Adult Catechesis
2016-2017
Session 10: December 3, 2016
Fidel Castro on Religion

Lecturer: Dr. Ed Maniscalco
Sponsored by Fr. Robert D. Turner, Pastor
Blessed Sacrament Congregation, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
La Catedral de la Virgen María de la Concepción Inmaculada de La Habana
Advent 2016

Waitrose Christmas Ad: “Home For Christmas”

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENFU4PRqRFk
Advent 2016

Apple Christmas Ad: “Home for the Holidays”

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W03TwGRAPbc
Fidel Castro
Fidel Castro
“El Comandante”

Born:
• August 13, 1926 (Birán, Cuba)

Died:
• November 25, 2016 (Havana)

Occupation: Lawyer; Thug

Marriages:
• Mirta Díaz-Balart (1948-1955)
• Dalia Soto del Valle (1980-2016)

Children: 11

Siblings: Raúl, Ramon, Juanita
Fulgencio Batista Zaldívar (1901-1973)
Cuban Dictator (abdicated December 31, 1958)
Fr. Carlos Alberto Libânio Christo, OP
“Frei Betto”

Born:
August 25, 1944
Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil
For me, men are not divided into believers and atheists, but between oppressors and oppressed, between those who want to keep this unjust society and those who want to struggle for justice.

— Frei Betto —
CASTRO: There are 10,000 times more coincidences between Christianity and capitalism.... We should not create those divisions among men. Let’s respect convictions, beliefs, and explanations. Everyone is entitled to their own positions, their own beliefs.

THE REALITY: “[Ché Guevara] was Fidel Castro’s chief enforcer and had a personal hand in at least 100 firing squad executions, often delivering the coup de grace personally. In response to questions about Castro’s firing squads Guevara once said, ‘To send men to the firing squad, judicial proof is unnecessary. These procedures are an archaic bourgeois detail. This is a revolution. And a revolutionary must become a cold killing machine motivated by pure hate.’ ”
CASTRO: I [don’t] fully agree with the positions [of] the church, as an institution.... For example, I’d say that it’s necessary to go more deeply into the very serious problem of uncontrolled population growth.... It’s necessary to approach the important problems of our times realistically, and one of them is how to handle the need for birth control.... These matters are so vital that they shouldn’t enter into conflict with religious beliefs.

THE REALITY: In Cuba, abortions, like funerals, are funded by the government. “The abortion is the baby’s funeral,” many Cubans say. Those who have opposed abortion in Cuba have been mercilessly [beaten] by the state intelligence apparatus.
CASTRO: [Occasionally], I’ve referred to Christ’s miracles and said, “Well, Christ multiplied the fish and loaves to feed the people. That is precisely what we want to do with the revolution and socialism: multiply the factories, the fields under cultivation, and the jobs; multiply industrial and agricultural productivity; and multiply the research centers and the number of scientific research projects for the same purpose.

THE REALITY: Cuba has the lowest income inequality in the world.... [The] average monthly wage is $20—that is, Cubans are equal in their poverty....

If you visit Cuba to puff cigars, get drunk on rum-and-cokes or mojitos, read Hemingway, and fetishize the country’s dilapidation with your brand-new Canon Rebel, you just might miss this uglier side....
CASTRO: I believe that many of the passages of the preachings [sic] of Christ, such as the Sermon on the Mount, cannot be given any interpretation other than...the option for the poor.

When Christ said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit...blessed are those who mourn...blessed are the meek...blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness...” it is obvious that Christ didn’t offer the kingdom of heaven to the rich; he really offered it to the poor, and I don’t think that the preaching of Christ is also a case of mistaken translation or interpretation.

I believe that Karl Marx could have subscribed to the Sermon on the Mount.
Fidel Castro
One of the world’s richest men, but...
Shhhhhhhhhhhhh Don’t tell anyone.
Secrets
Of a successful communist state.
CASTRO: [Undoubtedly]—it’s not just a matter of interpretation—Christianity was the religion of the slaves, of the oppressed, and of the poor, who lived in catacombs, were subjected to the most terrible punishments, were taken to the circus to be fed to the lions and other animals, and were subjected to all kinds of persecution and repression for centuries. The Roman Empire considered that doctrine to be revolutionary and subjected its adherents to the most savage harassment—which I always related, later on, to the history of the communists, because ever since communism was established as a political and revolutionary doctrine, the communists have also been subjected to savage harassment, torture, and other crimes.
CASTRO: The great historic truth is that the communist movement also has its [martyrs] in its struggle to change an unfair social system.

Like the early Christians, the communists, too, were savagely slandered and cruelly repressed everywhere.

THE REALITY:
CASTRO: Wherever the Catholic hierarchy or the hierarchy of any other church is closely associated with imperialism, neocolonialism, the exploitation of nations and of men, and repression, it shouldn’t astonish you if in that specific country, somebody were to repeat the phrase that “religion is the opiate of the people.”

I believe that from the political point of view, religion is not, in itself, an opiate or miraculous remedy. It may become an opiate or a wonderful cure if it is used or applied to defend oppressors and exploiters or the oppressed and the exploited, depending on the approach adopted toward the political, social, or material problems of the human beings who, aside from theology or religious belief, are born and must live in this world.
CASTRO: From a strictly political point of view—and I think I know something about politics—...it is possible for Christians to be Marxists as well and to work together with Marxist communists to transform the world.

The important thing is that in both cases they be honest revolutionaries, who want to end human exploitation and to struggle for a fair distribution of social wealth, equality, fraternity, and the dignity of all human beings; that is, that they be the standard-bearers of the most advanced political, economic, and social ideas, even though in the case of the Christians, their starting point is a religious concept.

THE REALITY: An American Christian Marxist...

VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdJB-qkfUHc
CASTRO: I’m rather well versed in Christian principles and in Christ’s teachings. I believe that Christ was a great revolutionary. That’s what I believe. His entire doctrine was devoted to the humble, the poor; his doctrine was devoted to fighting against abuse, injustice, and the degradation of human beings. I’d say there’s a lot in common between the spirit and essence of his teachings and socialism.

THE REALITY: [Video] “Prisoner Tried, Condemned & Executed in Cuba (1959). Silent footage of a former Fulgenico Batista official being tried in Cuba.... The prisoner is then taken to a location where he is given his last cigarette before being shot by a firing squad.”

[VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogKBqxnaWhU]
CASTRO: I was taught that there was a constant struggle between good and evil, and evil had to be punished. Well, I’m not going to say I share that belief.

I was taught that those who committed crimes and were responsible for injustice, evil, and all those other things that we are fighting against would be punished in hell. Could that be interpreted as an expression of hatred?

I’ll tell you what I think. I’ve never felt personal hatred for individuals. It’s not that I love my enemies. I don’t; I haven’t gotten that far.

Marco Rubio on Fidel Castro’s Death
VIDEO LINK: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jGBa94eS2RI
Saturday, December 10
The Origin and Meaning of Advent