader is thus hooked and hungers for more. Finally at about three-quarters of the way through the book he pulls out all the stops and gives the reader the full details of the ritual which by now, with the full force of his propaganda, the reader is "prepared" to witness. The reader has been "initiated" properly and now is not scandalized because he has obediently suspended his Christian belief system which would cause him to be shocked. The compliant reader has been reprogrammed to accept the satanic ritual as "natural" and even "holy." Such is the overall effect of the propaganda that Brown uses in *The Da Vinci Code*.

Now, let me give you some examples of the way in which Brown demonizes the Church to make the reader believe his nonsense about Jesus' marriage to Mary Magdalene and to warm the reader up to his replacement value system.

The main characters in Brown's book, Robert Langdon and Sophie Neveu, encounter a new age guru by the name of Leigh Teabing who serves as the prime indoctrinator of the characters we identify with. Teabing takes pot shot after pot shot at the Catholic Church and its leadership. In his main indoctrination session with Robert and Sophie we hear him say things like this:

"The woman they are speaking of," Teabing explained, "is Mary Magdalene. Peter is jealous of her."
"Because Jesus preferred Mary?"

"Not only that. The stakes were far greater than mere affection. At this point in the gospels, Jesus suspects He will soon be captured and crucified. So He gives Mary Magdalene instructions on how to carry on His Church after He is gone. As a result, Peter expresses his discontent over playing second fiddle to a woman. I daresay Peter was something of a sexist."

Sophie was trying to keep up [Note: see how Brown paints his female character as a total airhead? More on this below.] "This is Saint Peter. The rock on which Jesus built His Church."

"The same, except for one catch. According to these unaltered gospels, it was not Peter to whom Christ gave directions with which to establish the Christian Church. It was Mary Magdalene....Jesus was the original feminist."

"...And Peter had a problem with that," Langdon said, pointing to The Last Supper.

"Magdalene was recast as a whore in order to erase evidence of her powerful family ties."

(pp. 247-249)

Oh, please—how silly!

Here's another one which casts the Catholic Church as an evil demon standing against a secret society called the Priory of Sion as it was trying to convince the world that Mary Magdalene was the elusive Holy Grail and the wife of Jesus:

"This kind of infiltration could only have come from the Priory's oldest enemy."

Langdon glanced up. "The Church."

"Who else? Rome has been searching for the Grail for centuries."

Sophie was skeptical. "You think the Church killed my grandfather?"

Teabing replied, "It would not be the first time in history the Church has killed to protect itself. The documents that accompany the Holy Grail are explosive, and the Church has wanted to destroy them for years."

Don't you just hate this evil Catholic Church? If so, that is the intended objective of Brown's propaganda. The Church he presents to his readers is sinister, evil; its leaders are corrupt and deceitful or at the very least misguided fools. The characters of Teabing and Langdon do nothing but pile on all this type of hateful rhetoric with erroneous factual claims and lots of snide remarks and sniping comments which can sometimes be downright blasphemous. I will spare you the blasphemous comments which are many, but here I will just include a few of the snide remarks Teabing and others make about the Catholic Church or Christian faith in order to demonize it:

"The bible is product of man, my dear, not God."

"Virtually all the elements of the Catholic ritual...were taken from earlier pagan religions."

"It was all about power. The Church literally stole Jesus from his original followers."

"Of course the Vatican in keeping with its tradition of misinformation, tried very hard to suppress the release of these scrolls."

"Knights who claimed to be "searching for the chalice" were speaking in code as a way to protect themselves from a Church that had subjugated women, banished the Goddess, burned nonbelievers, and forbidden the pagan reverence for the sacred feminine."

"Yes. That's one of the reasons why the Grail legend is so rich in France. Many of the Vatican's Grail quests here were in fact stealth missions to erase members of the royal bloodline. Have you heard of King Dagobert?"

Sophie vaguely recalled the name from a grisly tale in history class. “Dagobert was a Merovingian king, wasn’t he? Stabbed in the eye while sleeping?”

“Exactly. Assassinated by the Vatican in collusion with Pepin d’Heristal.”

Sophie shook her head. “The Church had no influence on my grandfather!”

