

Christ the King Young Adults
Present
Theology on Tap

American Torture
Into the Abyss

Brogue's Downunder
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Theology on Tap – American Torture – Into the Abyss

Index

Epiphany 2015	3
Coincidence Divine	3
Epiphany	3
Massacre of the Infants	4
Death, Be Not Proud.....	4
Epiphany and the American Torture	4
Torture Defined	5
Change Your Mind – In Ancient Times	5
180 BCE – 161 BCE – A Mother and Her Sons	5
120 AD – New and Dangerous Superstition	5
177 AD – The Martyrs of Lyons	6
203 AD – The Pregnant Woman	6
251 A.D., Cyprian – Carthage Council – Apostasy	6
1252 AD – Church Sponsored Torture.....	7
Canon Law – Embracing Clemency and Mercy.....	7
General Medieval Torture - Secular	7
1597 AD – Nagasaki, Japan	7
United Nations.....	7
Types of.....	7
Effects of.....	8
Impact of.....	8
Torture Performed	10
War – Can It Ever Be Just?	11
Just War – Only One Case.....	11
Conditions for War	11
Moving Forward.....	12
The Problem of Insufficient Reflection.....	12
The Abyss.....	13

Epiphany 2015

Coincidence Divine

It can be thought a divine coincidence that this presentation American Torture – Into the Abyss happens on the Epiphany of the Lord. This then is our starting point.

What happened at the **Epiphany** as recalled in Matthew 2:1-12?

Related, what happened in the **Massacre of the Infants** in Matthew 2:16-18?

How is this related to American sponsored torture?

Epiphany

All of Jerusalem, the chief priests, scribes and the King were completely taken off guard. None had seen the star referred to by the Magi. None had been looking for such a marvelous sign:

1. These Magi strangers were certain of their mission.
2. The chief priests and scribes knew the textbook answer. Right here in the Micah 5:2.
3. There were three very different responses to this sign and wonder of God.

Bethlehem and Jerusalem are very close to each other. It would not have been a difficult journey for the King to accompany the Magi to find this newborn King. Nor would it take a long time.

Nobody wanted to go. Nobody wanted to do the research. **They didn't want to know.**

Magi	King	Jerusalem
Arrived	Greatly troubled	Greatly troubled
--	Assembled	Assembled
Asked Where	Audience	Audience
Stated Intentions	--	--
--	--	Searched Scripture
--	Secret Meeting with Magi	--
--	Ascertained when Start started	--
--	Sent them to Bethlehem	--
--	You search and report back	--
Overjoyed	--	--
Set Out	--	--
Star as Guide	--	--
Entered House	--	--
Saw Child and Mother	--	--
Prostrate	--	--
Homage	--	--
Gifts & Treasures	--	--
Gold	--	--
Frankincense	--	--
Myrrh	--	--
Dream	--	--

Departed	--	--
Flight to Egypt (Joseph dream)	--	--
--	Herod realized deceived	--
--	Furious	--
--	Ordered Massacre	--
--	Up to 2 years old males killed	--
--	Fulfilled Jeremiah 31, 15	--
--	Herod dies	--
Return Nazareth / Archelaus	--	--

Massacre of the Infants

King Herod realized the Magi departed for their homeland by another path. They did not return to Jerusalem to notify the King they found the child as the King had requested.

Sacred scripture does not record the Magi agreeing to inform King Herod as he requested but does record the Magi were warned in a dream not to return to Herod (Mt 2:12).

King Herod, for his part, decided he was deceived by the Magi and became furious (Mt 2:16).

He calculated a two year timeframe (age newborn to 2 years old) in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the Magi (Mt2:16). He had all the boys of that age range massacred.

Death, Be Not Proud

Why was King Herod furious? What control over the Magi do you suppose he thought he had? How can it be he felt betrayed? Unless he thought he ‘cut a deal’ or intimidated the Magi into compliance.

Knowing his history, does anyone here think he wanted to prostrate before the newborn King and do him homage? (Mt 2:8) Do you think he was saving up his tax revenue to purchase gifts for the newborn King?

King Herod was an Arab “convert” to Judaism. His kingdom of Judea was an appointment by the Roman Senate. He knew full well that a natural born Jewish King would likely win the day over his appointment. His governing was oppressive, taxation heavy and lifestyle below moral standards.

Herod used secret police, spying on the populous, and enforced a general prohibition of assemblies. Herod would have his detractors hauled off to prison. Just thought I would mention that.

