

FR. GLENN SUDANO, CFR

# We Live in a Castle

*Stories, allegories, and commentaries about  
the most wonderful religion in the world.*



# **WE LIVE IN A CASTLE**

**Stories, allegories, and commentaries about the most wonderful religion in the world.**

**Fr. Glenn Sudano, C.F.R.**

## About the Book

“Blue collar ecclesiology” or “kitchen table catechesis” is how the author describes his methodology in presenting some fresh ideas about what is considered to many, a very stale subject. The title of Father Glenn’s first book, *We Live in a Castle*, is taken from one of twelve stories which, like spotlights, illumine one subject at different angles.

The subject of the book? The Church.

The author describes his work as “friendly yet provocative” as he challenges the reader to dig into history and discover a valuable treasure; which he calls “the most wonderful religion in the world.” Father Glenn utilizes creative stories - both allegorical and personal – each with an introduction and commentary. Questions are also provided for personal reflection and group discussion.

No doubt, this book is most especially suited for teachers and students participating in some form of catechesis, especially those who are considering or preparing to enter into full communion with the Catholic Church.

## Chapter VII

*“Well, where’s that in the Bible?” Interrogation may not be the best word, but it’s close enough. I am referring to those times when I have found myself backed into a corner by someone who is as enthusiastic with the Bible as he is misinformed by my Catholic faith. Believe me, I do greatly appreciate people sharing their faith with me, however, I don’t appreciate them shoving it at me. So, tapping on the page of an large floppy Bible he demands: “Show me where it says we should pray to Mary.....or the saints....or believe in purgatory.....or follow a pope.” Well, good questions do indeed deserve good answers.*

*In order to handle such a touchy topic, I would like to invite my friend to step out of the boxing ring and into a kitchen. Kitchens are friendly places where to which we all gravitate after a stressful day. It’s where family members congregate or close friends share a cup of coffee. The popularity of cooking shows tells us even people who don’t cook like to watch other people cook. It’s in a kitchen I hope to make some headway with my friend who thinks I’m a heretic.*

*The subject at hand concerns the Sacred Tradition of the Church which, along with the Sacred Scriptures, is a source of divine revelation for the Church. Quite frankly, even if you learn little about what I hope to communicate, you might learn to make some really good meatballs. For sure, we Italian-Americans put meatballs on the map, but we Mediterranean types are not only noted for food - we are known for - let’s say - “expressing ourselves”. Swedish families are not known for either high drama or high volume, but we Southern Italians have got both down pat.*

*In the following story we will encounter some evident tension between two sisters; the eldest and the youngest of a large family. The names were chosen to represent two distinct approaches to the Bible; Catholic (Cathy) and Evangelical (Eve). Perhaps this might be the appropriate time to mention that when I am presenting the Catholic understanding of the proper use of the Bible, I am also including the Eastern Orthodox Churches which are historically rooted in the same apostolic Faith. Also, when using the term “Evangelical”, I include all those who might identify themselves as the following: “Protestant”, “Bible believers”, “Born-again”, and “Non-denominational”.*

*In regards to the characterization of the two sisters, it is not my intention to associate the characters personality traits to the traditions they represent. Indeed, while I attempt to present the weakness of a “Bible only” expression of Christianity, my intention is in no way to denigrate these*

*faith filled believers. I do, however, hope to straighten out my friend who has me pinned in the corner. While I don't expect him to accept my explanation, I do hope he at least understands it. So, let me begin by saying, "It's not all in the Book."*

## **IT'S NOT ALL IN THE BOOK!**

Eve could hardly believe her eyes. There, tucked between some yellowing sheets in an old dresser in the attic, was a treasure she'd been in search of for years. She actually gasped as she picked up the book and pressed it to her chest. Immediately she was brought back over thirty years, to the day her grandmother first placed that spiral-bound book with its floral cover in her hands. She opened it and saw her grandmother's name, Rosina Pasquilina. The sight of that old-fashioned European-style script warmed her heart. How she missed her grandmother, even after all these years.

