

❖ Ad Veritatem ❖

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CHRIST AND THE AMERICAN DREAM

Today's world seems to have raised "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" to the level of a divine order. Complimentary virtues which are similarly honored include rugged individualism, self-reliance, and hard work in pursuit of the American dream. Today's media promotes the pursuit of the secular "Holy Grail" of human existence: *personal happiness!* Anything that impedes this pursuit such as the Ten Commandments, the authority of the Church, etc. is marginalized, trivialized and finally eliminated all in an apparently logical progression.

Complimenting and justifying this "directive" is the generally accepted belief that anyone who is not successful, especially in America, must be lazy and clearly not blessed by God. The corollary to this belief is that poverty is the fault of the poor as well as an indication by God that the person is not in His favor. This concept which has run through American literature for hundreds of years (the Horatio Alger stories are a prime example) is the result of the Quaker's influence based on their religious beliefs that God blesses His favored (the wealthy are good) and curses those He doesn't favor (the poor are bad).

It is important to remember that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution are not the equivalent of the Bible! The concepts stated in our country's founding documents have also been misconstrued from the intent of the original authors who viewed God as the center of all that is good and accordingly the center of a good society. But just as the Quakers used phrases out of context of the Bible to justify the pursuit of wealth as a directive from God, many today misuse the words of the Constitution to justify a relentless pursuit of happiness.

Ultimately the question which plagues us is: can a Christian be wealthy in this life and still attain heaven? The answer, if we are brave and intellectually honest enough to accept it, is found in the words of Christ. See Mk 10:17-31; Luke 16: 19-31; Mt. 6:24-26; Luke 12:13-21.

Aquinas, Analogy and Being a Real Lawyer

*By: Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem
Our Chaplain*

"Lawyer". This is a word which is a classical case of "predication by analogy".

One type of analogy is when a word or concept is used which applies principally to one thing, but is also used in relation to many other different things which are related to it in some way. For example, the word "health" is used primarily to describe the proper and harmonious functioning of the body and its organic systems in any animal (including rational animals!). The words "health", "healthy", and "healthful" are used in relation to food, complexion, exercise, weather, hair, skin, color, medicine, insurance, buildings, professions, and so on. These concepts are all causes, effects, signs, conditions, or occasions, of "health" in the body, which is the only thing "healthy" in the principal of the sense of the word. These uses of the word only make sense as "healthy" in relation to the primary definition of "health" in the body. Similarly, the name of "lawyer" derives from the law and, therefore, the words "legal", "legislative", "legitimate", "licit", "lawful", and "lawyer" all make sense only in relation to the

(Continued on page 3) See CHAPLAIN



*"When statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties, they lead their country by a short route to chaos."
St. Thomas More*

*Editor's Note:
"Ad Veritatem" is Latin for "toward the truth".*

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APRIL DISCUSSION TOPIC: "Addiction and Grace"

At the May meeting, Judge David McEachen spoke about aspects of addictions whether due to a physical substance or the drive for personal security. After noting some key characteristics of addiction, Dave focused us on seeking the answer from the Bible. The following is a brief summary of the discussion:

Addiction is any compulsive, habitual behavior that limits the freedom of human desire. It is caused by the attachment of desire to specific objects. The word "behavior" is especially important in the definition, for it indicates that "action" is essential to addiction. Attachment of desire is the underlying process that results in addictive behavior, but for an attachment to become truly addictive, the person must elect to act on that desire.

There are 5 essential characteristics that mark true addiction: (1) tolerance, (2) withdrawal symptoms, (3) self deception, (4) loss of will power, and (5) distortion of attention.

Tolerance is the phenomenon of always wanting or needing more of the addictive behavior or the object of attachment in order to feel satisfied. What one has or does is never quite enough. Subjectively, the feeling might be something like: "If only I could get some more, everything would be fine." Typically, tolerance is not something of which one is aware, rather it happens insidiously.

Withdrawal symptoms are experienced when an addictive behavior is curtailed. The first is a stress reaction: when the body is deprived of something it has become accustomed to, it responds with danger signals, as if something is wrong. The second type of withdrawal symptom is a rebound or backlash reaction. The person experiences symptoms that are the *exact opposite* of those caused by the addictive behavior itself. For example, withdrawal from alcohol and other sedatives can produce hyperactivity and even seizures, while withdrawal from stimulants can result in lethargy, depression, and somnolence.