He succeeded only in killing innocent boys. Jesus, also innocent, but he was in Egypt. His deadly plan achieved nothing but violence.

Epiphany and the American Torture

The similarities of the two events can be outlined in these general terms (and not beyond).

King Herod	Interrogations
Secret Meeting with Magi	Operate without sufficient oversight
Ascertained when Start started	Calculate for Worst Case Scenarios
Sent them to Bethlehem	No original research / Alternate Research
You search and report back	False Promise
Herod realized deceived	Disappointment in Process
Furious	Emotional response
Ordered Massacre	Over reaction / revenge
Up to 2 years old males killed	Scope Exaggerated
Wrong targets	Wrong targets

As you can see the similarities are endemic to power in general.

Torture Defined

Change Your Mind – In Ancient Times

To the reader: Therefore, we must attend all the more to what we have heard, so that we may not be carried away. Announced originally through the Lord, it was confirmed for us by those who had heard. We earnestly desire each of you to demonstrate the same eagerness for the fulfillment of hope until the end, so that you may not become sluggish (**dull**), but imitators of those who, through faith and patience, are inheriting the promise (Heb 2:1, 3b, 7:11-12).

The Church knows something about torture.

180 BCE – 161 BCE – A Mother and Her Sons

It also happened that seven brothers with their mother were arrested and tortured with whips and scourges by the king, to force them to eat pork in violation of God's law. One of the brothers, speaking for the others, said: "What do you expect to achieve by questioning us? We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our ancestors." At that the king, in a fury, gave orders to have pans and caldrons heated. While they were being quickly heated, he commanded his executioners to cut out the tongue of the one who had spoken for the others, to scalp him and cut off his hands and feet, while the rest of his brothers and his mother looked on. When he was completely maimed but still breathing, the king ordered them to carry him to the fire and fry him. As a cloud of smoke spread from the pan, the brothers and their mother encouraged one another to die bravely, saying such words as these: "The Lord God is looking on, and he truly has compassion on us, as Moses declared in his canticle, when he protested openly with the words, 'And he will have pity on his servants.'" (2 Maccabees 7:1-6).

120 AD – New and Dangerous Superstition

We cannot cover all that history here. But we can summarize this way. Christians were considered a dangerous cult. There were basic things “wrong” with Christianity:

- They were **Atheists** because they did not worship the Emperor Gods.
- They practiced **Incest, Infanticide** because they called each other Brother and Sister and drowned babies in baptism, respectively.

- They were cannibals because of the Holy Eucharist.
- They were hard to identify (no common language, clothes, lower social status).
- They were bad citizens for not serving as Soldiers.
- Their doctrine is crazy (incarnation, transubstantiation).

This threat to the Roman Empire must be rooted out at all costs. Since they have no army, don't all look the same or talk the same, have no uniforms, and are 'violent' to the Empire, we will use whatever means necessary to wipe them out.

177 AD – The Martyrs of Lyons

To every question Sanctus replied in Latin: "I am a Christian". This he confessed again and again, instead of name and city and race and all else, and no other word did the brethren hear from his lips. When nothing else was left to inflict upon him they applied red-hot brazen plates to the most tender parts of his body (testicles). And though these were burning, Sanctus himself remained unbending and unyielding... (Letters from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, preserved in Eusebus, Church History V, I.)

203 AD – The Pregnant Woman

Felicity was martyred at Carthage in 203.

Felicity was pregnant. By Roman law a pregnant woman may not be executed. She was to be executed because she refused to sacrifice to the Emperor God.

By earnest prayer, she was giving birth which was most painful....

One of the gaolers said to her, 'If you groan like that now, what will you do when you are handed over to the wild animals which you have braved by refusing to sacrifice?' (Church History, Jean Comby, p.42).

251 A.D., Cyprian – Carthage Council – Apostasy

See http://www.dacb.org/stories/tunisia/cyprian_.html for a great article on these time.

In 251 A.D., Cyprian was able to return to Carthage and immediately held a council of bishops which upheld his views [to return Apostates] by adopting the following messages:

1. The certificates issued by the confessors were to be ignored.
2. The libellatici (i.e. those who had obtained a libellus from the authorities but had not actually sacrificed) were to be readmitted after suitable penance. [this included those who only burned incense in the Roman temples].
3. The sacrificati (i.e. those who had sacrificed) were to be accepted as penitents but only readmitted on their death-beds.
4. Fallen clergy were to be readmitted to communion on the same terms but were not to be allowed to resume their clerical functions.

