

❖ Ad Veritatem ❖

Volume 1 Issue 8

Official Publication of the St. Thomas More Society

November 1996

Catholicism vs. Protestantism: a live discussion

Sola Scriptura ("Scripture alone"), presented from the opposing views of Catholic apologist and evangelical Protestant, will be the topic of a lively discussion Saturday, November 9, sponsored by St. Joseph Catholic Radio.

Tim Staples, Director of Apologetics for St. Joseph Catholic Radio, will be presenting the Catholic view. James White, Director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization, will provide the Protestant interpretation of the subject.

The event will start at 6 p.m. on Saturday, November 9, at Plummer Auditorium, located at 201 East Chapman Avenue, Fullerton (near Fullerton Community College). A donation of \$10 per person is requested, with preregistration highly recommended.

St. Joseph Catholic Radio is sponsoring the
(Continued on page 2) Catholicism

OUR RETREAT

(June 6-8, 1997)

Our St. Thomas More Retreat will occur from Friday night June 6 to Sunday June 8, 1997 at Marywood, the Diocesan Center in Orange. Our Chaplain, Fr. Hugh Barbour, will be our retreat Director. The retreat will be a traditional, silent retreat with conferences and meditations taken from the writings of our patron, St. Thomas More, especially his writings on prayer, personal love for Jesus Christ in His Passion, and his famous writing to his daughter Margaret entitled "Last Things." There will be opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance, Eucharistic Adoration and quiet time with the Lord.

ORIGINAL JUSTICE AND ORIGINAL INJUSTICE

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

"Have you heard the latest lawyer joke?" Whether it is over cocktails, or on radio advertisements against this or that ballot initiative, the legal profession takes a generous share of abuse in our society. The supposed greed of unscrupulousness of its practitioners makes the whole profession the object of numerous jibes. The adjective "crooked," or nasty characterizations taken from dialect German, are applied proverbially to attorneys. To a reasonable observer, however, there is one obvious fact which no one can deny: lawyers have clients. The moral equality of legal representation has as much to do with the desires and expectations of a lawyer's public, as with his or her own personal uprightness. So why is it that the profession takes such a beating, being no better or worse morally than the rest of society? And how come other cultures and times have shared this perception almost universally? The answer could be envy, since many lawyers are prosperous, but so are motion picture stars, and yet no one seems to mind their often wildly irregular

(Continued on page 3) See Chaplain

Inside This Issue:

Chaplain's Message	Page 1
Upcoming Meetings	Page 2
Excerpts from St. Thomas More's writings	Page 4
Scriptural Corner	Page 4
From the Library	Page 4



St Thomas More pointed out that tyranny comes about through the negligence, greed, and cowardice of respectable people in respectable positions.

**Thomas More: A
Portrait of Courage**

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

The Holy Father, Pope Paul II, has said that all Christians have an obligation to evangelize.

(Continued from page 1) **Catholicism**

event, which is expected to draw a packed crowd of ardent supporters of the opposing points of view. Although the event is not labeled a debate, previous similar events have resulted in fast-paced exchange of ideas.

Fr. Hugh, Barbour, Norbertine (and our Chaplain) is moderating the discussion, which will have a strict protocol for each side to follow. Each speaker will present his argument, with responses from the opponent. Questions from the audience will be encouraged after the speakers have finished their talks.

St. Joseph Catholic Radio is a non profit, volunteer organization of laypersons dedicated to evangelization. St. Joseph Radio presents a live one-hour show every Saturday from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m. on 1190 AM (KORG). "St. Joseph Presents" is broadcast on short-wave radio station, WEWN, Mother Angelica's radio network. St. Joseph Radio also sponsors regular talks and conferences throughout Los Angeles and Orange counties; and St. Joseph Radio has recently spread out to Riverside County and is even hosting events out of state.

Tim Staples, representing the Catholic point of view, was raised a Southern Baptist. He became a youth minister for the Assemblies of God before he converted to Catholicism. He studied for the

priesthood for six years, but realized that was not his vocation. He is currently Director of Apologetics for St. Joseph Radio and frequent host of the regular radio program, and is also a youth minister within the Diocese of Orange.

James White, who will present the evangelical Protestant view, is a scholar in residence in the College of Christian Studies at Grand Canyon University. He is an ordained Baptist minister who holds degrees in theology and apologetics. He is an author and director of Alpha and Omega Ministries, a Christian apologetics organization.

St. Joseph Radio will have volunteers on hand to provide free literature as well as books, pamphlets, cassettes tapes and religious items for sale.