Teabing laughed coldly. “My dear, the Church has two thousand years of experience pressuring those who threaten to unveil its lies....The Church may no longer employ crusaders to slaughter non-believers, but their influence is no less persuasive. No less insidious.”

Langdon glared at Fache’s crucifix, uncertain how to phrase his next point. “The Church, sir. Symbols are very resilient, but the pentacle was altered by the early Roman Catholic Church. As part of the Vatican’s campaign to eradicate pagan religions and convert the masses to Christianity, the Church launched a smear campaign against the pagan gods and goddesses, recasting their divine symbols as evil.”

Those deemed “witches” by the Church included all female scholars, priestesses, gypsies, mystics, nature lovers, herb gatherers, and any women “suspiciously attuned to the natural world.” Midwives were also killed for their heretical practice of using medical knowledge to ease the pain of childbirth—a suffering, the Church claimed, that was God’s rightful punishment for Eve’s partaking of the Apple of Knowledge, thus giving birth to the idea of Original Sin. During three hundred years of witch hunts, the Church burned at the stake an astounding five million women.

SO DARK THE CON OF MAN (a cryptic verse written on the Mona Lisa in invisible ink):

“Sophie,” Langdon said, “the Priory’s tradition of perpetuating goddess worship is based on a belief that powerful men in the early Christian church ‘conned’ the world by propagating lies that devalued the female and tipped the scales in favor of the masculine.”

Sophie remained silent, staring at the words.

“The Priory believes that Constantine and his male successors successfully converted the world from matriarchal paganism to patriarchal Christianity by waging a campaign of propaganda that demonized the sacred feminine, obliterating the goddess from modern religion forever.”

(And the final quote.)

Sophie said, “You think Jesus Christ had a girlfriend?”

“No dear, I said the Church should not be allowed to tell us what notions we can and can’t entertain.”

“Did Jesus have a girlfriend?”

Her grandfather was silent for several moments. “Would it be so bad if he did?”

Sophie considered it and then shrugged, “I wouldn’t mind.”

Well, you get the point. I could go on and on, but the main reason for giving you these tidbits is to show you that this book is one massive piece of anti-Catholic and anti-Christian propaganda designed very cleverly to undermine any person’s Christian values. The average reader will subconsciously absorb the negativity towards the Church and end up hating or disrespecting the Church, seeing it as an institution repressive of women and suppressing the truth. The reader will thus be open to having his value system altered with a powerful presentation of a new value system based upon pagan, satanic beliefs which I will describe in the second section.

To reiterate my main thesis: Dan Brown has learned well from the radical feminist revolutionaries that brought us the culture of death. He is not doing anything that has not already been done by those who successfully convinced our culture to accept the wholesale killing of our children and destruction of our families and moral fiber. They too attacked and demonized the Church in order to discredit the authority which upholds the truth and meaning of our lives. They too infiltrated our consciousness with massive amounts of propaganda to replace our basic value systems and sanitize the evil concepts they wanted to sell us. They too got women to participate in their own funerals.

The danger of this *Da Vinci* book and movie I cannot repeat urgently enough. If our society has so fully caved into the culture of death and immorality by these same propaganda tactics, how much more dangerous to our society is this satanic propaganda? As the Book of Genesis said and as the Church knows by long experience, “the serpent is the most astute of all creatures.” Ultimately that serpent is after our souls and will use any pop writer and filmmaker to get what he wants. We cannot fall prey to his clever lies.

Strategy 2: Replace religious faith with a pagan and even satanic belief system

I will start this section with a quote from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians where he lashed out against other clever liars of his day trying to seduce his people away from Jesus Christ. We would do well to listen to his total prohibition of any seductive philosophies as we hear the Apostle speak to his community:

I am amazed that you are so soon deserting him who called you in accord with his gracious design in Christ, and are going over to another gospel. But there is no other. Some who wish to alter the gospel of Christ must have confused you. For even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel not in accord with the one we delivered to you, let a curse be upon him!