1252 AD – Church Sponsored Torture

While the Inquisition started in 1220-1230, it was not until 1252 that torture was officially authorized. The Church took the responsibility to met out the punishments and the civil authorities would carry out the sentence. (Church History, Jean Comby, p.168).

Canon Law – Embracing Clemency and Mercy

Can. 748 §1. All persons are bound to seek the truth in those things which regard God and his Church and by virtue of divine law are bound by the obligation and possess the right of embracing and observing the truth which they have come to know.

§2. No one is ever permitted to coerce persons to embrace the Catholic faith against their conscience.

General Medieval Torture - Secular

- Impalement
- Judas Cradle
- Pear of Anguish
- Coffin
- The Rack

1597 AD – Nagasaki, Japan

Sin, he reflected, is not what is usually thought to be; it is not to steal and tell lies. Sin is for one man to walk brutally over the life of another and to be quite oblivious of the wounds he left behind. (Silence, Shusaku Endo, p. 86).

A *fumi-e* (step upon the picture) is image plate of Jesus or the Virgin Mary and were used to force Catholics to reveal their faith and apostatize. If they did not they were tortured in the cruelty of the pit. If they further refused, they were executed.

The justification for persecuting Christians in Japan was that the religion was really a pacifying tool of the European armies which will surely follow.

United Nations

December 9th, 1975, the United Nations defined torture. ‘Any act by which severe pain or suffering whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted by or at the instigation of a public official on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or confession, punishing him for an act has committed, or intimidating him or other persons’.

Furthering into law, 1984, Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Ratified by USA, 1994.

The following sections are from Torture in the 80s (New York: Amnesty International, 1984).

Types of

Torture has two categorical goals:

Theology on Tap – American Torture – Into the Abyss

1. weaken the victim so as to make them susceptible to suggestion.
2. invade, undermine and destroy the personality.

Methods include:

1. Deprivation of sleep, food, water, hygiene, light, and air.
2. Constraint of the body, body parts, solitary confinement, mock executions, actual or threatened death threats of associates, family, friends.
3. Constraint of the mind, all the above (#1 #2) plus imposition of impossible choices.
4. Disinformation to induce confusion.
5. Use of pharmacological agents to disorient, paralyze or induce pain or panic.
6. Use of psychiatric institutions to perform the same.
7. Use of physical torture includes:
 - a. electric shock
 - b. hanging
 - c. water immersion
 - d. beating
 - e. hitting
 - f. whipping, burning
 - g. mutilation by insect, animals, or instruments
 - h. Sexual abuse

Effects of

The following sections are from The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought, Torture, by Sheila Cassidy (Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1994).

1. The immediate impact is profound terror, anguish and disorientation.
2. The longer term effects
 - a. depression
 - b. anxiety
 - c. nightmares
 - d. phobias
 - e. suicide, a higher rate
 - f. extends to family and friends
 - g. rehabilitation needed
 - h. it is modeled as a perversion of normal doctor-patient relationship.

Impact of

The effects of torture make the use of techniques of torture or those that approximate torture but are called by friendlier names, **Enhanced Interrogation Techniques**, bring serious consequence and long term impact.

Perhaps the words of Pope Paul VI will help explain: (UN Speech)

You cannot love with weapons in your hands. Long before they mete out death and destruction, those terrible arms... cause nightmares, distrust and dark designs... They lead astray the mentality of the people.

The following sections are from The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought, Dignity of Persons, by John C. Dwyer (Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1994).

To be a person is to be one who is morally responsible, to be one who experiences an absolute demand in the sense that the demand is not conditioned on our desire to obtain some particular goal or other and is therefore not under our control or disposition. The moral demand is one we acknowledge and can ignore only at the risk of rejecting our very humanity.

Pope John XXIII *Pacem in Terris* (1963)

The human person is also entitled to a legal protection of one's rights, a protection that should be efficacious, impartial and in conformity with the true norm of justice.

The torture method to invade, undermine and destroy the personality of a subject is particularly troubling. Free will is an essential right and need of the human person. The destruction of a personality for gain is morally reprehensible.

From the Catechism of the Catholic Church- Respect for bodily integrity.