For Eve, this handwritten recipe book was almost sacred – a Holy Grail. In her attempts to locate it, she'd asked everyone if they remembered it. They all did but no one but Eve seemed interested in finding it. At family gatherings the conversation would often turn to grandma stories, and Eve would try to uncover a trail leading to this long-lost treasure. But none ever did. Now, gazing at the book, she was almost numb with disbelief and joy. No one suspected it had been hidden away in an old dresser. Eve remembered that dresser—her grandmother's—covered with religious statues and funeral cards. She pressed the book to her lips and whispered: "I can't wait to tell Cathy!"

Cathy was Eve's oldest sister, and due to the age difference she was almost her second mother. Cathy was born a year after their parents' marriage while Eve showed up as a surprise many years later, the last of her generation. Being the baby of the family, she was everyone's sweetheart, but being spoiled, she sometimes became everyone's headache. Even as a toddler Eve was a handful. As the eldest, Cathy not only helped look after Eve, she helped grandma, who moved in after grandpa's death. Grandma quickly assumed the lion's share of the cleaning and cooking, especially on Sundays when the family gathered for dinner. That was the day when a moderately sized dining room magically expanded to accommodate a small army. Grandma, as

queen of the kitchen, banished the male gender from her domain. No one ever questioned who was in charge. All knew it was grandma, who was affectionately known as “Nonna”.

In her excitement Eve almost tumbled down the steep attic stairs. Breathless, she barged into the kitchen and yelled, “Cath!” Her sister, standing at the sink, jumped. “Eve! You frightened me!” she called out once she had turned around.

Eve smiled from ear to ear. “Guess what I found.” Before her sister could answer, Eve yelled as if she won the lottery, “Nonna’s recipe book!” Cathy smiled, and after drying her hands on her apron, reached out to take it from her sister. She looked happy as she perused the pages; putting the book under her nose she said: “Whew, smells like mothballs”. Handing it back to Eve, she asked, “Where’d you find it?”

Eve, her eyes as wide as saucers, said: “Cath, I don’t believe you!” Then opening the book Eve flipped through the handwritten pages. “There’s even an index! This has everything – sauces, pastas....oh my Gosh, Cath! Then pressing the open book to her breast, she shouted to the ceiling: “It has her meatball recipe! “Cath, remember Nonna’s meatballs?”

Cathy sighed and continued washing the dishes but Eve continued, “Cath we haven’t tasted Nonna’s meatballs in years!

“Eve, you’ve been eating Nonna’s meatballs forever,” the elder sister said. “What did you think you had the other night? Nonna taught me everything. The meatballs I make *are* Nonna’s meatballs!” Completely ignoring her sister, Eve was riveted to the book. After turning numerous pages she announced: “I found it – meatballs! Let’s see, ground beef, eggs, bread crumbs, grated cheese—Cath, we have everything we need! Let’s make Nonna’s meatballs right now!”

“Eve, we had them last week, remember?”

Eve merely groaned, “But these will really be Nonna’s!”

“No,” said Cathy. I’m tired and I’m going to bed – good night!”

“Why don’t you want to help me?”

“Because it’s ten o’clock and I’m tired!” Then, with an edge in her voice, she added, “Besides, you don’t need me – you have your book.”

Cath was halfway up the stairs when she heard the sound of pots tumbling onto the kitchen floor. “This is going to be a disaster; she has no idea what’s she doing,” she murmured. Then she turned around and wearily came back downstairs to find Eve kneeling in front of a pile of pots and pans and looking like a frightened child.

Signing, Cathy pulled two aprons off a hook, and handing one to her sister said, “Okay, I’ll help. But I’ve already cleaned this kitchen once today; when we’re done, it’s your turn.” Eve’s only response was: “I’m so excited...Nonna’s meatballs--finally.”

Cathy looked through the book and chuckled. “Nonna’s English wasn’t broken – it was shattered.” After a few minutes she said, “You know, I could do this in my sleep.” Taking the book from her sister, Eve said “I’ll read the instructions. It says to get a large bowl and put in the chopped meat . . . but there are lots of bowls; which one did she mean?”

