

❖ Ad Veritatem ❖

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SPECIAL SPEAKERS ON TIMELY TOPICS

How Do You Know That What You Believe Is True?

By: Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem, Ph.D.
Our Chaplain

OUR MEETING

This Thursday September 18th John Flynn together with Sister Carmella, a Carmelite nun, will speak to us on St. Terese of Lisieux. At the recent World Youth Day, the Holy Father, announced to the world that this humble saint, known as “the Little Flower”, would become a Doctor of the Church. She will be only the third woman in Church history to receive this high honor!

LUNDGREN TO SPEAK!

Attorney General Dan Lundgren will be the guest speaker at the October 3rd meeting of the First Friday Friars. Mass is followed by lunch and speaker. For information, please call Bob Lanphar @ 837-5000.

*Father Hugh is on a well-deserved vacation from his numerous commitments. Therefore, we are reprinting a portion of a column that he writes for **Envoy**, a Catholic Apologetic & Evangelization magazine. Father's column answers questions from readers. The following is reprinted from his column published in the Premier Issue. To subscribe to this terrific publication, please call 1-800-55-ENVOY.*

Query: How can I trust the claims of the Catholic Church without knowing all her theology and without being able to justify some of the dark chapters in her history? How can I have an assurance that the Catholic Church is

*(Continued on page 2) **Truth***

SEPTEMBER MEETING:

TOPIC: *St. Terese of Lisieux - soon to be the newest Doctor of the Church*

SPEAKER: John Flynn, Esq. & Sister Carmella, Carmelite

DATE, TIME & PLACE: *Noon on this Thursday, September 18th @ Village Farmer's Restaurant in South Coast Village, 1651 Sunflower, Costa Mesa.*

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More understood clearly that all human beings are created to contemplate God.

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage (p. 88) Gerard Wegemer

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

Christ's Church when there are so many facts and details I cannot know?

Answer: The question you ask has deep roots in a wider cultural problem that must be overcome. Many modern theologians, such as Karl Rahner, assert that no one can really master theology any more because the information to be digested is too great for one person, and that the Church can no longer make universal creeds or catechisms because of the complexity and diversity of both the world and academic disciplines. This assertion, however, is not true.

Since the time of the Protestant Reformation, many in the West have been afflicted by what the Holy Father calls "philosophies of suspicion." This means that the first question many people ask is not "*What is this?*" or "*Is this true?*" but, rather, "*How can I know for sure?*" Protestantism was born out of this attitude, a modernist and unbiblical approach to divinely revealed Truth. The whole thrust of Protestantism is to establish an unassailable personal authority to determine truth and to give the individual an absolute assurance of his salvation.

We've all heard the standard Evangelical Protestant questions: "*Have you been saved?*" and "*If you died tonight, do you know if you would go to heaven?*"

The problem is, these are the wrong questions to be asking. They are certainly not the questions Jesus and St. Paul and the other Apostles asked their hearers. The more crucial question is: "*How do you know that what you believe is true?*"

The normal, serene approach appropriate for human nature is to assume that knowledge, and knowledge of the truth, will lead to happiness and salvation. If one examines the Sacred Scriptures, those who have faith accept God's word in simplicity because they are used to accepting what is presented in a reasonable and authoritative way. They ask questions: "*How can this be since I know not man?*" "*Can a man return to his mother's womb?*" "*Then who can be saved?*" They ask such questions because

they are reasonable and want explanations, not because they are driven by anxiety about their salvation. The biblical man knows that the truth will make him free and will lead him to salvation, so he seeks truth first trusting that happiness and salvation will follow: "*Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,*" said St. Peter just after our Lord pronounced the most unprovable and mysterious words he ever uttered in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, words which Protestants cannot accept on their clear meaning. St. Peter professed the truth in the hope of salvation. He did not say first, "*I am a sinner in need of a savior,*" but "*Depart from me, I am a sinful man.*" First came the objective fact, the holiness of God and His truth, and only then the gift of salvation. Protestantism "poisons the well" by beginning with a doubt as to whether man can know any truth at all, and then resolving it with a "leap of faith" which cannot and must not be explained rationally. Catholicism assumes man's orientation toward the truth as part of his nature and presumes that the evidence, the testimony of the prophets and saints, their miracles and teachings, is sufficient to justify accepting the gift of faith which is offered to all by "*the light which enlighteneth every man coming into the world.*" For those who need proof of the Christian faith by miracles, or insist on proof without miracles, St. Thomas Aquinas has this masterful, serene, and very Catholic advice:

