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BUON NATALE FIORENTINI, BUON NATALE!

Buon Natale Fiorentini, Buon Natale! is heard from the many loudspeakers, placed all around the square of *Santa Maria del Fiore*, as Pope John Paul II joyously salutes Florentines from the window of the *Santa Maria* Cathedral.

It is Christmas Eve, December 24, 1999, in Florence, Italy. Hundreds of Florentines have gathered below at the square eager to see and salute the great Pope of Love and Compassion. Faustef, Evila Appro, and Sylvia are down there in a large crowd of people.

Be Not Afraid!

Pope John Paul II, the Servant of the Servants of the One True God of Abraham, the Creator of our Universe, is telling his people about the day when Virgin Mary's child was born, about the *Love of Christ* for them, and the importance of *Hope in Life*. By using Christ's very own words, the Pope advises his people: *Be not afraid!*

'I'm so proud, I'm a Catholic Christian,' says Evila.

'If you believe in the Resurrection of Christ,' says Appro, 'then you have satisfied a *sufficient condition* to be a Christian. That's stated by St. Paul in his *Corinthians*.'

'You sound like a mathematician, Appro,' says Faustef. 'There is the concept of *sufficient condition* in mathematics. In order to prove *the truth* of any mathematical expression, you must satisfy only one condition called a *sufficient condition*. There is also the

concept of *necessary conditions*—but they are weak, you need many of them.’

Evila is listening attentively, though she doesn’t have a clue as to what they’re talking about. It doesn’t matter, anyway; she has always hated mathematics

Faustef turns to her,

‘I know the basic physics principles as to how the Resurrection works. In my case, the resurrection is not the question of belief, but of knowing about.’

Appro is stunned by Faustef’s statement.

‘You know?’ he asks.

‘Within the framework of my *Ephemeron Theory*,’ says Faustef, ‘the resurrection appears to be a very simple physical phenomenon.’

‘So, if you know the physics principles of the Resurrection,’ says Appro, ‘then you also, *a fortiori*, believe in the *Resurrection of Christ*. You have satisfied St. Paul’s sufficient condition to be a Christian and, accordingly, you are a Christian.’

Einstein – A Person of the Century

The group is taking a walk in the streets of Florence. Faustef stops by a newspaper stand and buys the latest issue of *Time* magazine. On the cover page is Einstein’s picture—Einstein is being hailed as a person of the century.

‘Einstein,’ he says, ‘should be called a man of the second millennium.’

‘How about Newton?’ asks Appro. ‘I think he’s the greatest ever.’

‘Einstein comes first,’ says Faustef, ‘as far as I’m concerned.’

‘I like, Einstein, more,’ says Evila.

‘Me, too,’ adds Sylvia. ‘I like his bushy hair. It makes his physics, in my imagination, bushy also.’

Kabbalah of the Cross

On Appro’s suggestion, they visit the house of Giovanni Pico della Mirandola² in Florence.

‘Mirandola was an expert in Jewish Kabbalah,’ says Appro, ‘but quite unsatisfied with the lack of deeper emotions in it. So, he turned to Christian sacred books and literally created the *Christened Kabbalah*, which I refer to as *Kabbalah of the Cross*. Mirandola’s movement created a seed for yet another movement—the Reformation Movement of Martin Luther. I call it the *Cross in the Rose* movement, because a cross inside a rose was the symbol Luther used as his personal seal. Presently many secret societies operate behind that symbol.’

Mabus the Anti-Christ

‘In the sixteenth-century,’ Appro adds, ‘a number of Mirandola’s followers appeared all across Europe—the age of *Man the Magus* had begun.’

‘But it did not last long. The message from European authorities was clear: The Evil of Europe—the Occult Cross of Kabbalah—must be destroyed. A witch-hunt ensued. Every single magus in Europe was in danger. Nostradamus³ heralded blood, famine, wars, and plagues. And he heralded the *Coming of Mabus*—the Anti-Christ—the worst of all evils.’

Sylvia adds jokingly,

² Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463 – 1494), an Italian Renaissance philosopher.

³ Nostradamus (1503 – 1566), a French magus.

‘Probably our Vick is that Mabus.’

‘He is already called *Magus*, that’s very close,’ says Appro.

The Touch of God

‘This is considered,’ says Appro, ‘to be one of the greatest achievements in the visual arts of all times. Michelangelo⁴ is probably the greatest painter who ever lived, even though he viewed himself exclusively as a sculptor.’

Faustef looks up and says,

‘His talent was evident even in his childhood. While he was still in his teens, the great Florentine painter Ghirlandaio⁵ took him as his apprentice.’

All four gaze in awe at the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, at the set of frescoes by Michelangelo Buonarotti, which have been fascinating the visitors for centuries.

After Florence, they flew to Rome. The day before, they had done some sightseeing, but mostly they just rested. Today, the last day of 1999, they find themselves in the *Sistine Chapel*.

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‘There was a bitter clash between him and Leonardo da Vinci,⁶’ says Sylvia. ‘I’ve read a great deal about it.’

‘Who won?’ asks Evila. ‘I’m kidding! I know, there cannot be a winner there.’

‘In this fresco, the *Creation of Adam*,’ says Appro, ‘a man with his pointing finger is trying to touch the finger of God. Will he ever succeed? Will a man ever be as God is?’

⁴ Michelangelo Buonarotti (1475 – 1564), an Italian Renaissance sculptor.

⁵ Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449 – 1494), an Italian Renaissance painter.

⁶ Leonardo da Vinci (1452 – 1519), an Italian Renaissance painter.