“She didn’t mean any of them,” Cathy responded as she pulled a roasting pan from a cupboard. “This is what Nonna used. Get the chopped meat from the fridge.”

“Cath, we haven’t even begun and already you’re not following the recipe!”

“Nonna never used a bowl. What difference does it make? Bowl or pan, the idea is to mix the meat. Nonna used a pan because she liked to have space to work in.”

A very doubtful looking Eve continued reading: “Mix two eggs with the meat”.

As Cathy put the meat in the pan she casually said, “Give me four . . . no, five eggs.” Eve hands her two eggs. “Book says ‘two’,” she stated through clenched teeth.

“Look at the amount of meat we have. Two eggs aren’t enough; we need more,” Cathy said as Eve muttered something that doesn’t sound pleasant and began rummaging through a drawer.

“What are you looking for?”

“One of those whippy things for the eggs.”

“Just break them and put them into the meat!”

“It says, mix two eggs in a bowl!”

“That’s right, in the bowl with the meat!” Eve announced in a louder-than-necessary voice.

“It doesn’t say in *the* bowl, but *a* bowl! Grandma didn’t speak English, let alone write it – a bowl, the bowl, whatever - you don’t need to mix the eggs!”

Defiant, Eve showed the book to her sister. “You read it”.

Ignoring her sister, Cathy broke the eggs on the edge of the pan and vigorously massaged them into the meat.

“Shouldn’t you wash your hands?” Eve demanded.

“How should I know? What does it say in the book?” Happy with her brilliant reply, she even more energetically squeezed the meat and eggs.

Searching in some cabinets, Eve asks “Where are the measuring cups for the breadcrumbs?”

Cathy took a brown paper bag from a cupboard, pulled out a fistful of breadcrumbs, and deposited them in the pan. After feeling the texture of the meat, she took another fistful and added it. Keeping her distance, Eve said: “It says ‘three cupfuls, not handfuls’”, at which point Cath began to mumble into the meat and add another egg.

“That makes six!” a shocked Eve protested.

Taking a pinch of meat, Cathy tasted it, paused. Then she headed for the seasoning rack while Eve, horrified, cried out. “Did you really just eat raw meat? Nonna didn’t say anything about tasting the meat before it was cooked! You can get sick like that! Besides, it grosses me out.”

Without saying a word, Cath pulled the book out of Eve’s hands, slammed it on the counter, and returned to her work. Eve, however, retrieved it a little guiltily and resumed reading: “Two cups grated cheese, four teaspoons parsley....” Her voice trailed off as Cath began adding these ingredients haphazardly, tasting then adding another sprinkle, dash, or shake. When Cathy went to a cabinet and returned with a box of raisins, Eve couldn’t believe her eyes. “Raisins! Are you crazy? Grandma never put raisins in meatballs!”

“Sometimes, she did, sometimes she didn’t. She also sometimes added pine nuts, but that’s certainly not in the book!”

When the meat was ready to be rolled, Cathy turned to Eve and said, “Now watch. With one hand, you grab some meat, then make a ball and roll it in between the palms of your hands, like this.” Consulting the book, Eve quickly went to the kitchen drawer extracting an ice cream scoop. Cathy screwed up face and said: “What’s *that* for?”

“For making the meatballs! Nonna says it right here - Cath, Look!”

At that point Cathy yelled “AGGHHH! SOMEONE HELP ME!” and then stormed out of the kitchen. Twenty minutes later she came back to find numerous oddly shaped meatballs crammed together on several plates. “Almost done,” Eve proudly announced. “And the water’s almost boiling!”

“Eve, we’re not making the pasta yet.”

“The book said to boil water – isn’t it for the meatballs?”

With that Cathy was beyond exasperation, shaking her head in disbelief, she marched over to her sister and taking her by the shoulders, turned her around, and escorted her to the stairway. “Eve, it’s late, thank you, you did a great job, thank you, let me finish – I’ll do the rest, you’ve worked hard, you go to bed.