The Holy Father, Pope Paul II, has said that all Christians have an obligation to evangelize. St. Joseph Radio reminds you: "Sanctify Christ the Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope, but do it with a gentleness and reverence." (1 Pet. 3:15-16)

To preregister, send a check for \$10 per person to St. Joseph Catholic Radio, P.O. Box 2983, Orange, CA 92859. You may also use Visa, Mastercard or American Express credit cards. Telephone: (714) 744-0336; fax: (714) 744-1998.

A PREVIEW OF OUR NEXT MEETINGS:

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14: Tim Staples - Questions & Answers
THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21: Judge Francisco Firmat leads a discussion on "Prayer"

Tim Staples, a Catholic Apologist (see article on page 1 entitled Catholicism vs. Protestantism) has been conducting a six month course for us on Biblical Apologetics. At our meeting on Thursday, November 14, Tim will teach the final class where he will conduct a question and answer session. Even if you have not attended the prior classes, this meeting will be worth your while to attend. Tim's clear and concise explanation of the biblical basis and proof that the Catholic Church is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church established by our Lord, Jesus Christ, is awesome. You will learn a lot from this class. A sets of tapes containing all of Tim's prior lectures on the Eucharist, Apostolic Succession, the Virgin Mary, the Priesthood, and the fallacy of Sola Scriptura will be available for sale.

Francisco Firmat is an Orange County Superior Court judge. He is an immigrant from Cuba having escaped from Castro's regime in 1961. At age 11, he was sent by his parents to St. Vincent's Home for Boys, a Catholic orphanage in Denver, until they could also escape. Fortunately his entire family was reunited in the United States. His father was a judge in Cuba and Judge Firmat has followed his father's lead and believes that this is his vocation from God. He is a contemplative and team teaches at the Center for Spiritual Development (retreat house) in Orange. Judge Firmat is involved in a number of charitable causes including serving for 7 years as Chairman for a program designed to help rehabilitate Spanish-speaking juveniles.

On Thursday, November 21, Judge Firmat will lead our group in a discussion on prayer.

(Continued from page 1) *Chaplain*

moral lives, on the contrary! There must be something about the job of handling legal matters in itself which must excite this critical attitude. What could it be? The answer proposed here might shock at first reading, so hold on for the explanation.

The answer is sin, in particular, original sin. Almost instinctively in the minds of everyone the law is associated with the universal fact of our fallen human nature. Men tend not to do what they ought to do, and thus there have to be laws and sanctions to keep human weakness and human malice in check. Now *law*, in its highest and most perfect sense, has nothing to do with sin or evil. As we wrote a few issues back, the classical, Catholic definition of *law* taken from Saint Thomas Aquinas is "an ordinance of reason promulgated for the common good by him who has care of the community." The original law is and was always the rule of right reason, placed in us by our Creator, who made the use of reason the determining factor of our nature. In order to act justly, human nature should need no other law than its capacity to know and consider reality. Such was the case with our first parents, who possessed what theologians called "original justice" which means that all of their inclinations, desires, decisions, followed the rule of reason enlightened by their faith in what God had revealed to them. Had the human race continued in this state there would be no need of any other law but this "natural law": the serene judgements of human reason about what must be done and what must be avoided. Yet our first parents fell into sin, that is, they acted against what their rational judgement enlightened by faith told them to do. In other words, they acted unjustly, without conformity with the real order of things, putting themselves above their just place in God's creative plan. As a result, they "fell" to a lower place than they were meant to occupy. This fallen state has been the negative inheritance of their children: original sin. All original sin means is simply that we are conceived without the original reasonable and grace-filled harmony among the constituent parts of our human nature: reason and will, will and emotions, mind and passions, senses and desires. Our human nature remains intact and fundamentally good, but its different parts do not operate in harmony. There is a "law in our members" at odds with the "law of the spirit", a constant struggle between our higher inclinations, and the drag of our physical or emotional desires. Because of this state, undeniable on the evidence of personal experience, human nature needs not only the natural law, the rule of reason given us by the nature designed by our Maker, but also "positive law" given both by God (for example in the Ten Commandments) and by human authority (the law codes of civil societies and associations, for example, the Code of Hammurabi, Roman Law, Anglo-Saxon Common Law, the U.S. Constitution).