(Gal 1:6-8)

Strong words indeed! *The Da Vinci Code* is crammed with so many New Age, pagan and satanic concepts that it boggles the mind to consider them all. The problem with the book is again its clever manipulation of the reader with seductive propaganda. The inattentive reader who gets caught up in the superficial story of a high speed chase through the streets of Paris easily could go through the whole book and hardly notice the suffusion of the text with all these subliminal or open pagan concepts. The generous sprinkling of pagan and satanic views throughout the 454 pages acts like a gentle rain penetrating the subconscious mind of the reader to leave him literally saturated with "another gospel," as St. Paul says. I believe that this is why so many people are fascinated by this book. They have been rained on by the incessant propaganda.

Most people will not have the opportunity to sit down and pick through this book like I have and see all the horrible concepts at a glance, but I believe that it is the only way to winnow out the anti-Christian chaff and bring it to the surface for all to see. I am now going to read for you a partial listing of the New Age, Masonic, pagan or satanic references that I found in my reading of this book. Keep in mind that some of the terms I will list may be repeated dozens or even hundreds of times throughout the book. I just want you to see them as part of Dan Brown's indoctrination of his reader's mind with a new religion. (I literally had to go to the chapel after I got done pulling all this spiritual negativity out of the book!) Here's the list:

Hiéros gamos (a pagan Greek term which I'll explain more about below); Satanic pentagram (which he renames as pentacle); pyramids (one consisting of 666 glass panels); keystones; obelisks; zodiacs; astrology; fertility cults and rituals; goddess cults, goddess art and worship; wicca; nature worship and Mother Earth; yin yang; witches and crones; "the sacred feminine;" numeric ciphers, codes and puzzles; esoteric knowledge and hidden symbolism; secret societies, lodges and cults; alchemy; Egyptian gods and goddesses; Tarot cards; crystals; magic; anagrams; mystical teachings of the Kabbala; a pagan astrological device known as gnomon; The Rose Line, Rosslyn and the Rosslyn Chapel; a 33-foot Egyptian obelisk in a church; the secret Masonic brotherhood; fertility rituals performed by people on the spring equinox wearing masks and holding orbs; ritual nudity and chanting; hermaphrodites; Native American "wisdom;" pagan May Day; Friday the 13th; Rosicrucianism; gargoyles; sun worship; nature-worshipping festivals; pagan priestesses and their instruments: wands, ankhs, rattles and pagan statues; the Obelisk of Ramses; the number 13.

I'm only half way through!

Phallic symbols; Gnosticism and the Gnostic gospels; five stations of female life; pagan myths and stories; the Astrological Age of Pisces; the New Age of Aquarius; the Luciferian motto: do as you please; androgyny; Egyptian priests and priestesses; meditation gurus; Nirvana; the fertility god Baphomet; the Tower of Babel; black onyx; the goddess Sophia/Wisdom; papyrus scrolls with secret messages; the Pantheon; Stonehenge; circular churches for pagan fertility rituals; Knights Templar; freemasons; constellations, signs of the zodiac, comets, stars and planets; the Goddess of Astronomy; sarcophaguses and tombs; Eve and the Apple in the Garden; a Mithraic temple with a powerful magnetic field; cornucopias; Masonic seals; the hexagram; stargazing priests and pillars of the Temple of Solomon which are in all Masonic temples.

Now, if that is not enough to convince you that Brown wants to replace your religion here's another list of pagan gods and goddesses or other (even biblical) names that Brown uses with New Age meanings. I list them in alphabetical order: Adonis, Amon, Aphrodite, Ariel, Astarte, Aurora, Baphomet, Dionysius, Eve, Eros, the Eastern Star, Hermes, Horus, Ishtar, Isis, Krishna, Mars, Medusa, Mithras, Osiris, Pisces, Poseidon, Venus and Zeus. Even the name of the main female character, Sophie Neveu, sounds like the French term, *sophie neuveau*, which means "new wisdom." My how convenient that the main female is the incarnation of the goddess Sophia!

Most despicable of all, however, are Brown's attempt to sanitize the Satanic, something which he does at several key points of the book. There are many incidents of this, but only the one most egregious example will suffice to make my point.

First, Brown uses an actual satanic ritual to promote his idea that his pagan religion is holy and something that the wicked Catholic Church has unjustly persecuted for centuries. Glorifying this atrocious act in his book is bad enough, but presenting it as holy reminds me of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "*Woe to those who call good evil, and evil good, who change darkness into light, and light into darkness*" (Is 5:20). Brown is a master of this demonic twisting.