Self-deception is another characteristic of true addiction: the exquisite inventiveness of the mind is one of the most significant hallmarks of addiction. The creative power of the mind is used unconsciously to subvert each and every attempt to control the addictive behavior.

Loss of will power is a key element of addiction. As soon as one tries to control any truly addictive behavior by making autonomous intentional resolutions, one begins to defeat oneself. For the most part, defeat is due to mixed motivations: one part of

the will sincerely wants to be free while another part wants to continue the addictive behavior. In any true addiction, the second part is stronger, and so the resolutions fail.

Distortion of attention always results from true addiction. The mind is often able to keep its addiction hidden, even from ourselves, as long as we are getting a sufficient supply of the object of the attachment and are experiencing no great conflict without it. However, the attention is not free for other matters. As long as we are focused upon satisfying our addiction, there is no freedom for attention to other matters such as love.

The presence of addiction should be suspected whenever interior human freedom is compromised. The foregoing characteristics can help us distinguish between addiction and free desires and love. Even the most well adjusted and spiritually mature of us can identify with some addictions when it comes to the human need and desire for security. In our culture, the 3 gods we trust for security are: possessions, power, and human relationships. To a greater or lesser extent all of us worship this false trinity.

In the realm of possessions, we try to acquire and hold on to sufficient income and property. We call this financial security and hope it will eventually provide us and our family with freedom and peace of mind. We justify this conduct by arguing that it is essential for us to continue our good works!

In the arena of power, we seek status, influence, and control over our lives. This relates in part to financial security, but also extends to claiming and holding self-determination and autonomy in the face of forces around us. We confuse "freedom" with capacity to secure our self-interests.

In terms of human relationships, we try to secure both short-term affiliations and long-term bonds with other people. Ideally, relationships are the vehicle through which we most directly love and are loved. But relationships can tyrannize us: we can become too dependent or too possessive. Our sense of personal worth, goodness, or lovability may become contingent on the approval of others.

The Scriptures give us many examples of the attraction of desires by man, their failure in resisting it, and the consequences. The first story showing us temptation is found in the fall of Adam and Eve in Genesis. Being tempted by the desire to be god-like (the attachment) as promised by the lying serpent,

*See **ADDICTION** (Continued on page 3)*

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(Continued from page 2) **ADDICTION**

Adam and Eve choose (act) of their free will to disobey God. When confronted by God, they take no personal responsibility with Adam blaming Eve, and Eve blaming the serpent (self deception).

The story of Exodus and the wandering in the desert is rich with metaphors of our struggle to overcome addiction through grace.

In the desert the Jews expressed all the characteristics of addiction and of the addicted personality to a degree that was agonizing for God and as frustrating for Moses as it was for themselves. They experienced the stress and fear of withdrawal symptoms, longing for the old days of slavery. They hoarded more of their manna than they needed, and it rotted. They deceived themselves with idolatry and excuses. They made resolutions to obey God's commandments, only to fail when left by themselves.

Their attention was so distorted that they became lost in idol worship while surrounded by enemies. They acted in self-centered, narcissistic manipulative ways, with self-images so eroded that at times they wished that they had died in slavery! Yet, through it all, God guided the people of Israel, protected them, suffered over them, commanded them, and raged at them, continually commanding and empowering them to trust and to love.

For the power of addiction to be overcome, human will must act in concert with divine will. The human spirit must flow with the Holy Spirit. Personal power must be aligned with the power of grace. We must pray, we must use the sacraments of reconciliation and the Eucharist, and we must seek help from the community as "no man is an island".

Source: **Addiction & Grace**, by Gerald G. May, M.D., Harper Collins Publisher, 1988

(Continued from page 1) **CHAPLAIN**

definition of law in its primary and most proper and significant meaning.

Catholic tradition gives a brilliant, succinct, and all encompassing definition of "law". In his **Summa Theologica**, St. Thomas Aquinas presents a formula which has been taught to generations of civil and canon lawyers, seminarians and philosophy students. This definition of "law" is both refined and at the same time full of implicit edification for anyone involved with any aspect of law, whether it be eternal, natural, divine, human, positive, civil, ecclesiastical, or domestic: "Law is an ordinance of reason for the common good promulgated by those who have care of the community." (**Summa Theologica**, I-II, q. 90, a. 4). In other words, law must be *rational* ("an ordinance of reason"), *social* ("for the common good"), *communicative* ("promulgated"), and *authoritative* ("by those who have care of the community").