"It is a well-known fact, related in pagan histories, that the whole world worshipped idols and persecuted the faith of Christ; yet now behold...the wise, the noble, the rich and the powerful have been converted at the words of a few simple poor men who preached Christ. Now was this a miracle or not? If it was, then you have what you asked for, a miracle. If you say that it was not a miracle, then I say you could not have a greater miracle than the conversion of the whole world without miracles, and we need to seek no further."

This miracle happens every day, all over the world. Ultimately, this is all any of us needs to know about the Catholic Church." †

ARGUING THE EXISTENCE OF THE IMMORTAL SOUL: WHY IMMATERIALITY REALLY MATTERS

By: Michael Shonafelt, Esq.

The cover of the March 25, 1997 issue of *Time* magazine featured the head of a woman, beautiful, but droid-like, fixing a knowing gaze on the reader and crowned with a halo of gears. The caption of that week's *Time* was "*Can Machines Think? They already do, say scientists. So what (if anything) is special about the human mind?*"

What is so special about the human mind? Is it a matter of degree or complexity? Is it like that of a monkey, but with more neurons? If so, then there is nothing to prevent us from replicating it in the form of a computer motherboard. If so, then we are nothing but machines ourselves.

In describing the unsettling reality that machines are getting better than human beings at math, secretarial work, and even chess, the *Time* article goes on to say "[t]he better these seemingly soulless machines get at doing the things people do, the more plausible it seems that we could be soulless machines too."

The article provides another example of how modern society has eroded the boundaries between man and machine. It is both a moral phenomenon (we don't want eternal responsibility for our actions) and a philosophical phenomenon (we are materialists and no longer hold to the existence of an immaterial soul).

But current philosophies that reduce the human mind to a machine fail to account for what *Time* magazine calls the mind's "mysterious" qualities such as consciousness. And try as they might, the materialists will never be able to explain how the mind moves in immaterial realms and builds complex systems of thought with nothing but abstract ideas that transcend matter.

Is an idea or a concept such as "justice" or—less lofty—the Pythagorean Theorem, for instance, reducible to material components? If a materialist says "yes", then he is compelled to explain how ideas can be reduced to atoms. If he says "no", he is compelled to deny their existence.

But their existence is beyond the denial of reasonable human beings. We build cities based on our grasp of Euclidean geometry—a system of concepts abstracted from our perceptions of raw matter. But we can never take these ideas and examine them under a microscope. They have no matter. They are "immaterial".

The following "thought experience" (to use Peter Kreeft's terminology) demonstrates the immateriality of thought.

Conjure the image of a car. What does your imaginary car look like? In your imagination, change your car's color, shape, style. Your image changes, but something remains constant which allows you to

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draw an association between the two. That which remains constant is the concept of “the car” which is quite distinct from the pictures in your imagination. Whether your imagination presents a picture of a Volkswagen Bug or a Cadillac Seville, the universal idea of “the car” is common to each and therefore transcends any and all particular concrete example of cars we see either on the road or in our imagination.

This thought experiment demonstrates the universality of our ideas. It shows that ideas are completely distinct from the images in our imagination and that they transcend the material representations or examples of the ideas that we encounter. It also shows that ideas transcend matter. For, if ideas were material, they could not be universal.

This truth is profound. It is the grist for Saint Thomas Aquinas’ proof for the immortality of the soul. For, if ideas transcend matter, so does the mind that produces these ideas, since “*action follows being*” to quote Saint Thomas. And, if the mind transcends matter, it cannot be reduced to parts, and cannot therefore be destroyed. This ultimately means that the mind (read “soul”) persists beyond the destruction of the body at death.

To argue immateriality is to argue immortality and, ultimately, an eternal destiny for all human beings. The argument is a priceless tool for apologetics.

The positive, albeit ironic, outcome of the advancement of technology into the realm of “artificial intelligence” is a renewed debate on the nature of the human mind. Twentieth Century thought has hitherto dismissed the notion of immateriality out of hand as something too chimerical for reasonable discussion.