The next morning, when Eve came down for breakfast she found her sister at the kitchen table having a cup of coffee. Looking around the kitchen she sheepishly remarked, “Gee, you cleaned up; I was going to do that this morning.” After pouring herself a coffee, she sat down next to her sister and asked, “How did the meatballs come out? Was the pot big enough?”

“That’s fine, Eve. I was able to get on by myself.”

“Hey, I always loved grandma’s meatballs right from the refrigerator, can I have one now?”

“For breakfast?”

Eve almost ran to the refrigerator and returned with a bowl covered in aluminum foil. Cathy’s eyes widened. With an ever so slight smile added: “*Buon appetito.*”

As Eve bit into the meatball, her face took on a look of ecstasy. “Oh, Cath, it’s delicious! It’s like Nonna never left!”

“Eve, last night, after collapsing into bed, something came to me which I think you should know about. The book you found wasn’t really Nonna’s”.

“Sure it was; I remember her showing it to me. Besides it’s written in her own handwriting”. Cathy gently placed her hands both flat on the table, and explained. “Eve, Nonna wrote the book, but she never used it—or any cookbook. Nonna learned to cook from her mother, who probably didn’t know how to read, and *she* learned from her mother. You see, years ago not everyone read. Not everything was learned from books, they learned from people.

“But her name was on the book, and it was in her dresser...”

“Eve, before you were born an elderly couple lived next door – both were very fond of Nonna. When the wife was diagnosed with cancer, Nonna knew that one day her husband would be left by himself. She also knew that being from the old school, he could barely boil water. So Nonna wrote a simple book with instructions that even he could follow. His wife died two days after grandma finished the book. He used it right until the day he went to the hospital. In fact, it was he who wrote Nonna name in the book, so it could be returned to her after he died. That’s when she must have put the book in her dresser. She probably never even looked at it since then. But she certainly never used it.”

Eve sat there silent and somewhat confused.

Cathy then said, “Eve, the meatball you enjoyed right now – were the ones I made last week. Yes, they were Nonna’s, but I made them. Eve, I grew up with Nonna, that’s how I know how she cooked. Not everything is in the book. If you really want to enjoy Nonna cooking for the

rest of your life, I'll be happy to teach you. You see, in that way, you can teach your children and they can teach theirs.”

Eve sat still without uttering a word. Then, looking at her sister said, “I’m tired of you treating me like a little sister. Just because you’re older you think your better. Let’s face it, Cath, you’re just jealous because I found Nonna’s book. Know what? I don’t need your lousy cooking lessons. And when I have kids, I’m going to teach them how to cook the *right* way. I have Nonna’s book – and a autographed copy!”

With that, Eve got up and left leaving her sister holding her coffee cup completely dumbfounded.

It was about two weeks later when Cathy returned home to find the kitchen in total disarray. The sink was filled with pots and pans and utensils strewn everywhere. On the table she saw a sheet of paper – a colorful flyer with a banner which read: Nonna’s Kitchen”. Cathy’s quickly read the flyer. Evidently Eve had begun a catering business. Speechless she read and reread the flyer. Suddenly the kitchen door flew open as Eve wrestling with two king sized brown paper bags which she almost threw on the kitchen table.

Standing there holding open the flyer Cathy inquired, “Eve, I see you’re starting a catering business.” Eve replied with a curt, “Yup.”

“I love the name.” She continued. “But, do you think you can use some help? I mean, it’s a lot of work. If you want, I can help, maybe be a consultant...”

Eve kept silent as she unpacked the groceries. Cathy gently continued presenting some simple reasons why she may want to wait, perhaps to get some experienced help.” Her words were met only by silence. Then Cathy added with a smile – I can be both your assistant and consultant!”

“Cath, Trust me, I don’t need your assistance or advice. I shown Nonna’s book to some friends and their super-excited about the business. We’re gonna start small, but when we get the business up and running we’re gonna start a franchise. They use their own kitchen and buy their own groceries, but we allow them to use Nonna’s recipe book. Now, if you excuse me, I have a customer who ordered dinner for six tonight.”