‘Of course,’ answers Evila. ‘Vick will become an immortal like God. And he will make us all immortals.’

‘To some, being an immortal is like being touched by the Devil,’ says Appro.

The Touch of the Devil

‘Appro!’ says Evila, ‘we were already touched by the Devil at the time of our birth.’

‘How do you know that?’ asks Faustef.

‘Prophet Muhammad said that,’ she answers. ‘When I was in Santorini, Greece, I met a young Muslim named Hassan who told me that.

‘Vick. Don’t look at me like that! Nothing happened between the two of us. People simply appreciate me, and they are nice to me—they do not take me for granted as you do. Hassan was very nice and polite with me. He once tried to touch me, but I politely refused. Then he said that his touch could not damage me more than I had already been damaged by the touch of the Devil.

‘He explained to me that Prophet Muhammad had been heard saying that everyone born as an offspring of Adam and Eve is touched by the Devil at the time of birth. All children were touched by the Devil, except for Mary’s child, the Prophet had said.

‘Touched by Lucifer,’ says Appro, ‘sounds like becoming a mortal. It seems that by touching you at your birth, Lucifer takes away from you your God-endowed immortality—that’s why the babies cry at their birth. Instead of being the beginning of an unending life, Lucifer makes the birth diametrically opposite in its character—the beginning of the dying process.’

‘Still, in that dying process, there is yet another touch, a human touch that makes dying easier. Human touch is the most

important of all senses. Newborns, if not touched by humans, slowly die. The major offspring of human touch is *sexual love*.’

Goodbye Evil Century

It’s Friday night, the last day of 1999—the dawn of the Third Millennium.

After having a dinner together, the four friends decide to go to the square *Piazza di Campo dei Fiori* with the Clock Tower. This is the place where Giordano Bruno,⁷ a heretic, was burnt alive by the Inquisition in 1600.

People are gathered here, awaiting the clock to strike twelve. That will happen exactly in five minutes.

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The counting down of the masses begins: Ten, nine ...’

‘Zero!’ exclaims Evila, as she jumps into Faustef’s arms. She’s kissing him passionately.

‘Happy New Year, my dearest, Vick! Happy New Year!’

Quickly she adds,

‘Goodbye evil century.’

‘Why evil?’ asks Faustef.

‘Two world wars, weapons of mass destruction, nazism, terrorism, floods, earthquakes, famines, children starving, and more—that’s why.

‘It will not be like that in the next century. You will bring immortality to the human race. My dear, Vick, for me, you are the New Savior, or Christ himself in the second coming. For me!’

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Judgment Day

⁷ Giordano Bruno (1548—1600), an Italian astronomer.

Appro and Sylvia join them,

‘Happy New Year, guys!’

‘Happy New Year!’

Evila quickly gives a kiss to both Sylvia and Appro. Faustef does the same.

‘It’s January 1, 2000,’ says Evila, ‘day one of the Third Millennium, and nothing has happened. This is supposed to be Judgment Day, but I don’t see the Judge—and we are so close to Him that it doesn’t get closer. We are in Rome.’

Appro interjects,

‘January 1, 1000—day one of the Second Millennium—was considered to have been Judgment Day also. Throughout Europe, in those days, you could have seen people in religious ecstasy, deliriums, and even committing mass suicides.’

‘Thank God we don’t see that now,’ says Sylvia.

Appro and Sylvia have brought a bottle of champagne, and Faustef and Evila a package of chocolate truffles.

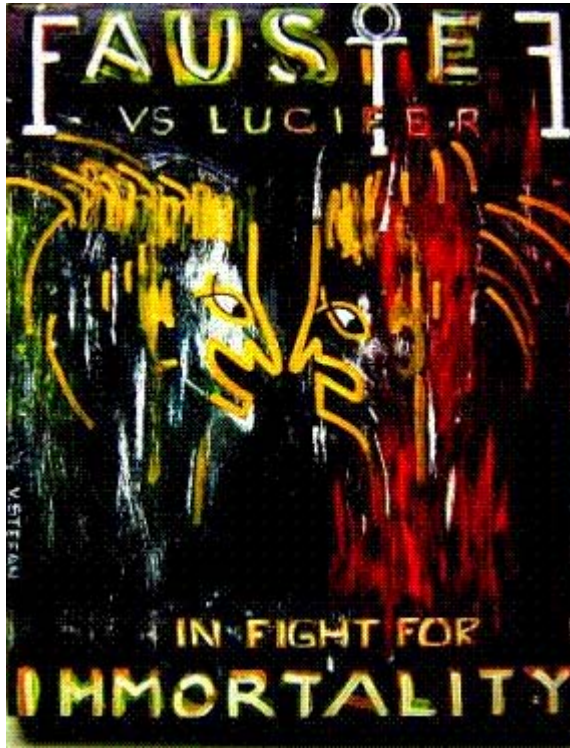
The four friends, standing in the joyous crowd, happily drink champagne and eat chocolate truffles. Singing, music, and the cheerful sounds of on-cloud-nine crowds can be heard throughout the city. The group nearby, apparently from America, is singing Cliff Richard’s *Millennium Prayer*.⁸

Our father who art in heaven,

Hallowed be Thy name...

Rome is celebrating the dawn of the Third Millennium.

⁸ Sir Cliff Richard (b. 1940), a British rock singer



Faustef Versus Lucifer in the Fight for immortality

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To the Reader:

I bring to you some chapters (of 137 total) from my fiction story, an epic-novel, entitled *Doctor Faustef*, with the intent, not to provide an essence of the epic, but rather to take you on a short trip along some avenues Faustef had walked upon in his search for human immortality.

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