2297 Kidnapping and hostage taking bring on a reign of terror; by means of threats they subject their victims to intolerable pressures. They are morally wrong. Terrorism threatens, wounds, and kills indiscriminately; it is gravely against justice and charity. **Torture which uses physical or moral violence to extract confessions, punish the guilty, frighten opponents, or satisfy hatred is contrary to respect for the person and for human dignity.** Except when performed for strictly therapeutic medical reasons, directly intended amputations, mutilations, and sterilizations performed on innocent persons are against the moral law.

2298 In times past, cruel practices were commonly used by legitimate governments to maintain law and order, often without protest from the Pastors of the Church, who themselves adopted in their own tribunals the prescriptions of Roman law concerning torture. Regrettable as these facts are, the Church always taught the duty of clemency and mercy. She forbade clerics to shed blood. **In recent times it has become evident that these cruel practices were neither necessary for public order, nor in conformity with the legitimate rights of the human person. On the contrary, these practices led to ones even more degrading. It is necessary to work for their abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors.**

2148 **Blasphemy** is directly opposed to the second commandment. It consists in uttering against God - inwardly or outwardly - words of hatred, reproach, or defiance; in speaking ill of God; in failing in respect toward him in one's speech; in misusing God's name. St. James condemns those "who blaspheme that honorable name [of Jesus] by which you are called." **The prohibition of blasphemy extends to language against Christ's Church, the saints, and sacred things. It is also blasphemous to make use of God's name to cover up criminal practices, to reduce peoples to servitude, to torture persons or put them to death. The misuse of God's name to commit a crime can provoke others to repudiate religion.**

Blasphemy is contrary to the respect due God and his holy name. It is in itself a grave sin.

Torture Performed

Side by Side from the Copenhagen torture standard to the US Senate report.

<p>Deprivation of sleep, food, water, hygiene, light, and air.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CIA had force fed some prisoners orally and/or anally. • One prisoner died during interrogation by hypothermia. • Prisoners were kept awake for over one week (180 hours) causing at least five to experience "disturbing" hallucinations. • Prisoners were forced to use buckets for toilets. • As punishment, the waste bucket could be removed from a prisoner's cell. • The Federal Bureau of Prisons found that individuals were so sensory deprived (constant white noise, no talking, everyone in the dark, with the guards wearing a light on their head when they collected and escorted a detainee to an interrogation cell, detainees constantly being shackled to the wall or floor, and the starkness of each cell (concrete and bars)). There is nothing like this in the Federal Bureau of Prisons... detainees were not being treated... humanely." • One detainee was subjected to "ice water baths" and 66 hours of standing sleep deprivation. He was later released as the CIA had mistaken his identity.
<p>Constraint of the body, body parts, solitary confinement, mock executions, actual or threatened death threats of associates, family, friends.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threats to rape and murder were made against the children or family members of prisoners. • Prisoners were told that they would be killed. (For example: one prisoner was told "We can never let the world know what I have done to you") • One CIA interrogator who was subsequently sent home early threatened a prisoner with a gun and power drill and played Russian Roulette with him. • At least two prisoners were victims of "mock executions." • One prisoner was placed in a box the size of a coffin for over 11 days and was also placed for 29 hours in a box 21 inches (53 cm) wide, 2.5 feet (76 cm) deep and 2.5 feet (76 cm) high.
<p>Constraint of the mind, all the above (#1 #2) plus imposition of impossible choices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another was told that the only way he would be allowed to leave the prison would be in a coffin. • Janat G. was tortured for months based on false accusations made by an informant.

Theology on Tap – American Torture – Into the Abyss

Disinformation to induce confusion.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torture of prisoners led to serious mental harm (eg. dementia, paranoia, insomnia, and attempts at self-harm [including suicide]) • One prisoner was psychologically traumatized to the point of being "a broken man".
Use of pharmacological agents to disorient, paralyze or induce pain or panic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Noted.
Use of psychiatric institutions to perform the same.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Noted.
Use of physical torture includes:	
electric shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Noted.
hanging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIA interrogators used unauthorized techniques such as forcing a prisoner to stand with his hand over his head for 2 1/2 days, putting a pistol next to his head and bathing him with a stiff brush.
water immersion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several prisoners almost died and became completely unresponsive or nearly drowned during waterboarding.
beating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least four prisoners with injuries to their legs (two with broken feet, one with a sprained ankle and one with an amputated leg) were forced to stand on their injuries.
hitting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abu Zubaydah's eye was so badly damaged during his time in prison that it was surgically removed.
whipping, burning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None Noted.
mutilation by insect, animals, or instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rectal exams of at least two prisoners had been conducted with "excessive force."
Sexual abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least one prisoner was "diagnosed with chronic hemorrhoids, an anal fissure and symptomatic rectal prolapse," symptoms normally associated with a violent rape.