Obviously a lawyer is one who concerns him or herself with the law for the benefit of his or her clients. However, given the foregoing definition of "law", these are the characteristics which a lawyer must possess in order to be called "lawyer" by a true analogy to this definition and not merely a utilitarian professional connection.

RATIONAL: A lawyer is a man or woman of reason, or, in other words, truth. Therefore, for a lawyer to be like the law he or she serves, he or she must be a stranger to falsehood, insincerity, and the purely emotional appeals of self-interest and sensuality.

SOCIAL: Even when the law benefits or protects individuals and their rights, it does so in order to guarantee the respect due the rights of each and all. The law and, therefore, the lawyer

sees things in context, in the light of the common good that delicate but real balance between the good of one individual and the good of another. The lawyer is not simply the representative of a private or individual interest, but rather an expert in the order and true good of a society of individuals of which his client is just a part.

COMMUNICATIVE: For the law to be just, it must be available to be known by those whom it concerns. The lawyer keeps secrets to be sure, but only secrets which have no bearing on the law. He develops strategies, and lines of argument which he does not reveal until the right moment, but they must be revealed eventually. A lawyer communicates the truth about the law and his client in relation to the law. Without this openness and clarity, a just judgment is merely an accident, if it occurs at all.

AUTHORITATIVE: The law is its own defense. The lawyer has a confidence which is based not only on power whether political, personal, or economic, but on authority, the law which is reasonable, socially responsible, and clear, and has been established by those who have the right and duty to do so: the people and their legitimate representatives.

These characteristics of one who takes his or her professional title from the law may sound like a high ideal, unrealistic perhaps, and out-of-touch with reality. However, they represent a challenge as well as an opportunity to make more analogies with the other, non-professional aspects of our lives. Indeed, there is barely an aspect of our lives that is not meant to come under some law, either human or divine, and sometimes, both. We should never profess to be a lawyer or anything else, in name only and not in fact. "I am a lawyer" should be an analogy to the "law", not an equivocation.

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem:

Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



Scriptural Corner:

"There was once a rich man who dressed in the most expensive clothes and lived in great luxury every day. There was also a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who used to be brought to this rich man's door, hoping to eat the bits of food that fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the feast in heaven. The rich man died and was buried and in Hades where he was in great pain, he looked up and saw Abraham, faraway, with Lazarus at his side. So he called out, 'Father Abraham! Take pity on me, and send Lazarus to dip his finger in some water and cool off my tongue, because I am in great pain in this fire!' But Abraham said, 'Remember, my son, that in your life time you were given all the good things, while Lazarus got all the bad things. But now he is enjoying himself here, while you are in pain. Besides all that, there is a deep pit lying between us, so that those who want to cross over from here to you, can not do so, nor can any one cross over to us from where you are.' The rich man said, 'Then I beg you, father Abraham, send Lazarus to my father's house, where I have five brothers. Let him go and warn them so that they, at least, will not come to this place of pain.' Abraham said, 'Your brothers have Moses and the prophets to warn them; your brothers should listen to what they say.' The rich man answered, 'That is not enough, father

Abraham! But if someone were to rise from death and go to them, then they would turn from their sins.' But Abraham said, 'If they will not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone were to rise from death.'" **Luke 16:19-31**

From The Library:

College Apologetics by Fr. Anthony F. Alexander is not just another nice book of apologetics. It is rather the classic treatment of the subject - undated and undatable, precisely reasoned, and carrying the reader through a series of logic gates that begin with the proof of the existence of God and follow logically through the proof of the existence of the human soul, the necessity of religion, the reliability of the Gospels, the claims of Christ and the proofs thereof, the reason for His coming, the nature of His Church, its four classic identifying marks, the "moral miracle" of the Catholic Church, and, finally, its infallibility as the religious Teacher of mankind." Not only is the book's logic ironclad, but it also unveils the great historical evidence for the veracity of the Church from extant writings of some of the greatest historical figures of the first century after Christ.

Available through St. Joseph Catholic Radio in Orange. Mail orders can be made by telephone: 744-0336

Ad Veritatem**ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY**

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NEXT MEETING: Thursday, May 16, 1996**TOPIC:** Biblical Apologetics (Please see enclosed flyer)**SPEAKER:** Tim Staples, Catholic Apologist**PLACE AND TIME:** Rutan & Tucker, 12th Floor, 12 noon R.S.V.P. 641-3450