Cathy stood there in complete disbelief. She thought, “This is a disaster ready to happen.”

Eve went over to the stove and started stirring something in a huge pot with a long wooden spoon. Then looking up at Eve called out with a slightly nervous smile: “Eve, do think twelve pounds of spaghetti is enough?”

With that Cathy, threw up her hands in the air and began stomp and scream: “EVE, IT’S NOT ALL IN THE BOOK! DO YOU HEAR ME? IT’S NOT ALL IN THE BOOK!”

### **AS I SEE IT**

Well, there’s the story about Cathy and Eve.

We’re all familiar with the famous riddle, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” This question can also be asked about the Church and the Bible – specifically, the New Testament. If we can say the Church is a community of those who follow Jesus, the answer to our question becomes quick and easy: “The Church comes before the Bible.” Who, we might ask was Jesus’ first follower - Mary, Joseph would be second. Let’s not forget John the Baptist, then, of course, the fishermen Peter, James and John. Even before one word was put to parchment, the body of believers slowly began to grow. At this time, of course, the Church had no buildings, no choirs, pulpits, or stain glass windows. However, he would remind us, “Wherever two or more are gathered in my name, I am there.”

Yes, the Church came into existence as you and me – small, silent, and unnoticed. In like manner, the Church was present before the evangelists and apostles wrote one word.

Before the written word, there was the spoken word, and before that, the Eternal Word. This Word, we are told became flesh in the womb of the Virgin and born in Bethlehem. After thirty years of being hidden in the womb of their humble home in Nazareth, Jesus was born into the world beginning his public ministry. The Church, as noted above, slowly but surely grew as more and more people came to believe in Jesus through his words and wonders. For sure the wisdom and works of Jesus were recorded in the mind and recounted by the mouth. Songs, in particular, was one way Christians learned the doctrines passed on by the apostles. As time proceeded, so did the process of passing on the teachings of Christ. This “passing on” is called “traditio” or a handing over. This is what is called the sacred or apostolic Tradition.

New Testament scholars surmise that what we have recorded in the pages of the four gospels was passed through preaching especially at their weekly gathering on Sunday. Indeed, the longest tradition of the Church is evidenced in the weekly “breaking of the bread” or the Eucharist. At these gatherings, from what we know from extant writings from the time, portions of the gospels and the writings of the apostles would be read and explained by the bishop or delegate priest. Any notions of Christians getting together for a New Testament Bible study must be quickly dismissed. Not only was literacy limited to very few people, the letters of Peter and Paul

and other apostles were still being written. Archaeologists have uncovered rooms in private homes where believers gathered for the Eucharist, some decorated with paintings with biblical themes - images for the unlettered. Later on, mosaics, stained glass and stone statuary served the same purpose. The Church, we might say, carried God's word in their heart and mind way before they carried it in their arms.

I presume not even centuries ago few people actually believed the Bible fell from the sky. However, even today not many know how it came to be. While this is not the time or place to offer even a historical overview of its development, we can only say that God, the Holy Spirit, was very much a part of the process. In a brief and basic review: the four Gospels penned by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John present us with some of the known life and teachings of Jesus. The Acts of the Apostles, written by the evangelist Luke, gives us a look into the life of the early Church. While the remaining New Testament are generally letters written to the various Christian communities mostly but not exclusively by Saints Peter and Paul. That some of the gospel accounts were written sixty to ninety years *after* the events they describe turns our attention once again to Sacred Tradition. Indeed, it would take a few centuries before the bishops of the Church would gather in council and officially "canonize" the four gospels and the apostolic letters which we know to make up the New Testament.