The ritual in question is called *hiéros gamos* (which he translates as "sacred marriage") and is described partially in chapter 32 and then completely in chapter 74 after his readers are fully brainwashed by his other propaganda. Dan Brown certainly knows that the term *hiéros* in Greek means a "holy" or "sacred" thing used in a pagan temple; but he could have used the other Greek word for "sacred" which is *hágios* and means "set apart for or by God," "consecrated" for sacred use, even "morally pure," "upright." This is the term used in the New Testament to describe marriage and family life! (cf. 1 Cor 7:14).

Now think of the terrible perversion that is going on here. What Dan Brown calls an ancient pagan "sacred marriage" ceremony, is nothing other than a perverse mockery of holy matrimony depicted in living color in the pages of his book. I can't describe it or read the passage without offending my own deepest values, but I can say that if this act was "sacred" it was only so to the devil.

It is important to understand Brown's main reference to this act. The ceremony he describes was featured graphically in the disgraceful 1999 Stanley Kubrick movie called *Eyes Wide Shut*. The star, Tom Cruise, was a clandestine witness to a secret satanic ceremony of brutal sexual acts in which the participants dressed up in costumes and masks to perform their perversities. Nicole Kidman, the co-star, summarized the movie's whole hideous theme when she pronounced the final word of the movie: "F---." I kid you not. That was how the movie ended.

Brown says that "there were many inaccuracies" in the Kubrick movie but that it was essentially a correct enactment of this "sacred marriage" ritual described in the book. My question is: How does Dan Brown know that the movie's depiction of this secret ritual was "inaccurate"? I can only conclude that he must have detailed inside knowledge of the ritual himself because Satanists do not generally disclose their trade secrets. He says that it was simply "a secret society communing to celebrate the magic of sexual union." Oh, I forgot, this is supposed to be fiction, right?

Brown's use of the media to glamorize the lord of evil and ritual satanic worship is not to be taken lightly by people of faith. At our baptism we pledged to "reject Satan, and all his works and all his empty promises" and rightly so. There is nothing holy, attractive or redeeming about this blasphemous act which apparently forms the core of Dan Brown's new religion. We must reject it outright.

Strategy 3: The use and abuse of women for the purposes of men

Finally, we come to the third and last element of the strategy used by the *Da Vinci* book which mimics the strategies of the people who brought us the culture of death. To recap briefly, the first prong of their strategy was to attack and undermine the authority of the Catholic Church because it was the only obstacle standing in the way to the anti-life, radical feminist agenda in the sixties. Brown repeats this in his not-too-subtle attack on everything Catholic. Second, the vendors of the culture of death had to replace the immutable truths about human sexuality which the Church upholds with a different "gospel" that people would readily believe, in order to seduce them into thinking that immorality and the killing of babies was morally respectable. Brown does this too by saturating his book with a panoply of pagan and even satanic concepts that replace the good old-time religion with a new perverse religion that penetrates the readers' minds and souls like rain from hell. Now, Brown mimics the radical feminist agenda again in the way he uses female characters to get what he wants then kicks them to the curb when they have served their purpose.

As mentioned above, for a book which purports to exalt "the divine feminine," the three female characters in this book are all empty handmaidens for Brown's main agenda which is to exalt paganism and destroy our faith. There is only one main female character: the other two women are totally peripheral to the story. This stands in marked contrast to the many well-developed male characters (whether good or evil) which

Sophie has to compete against for attention in the book. Saunière, her grandfather and the curator of the Louvre, Langdon the symbologist, Teabing the guru and Rémy his butler, Fache the Captain, Collet the Lieutenant, Silas the evil albino, Bishop Aringarosa the Opus Dei prelate, even Vernet the Swiss Bank president and several other male figures get all Brown's best literary efforts! Poor little Sophie is clearly a second class citizen in Brown's make-believe world.

Sophie makes her debut in the book with a grand entry into the crime scene at the Louvre. She is young and attractive, looking like a million bucks strolling down the long corridors and exercising her supposedly-superior intelligence to engineer a brilliant escape from the cops. After that, however, Sophie becomes a puppet. She loses any independent thinking function and spends the final 350 pages or so expressing profound thoughts like, "Really? I didn't know that!" and "Gee, I guess I had it all wrong." This is part of Brown's de-construction of her brain and re-programming with all the demonically-correct thoughts and concepts to make her into the perfect little pagan girl that he wants her to be.