Now lawyers concern themselves principally with the interpretation of the positive law of civil societies. As we have just seen, this positive law would not exist were it not for the fact of our fallen nature. Lawyers are constantly dealing with the

tension between what is reasonable and right according to the natural law, and the unruly inclinations of fallen human nature. From a natural point of view, their work is at the heart of what ails us as human beings: the loss of the wholeness and integrity of our human nature, and the attempt to restore or maintain a harmony at least in human society if not in the life of the individual. Whether one is a public defender or facilitates corporate mergers, the cause of all the varied uses of the legal art is our current fallen state which is due to "original injustice." We cannot be expected to do what is reasonable and right for ourselves and others without some positive norms and enforcement of those norms.

As grim and sin-laden as law might seem on this account (perhaps economics, "the dismal science," has some competition!), the discerning legal mind can find in the teaching set forth here some ray of hope or even evidence of the so-called "majesty of the law." The grounding of the positive law in the natural law of our rational nature. Our reason's power to divine the wise plan of our Creator is the safeguard and the justification of all the lawyer's sometime unpleasant dealing with the down side of the human condition. After all, the ideal of our nature as willed by God is what the law is, the practical realism, trying to establish. This is a noble endeavor, open to all the best inclinations of the human heart, and the most powerful movements of God's grace. Saint Thomas More, our patron, gives us the best example here.

So why is it then, that the legal profession is not held in higher regard? Certainly not because of the lofty conception of it put forth here. The debasement of the profession comes from what we can call a "legal positivism" which accepts as the norm only positive law, as though our current, constantly changing state has no natural standard against which it should be measured. A law to be a true law must be just, and to be just it must be reasonable, that is, in conformity with our nature as it strives to do its best, albeit in difficult, fallen circumstances. Laws and lawyers who do not concern themselves with the natural law of justice win the condemnation of all who are reasonable.

Next time we will see the best means for upholding the natural law in the profession of the positive law: by restoring the balance of justice in our fallen nature by prayer and the discipline of penance. After all, Saint Thomas More donned a hairshirt under his judge's ermine!

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY:

**Remember: the first person to
ever leave Mass early was
Judas!**

Scriptural Corner:

"Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea." **Mark 9:42**

Comment from The Navarre Bible - Saint Mark's Gospel.*

"Scandal is anything said, done or omitted which leads another to commit sin" (St. Pius X Catechism, 417). Scandal is called, and is, diabolical when the aim of the scandal-giver is to provoke his neighbour to sin, understanding sin as offence against God. Since sin is the greatest of all evils, it is easy to understand why scandal is so serious and, therefore, why Christ condemns it so roundly. Causing scandal to children is especially serious, because they are so less able to defend themselves against evil. What Christ says applies to everyone, but especially to parents and teachers, who are responsible before God for the souls of the young." (Page 134)

* The Navarre Bible, an edition of Sacred Scripture prepared by members of the Faculty of Theology of Navarre University, consists of the New Vulgate, the Revised Standard Version, and commentaries. The commentaries provide explanations of the doctrinal and practical meaning of the scriptural text, drawing on a rich variety of sources—Church documents, the exegesis of Fathers and Doctors, and the works of prominent spiritual writers, particularly the Venerable J. Escriva, who initiated the Navarre Bible project.

From The Library:**Keeping Your Kids Catholic** by Bert Ghezzi

In this book, Catholic parents, religious educators, family counselors, and youth workers offer practical articles that cover nearly every aspect of Catholic family life. From a how-to article on sharing your faith with small children to articles on how to love adult children who leave the Church, here is tested pastoral wisdom for raising your kids Catholic.

From St. Thomas More's Writings:

"It is not a sin to have riches, but to love riches. 'If riches come to you, set not your heart on them,' says Holy Scripture...He who forgets that his goods are the goods of God, and who reckons himself an owner rather than a disposer, takes himself to be rich. And because he reckons these riches to be his own, he casts his love on them and so much is his love set less upon God. For as Holy Scripture says, 'Where your treasure is, there is your heart.'"

Wegemer, Gerard B. Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage Scepter Publishers (1995) page 84

Ad Veritatem**ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY**

Anne Lanphar
c/o Rutan & Tucker
611 Anton Blvd #1400
Costa Mesa, CA 92626
alanphar@mcimail.com
(714) 641-3450

NEXT MEETINGS: Thursday, November 14 & 21, 1996

TOPIC: See Article on Page 2

SPEAKERS: Tim Staples (Nov. 14); Judge Francisco Firmat (Nov. 21)

PLACE AND TIME: Rutan & Tucker, 12th Floor, 12 noon R.S.V.P. 641-3450