In speaking about the celebration of the Lord's Supper – the Eucharist – Paul himself uses the word "traditio". Keep in my mind, when the word is placed in the lower case – tradition(s), we are not speaking of divine revelation but certain changeable customs. Thus, Jesus handed on to the apostles what was handed on to Him by His Father. The apostles, for their part, handed on this revelation to others; in particular, their validly ordained successors. As mentioned above, it would take literally centuries before the Church would definitively define what texts were divinely inspired and what were not. Some of our readers may be familiar with the "fake news" picked up by Hollywood that other gospels existed and were "suppressed" by the Church. They are speaking of the Gnostic gospels which were not so much suppressed but rejected as uninspired; indeed, heretical.

In our story, Cathy, as mentioned in the introduction, represents the ancient apostolic Church. She kept alive for her family – and especially Eve – the great gift of her grandmother's culinary skills. She tried to make it clear to her younger sister that consulting a book was not necessary in order for her to enjoy Nonna's cooking. The highly coveted recipe book – which, of course, represents the Bible – is understood by Eve as a way of reliving her childhood and

“reviving” her deceased grandmother. However, she doesn’t realize that it is her sister who can and does fulfill this deep desire. Without Cathy’s lived knowledge and experience with her grandmother, that which Eve truly hopes to attain cannot be fully realized. Simply stated, Cathy was able to share the great treasure of her Nonna’s gift with Eve not because she knew how to read but because she learned how to cook – from her grandmother.

At this point, I must wade into a little theology. It’s just ankle deep. Stick with me.

There are two foundational dogmas or revealed teachings essential to the ancient apostolic faith; these are the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation. The first teaches that the One Godhead is made up of three perfectly distinct, equal, and non-created divine Persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The second affirms that the Son – the second divine Person – took on our human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary while not surrendering his divine nature. The two natures are neither compromised nor diminished. Thus, Jesus is both fully God and fully man.

I am certain that many of our readers may be quite familiar with these two fundamental truths. However, the words “Trinity” and “Incarnation” cannot be found in on one page of the New Testament. While these truths can be readily culled out of the gospels and epistles, their full meaning and theological import could not. It would be the task of the apostle’s successors – the bishops - by means of discussion, dialogue, and even debate to definitively define them. Such work was accomplished at “Ecumenical Councils”. Many readers are familiar with the Apostles and Nicene Creed, but if one wants some theological certitude on the Trinity need only to read the Athanasian Creed. Go ahead, *Google it*.

Besides the virulent and violent persecution by the Roman Church, the other enemy of the Church were heresies; namely, false teachings. Often enough, the Church responded to the spreading of theological errors by means of Church Councils which articulated and promulgated sound doctrine. Over the years, Church teachings, practices and disciplines emerged from such authoritative councils. Sadly, those who led the charge in the Protestant Reformation referred only to the Bible to justify their actions. Thus, substantial teachings firmly held by both the Church in the Orthodox East and Catholic West was rejected. For example, the apostolic authority of bishops, the ministry of priests, the role of deacons, the sacramental life of the Church – especially in the Eucharist, and the proper role and devotion to Mary and the saints.

Good motives do not always guarantee good results. Luther pulled the lynchpin, and soon, even he couldn’t stop the ecclesiastical and social unraveling which affected the entire Western world. When a tree limb is diseased, the solution is pruning not uprooting. What first began as

one man pointing out bad apples ended by many attempting to pull down the tree. All of this energy expended by the righteous who not only read – but reworked the Bible. These sought to imitate what they read without consulting the family who wrote the book. In time, one reform sired another, each engendered movement seeking its own distinct identity. The greater their zeal to follow the Holy Bible, the further they drifted from the Mystical Body – and one another.

Like the famous nursery rhyme, the Church was the “Humpty Dumpty” of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Still, after five hundred years we’re left looking at the pieces. All the king’s horses and all the king’s men have yet put the Church back together again. Yet, we all know someone who can - the King!

---

© 2018 Fr. Glenn Sudano, CFR

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law. For permission requests, write to the publisher, addressed “Attention: Permissions Coordinator,” at the address below. For sincere questions contact (no emails or phone calls please).

Fr. Glenn Sudano, CFR

Saint Joseph Friary

523 W 142 St.

New York, NY 10031

[www.franciscanfriars.com](http://www.franciscanfriars.com)