The other woman who figures even marginally in this book is some mysterious grandmother who functions alternatively as the curator of a Masonic shrine and as a sacred satanic prostitute. She is so important to Brown's plot that we don't even learn her name until the 105th, that is, the last, chapter! Her eminent dignity was captured by Brown in this glowing description of her ritual function: "*Her luxuriant silver hair [was] flowing out from behind [a white mask]. Her body was plump, far from perfect, and she was gyrating in rhythm to the chanting...*" In other words, this old fat woman was a necessary piece of furniture used to prop up his male-dominated novel because he couldn't very well make a point about "sacred (satanic) marriage" using a homosexual man. A fat female prostitute was preferable.

The only other female character was a paranoid liberal nun whose character development was so shallow that before we could get to know anything about her she was brutally murdered in a church. Brown was not intending to tell us anything positive about Christian martyrdom thereby. He was simply using the female character as an object lesson to highlight how nasty is the murderous, patriarchal, male-dominated Catholic Church. Not only that, but all throughout the book Brown is telling us that the Church killed witches—now the Church is killing its own nuns!

Other references to women, when they exist, are contradictory at best and pornographic at worst. Mary Magdalene, the spiritual heroine, is dead and can't protest the historical revisionism that her holy legacy is subject to by Brown! Eve even makes a final appearance at the end of the book in Brown's misguided attempt to resurrect her image and polish off that apple that she bit into. I think that Eve herself, now that she has been redeemed in Christ, would have real problems with this portrayal of her as an unrepentant heroine of salvation history. We don't really have too much to thank Eve for, do we?

Furthermore, Langdon has several conversations with male students in his classroom settings, and these always devolve into pornographic jokes about women. The silly girls sitting in the same class make no protest of course but just grin glowingly on cue when he mentions the "sacred feminine." These are college-educated feminists?

There is certainly more that can be mentioned about Brown's use and abuse of women in the book, but the point is clear. Like the anti-life revolutionaries, Dan Brown's view of women and their dignity is pathetic. He can't bring himself to respect women in a book that supposedly divinizes women. Those of us in the pro-life movement have for decades been issuing this same critique about the culture of death: Pagan ideologies and politicized notions of women's dignity always fall short of promoting the authentic good of women and even end up destroying them with their cooperation. On the other hand, women are consistently honored, respected and dignified as women by pro-life and pro-family Christianity as no other religion or movement can do. Brown certainly misses the mark by a mile.

IV. Conclusion

We have finally drawn to the end of this discussion which I hope has been helpful to your faith. I pray that you have learned a few things about Dan Brown and *the Da Vinci Code's* plan for the destruction of your faith. As a priest I cannot be neutral to that, nor can you. We must act on our faith if it is to actually lead to our salvation because as St. James says, "faith without works is as dead as a body without breath" (Ja 2:26).

So here is how you can act on your faith and nip this *Da Vinci* nonsense in the bud: I want you to take this article or the corresponding recording and give it to someone who really needs to hear another

perspective on *Da Vinci*. Tell them that if they are truly open-minded (that's a good one for people who read Dan Brown's books—they don't want to be accused of being close-minded!), if they are truly open-minded they will listen to an actual Catholic priest's view about *The Da Vinci Code* which may help them to see the light. That Light is Christ, and we have to help our brothers and sisters to "read between the lines" of the *Da Vinci* deception and to see the Truth. Their souls are in danger, and we cannot sit back and let the likes of Dan Brown take them away from us without a fight.

In the 70s the Church had to fight *A Course in Miracles*. In the 80s we fought *The Name of the Rose*. In the 90s it was The Celestine Prophecy. Now it's *The Da Vinci Code*. Next year, decade, century it will be something else. No matter, the Church is prepared for the battle. We are the Church Militant and have the guidance of all the angels and saints in battling the principalities and powers of darkness. But we need your help!

Remember what the Lord Jesus told us who are willing to undertake spiritual warfare: the gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. Nor will the gates of Dan Brown and his deceitful *Da Vinci Code*!

St. Mary Magdalene, pray for us!

May God bless you and your families!