War – Can It Ever Be Just?

Just War – Only One Case

Two small points:

1. Catholic social teaching notes that only defense is a valid reason for war. Retribution is not a valid reason for war.
2. The conditions for war are no less important on how we treat an individual combatant. Personalized interrogation should in the least follow the same guides and more.

Conditions for War

Roman Catholicism has the following three basic attitudes towards:

1. war is not inevitable
2. war is not necessary

3. war can be abolished

The Church further says that:

1. In this world conflict is inevitable
2. Without effort, conflict can evolve into war.
3. Given conflict and given the repeated outbursts of war, never the less:
 - a. There remains a moral dimension of human existence that cannot be set aside by war
 - b. Restraint must bind the opponents, before, during and after war

Restraint has multiple dimensions:

1. Reason to Act
2. Reason not to Act
3. Manner by which you Act
4. Manner by which you do not Act
5. It must be Just. The concept of a Just War is restricted to only defense against aggression. Unfortunately some stretch this concept beyond recognition.
6. Pacifism is not justified as indifference to the common good and basic rights of others. Unfortunately some stretch this concept beyond recognition.

Intelligibility of Action. One must justify reason and activity against these principals:

1. Just Cause
2. Competent Authority
3. Comparative Justice
4. Right Intention
5. Last Resort
6. Probability of Success
7. Proportionality
8. with discrimination.

Moving Forward

The Problem of Insufficient Reflection

The following section is from The Way of the Lord Jesus by Germain Grisez.

Awareness of moral truth also demands some understanding of the inherent reasonableness of loving all human goods and acting for integral human fulfillment. One can have a great deal of insight into this without having any of the sophistication required to articulate it reflexively. Some people are much more clearheaded than others about moral truth; some grasp very little in morality except at the levels of superego and social convention. Once more, one can reflect on one's own growth in insight and realize that other people experience similar growth, but some far less than others.

Awareness of moral truth does not exist in isolation in the intellect; it is always surrounded by a more or less completely integrated (or nonintegrated) cognitive and affective context. In other words, some people see little or no connection between their thinking in general and their moral

thinking; for others, insight into moral truth is closely knit with the remainder of experience and knowledge.

Similarly, some people have a working understanding of the moral weight of only some of the human goods and modes of responsibility, and so are able to have many desires and interests, many goals and purposes in life, which remain for them in a "free area," like the free area of behavior upon which **superego and social convention make no demands**. The more totally integrated one is, the more one realizes that to violate conscience is to violate reality, genuine community, reason and sense, and one's self. Thus, some people can know that something is gravely wrong yet feel that doing it is not very important, while others who have the same intellectual awareness of grave wrong will have a total personal awareness of the absolute importance of avoiding such a thing.

The Abyss

Institutional paranoia and fear lead to madness.

Among all the things that happen under the sun, this is the worst, that things turn out the same for all. Hence the minds of men are filled with evil, and madness is in their hearts during life; and afterward they go to the dead. Ecclesiastes 9:3

Though I said to myself, "Behold, I have become great and stored up wisdom beyond all who were before me in Jerusalem, and my mind has broad experience of wisdom and knowledge"; yet when I applied my mind to know wisdom and knowledge, madness and folly, I learned that this also is a chase after wind. Ecclesiastes 1:16

And in this matter effort is the more needful because perils everywhere abound. The great virtues of our forefathers have in large measure disappeared; **the most violent passions have claimed a freer indulgence; the madness of opinion which knows no restraint**, or at least no effective restraint, every day extends further; of those whose principles are sound there are many who, through a misplaced timidity, are frightened, and have not the courage even to speak out their opinions boldly, far less to translate them into deeds; everywhere the worst examples are affecting public morals; wicked societies which We ourselves have denounced before now, skilled in all evil arts, are doing their best to lead the people astray, and as far as they are able, to withdraw them from God, their duty, and Christianity.

Encyclical Letter of Pope Leo XIII QUOD AUCTORITATE (QA, 2).

May God have mercy on our souls.