But now the technological gurus and modern philosophers are taking notice of the mystery of the mind. As scientists provide more and more of the technology that has its counterpart in the gray matter of the brain, they will take note that one major ingredient is missing: the soul.

For now, scientists and modern philosophers only skirt about the periphery of the great truth of the mind’s immateriality, but the more thoughtful of them have realized that something profound is missing in their calculus. *Time* calls them the “*Mysterians*” and one of them has said that there is something “*over and above the physical*” that separates artificial intelligence from human intelligence.

Though we may take some comfort in the idea that modern thought is finally coming around to questions answered centuries ago with such blinding clarity by Aristotle and Saint Thomas, we could also offer the “*Mysterians*” a helpful bit of advice—read the Summa and then get down on your knees. †

Michael Shonafelt is an associate with the law firm of Nossaman, Guthner, Knox & Elliott having received his J.D. degree from Loyola School of Law in 1996. Michael has a master’s degree in education and taught in the L.A. school district while attending law school. He and his wife have 3 children under the age of 6! His 3 years of studies at St. Michael’s Seminary are reflected in his regular contributions to this

Let Go and Let God!

PRIDE: the Deadliest of the Deadly Sins

By: Anne Lanphar, Esq.

Our society encourages us all to have “pride” in ourselves. We promote this among our children as an important character trait calling it euphemistically “self esteem”. “Humility” is seen as a virtue that we should “appear” to have so that we don’t seem to be *too* egotistical. This false humility is, of course, merely another aspect of pride. But is pride a virtue or a curse, an asset or a sin? Why has pride been universally condemned across the ages by the Bible, the Church, and the Saints?

“*Pride*” is defined in the Encyclopedia of Catholicism (p. 1048) as “...the disordered love of self or one’s own success to the exclusion of others or God. Pride is a capital sin because it is often the source of other sins.” Pride is the first of the seven deadly or capital sins (pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust). These sins or vices are “...the wellsprings from which sinful thoughts, behavior, and omissions arise....It is more precise to think of the capital sins as dispositions toward sinning rather than as sins properly speaking; that is, they are tendencies in our character that threaten moral goodness by predisposing us to sin.” (Ibid., p. 225) This designation was first used by Pope Gregory the Great, reinforced by St. Thomas Aquinas and even immortalized by Dante in his work The Divine Comedy in which the prideful were assigned to the lowest level in purgatory meaning that its residents had the most grievous of sins and the greatest amount of atonement due to God.

The very first sin in recorded history was the disobedience of Adam and Eve which was driven by pride: Eve was tempted to think that she would become as great as God. It is believed that the sin that engendered the downfall of the Lucifer was his great pride which caused him to refuse to adore the Christ as the God-Man.

Some think that some pride is good – that it is a matter of balance. But if pride has had such a central part in the downfall of both men and angels, can it be good at any level? The greatest minds over 2 millenium say not. Why?

To have pride assumes, by definition, that we are *solely* responsible and can take full credit for some act or accomplishment. In other words, we come to believe that we are in full control and have, *without assistance*, accomplished some end. But is that true? Well, we worked hard to earn our law degrees and we certainly are the ones who are working so hard to be successful. A common response to a being called “lucky” is: “*Well, that’s funny but the harder I work, the luckier I get.*” How in the world can we have the audacity to take credit for God’s gifts to us? What did we ever do to deserve to be born with intelligence and health in one of the riches countries of the world, to parents who were able to provide us with opportunities to obtain the necessary education, and so much more! This is as absurd as the flea on a dog bragging that *he* is great because he was born on the largest dog! Everything that we have been given is totally a gift from God totally undeserved and for which we will one day be accountable to Him.

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(Continued from page 5) **Pride**

Christ often condemned the Pharisees for their deafness to His Word pointing out that the deafness was caused by their pride. The Pharisees were the leaders, the educated ones who were successful in their day. Christ repeatedly warned all men against pride and the fatal error of getting too caught up with the riches of this world. How many times did He say it and how many times have we heard the words and how many times have we assumed in some irrational part of our minds that He didn't *really* mean it or that it does not *really* apply to us? Christ even went so far as to tell us that we must be humble and act as servants to others in this life and do as He did when He humbled Himself to perform the lowly task of a slave by washing the feet of the Apostles. Do we serve like Christ or do we just work hard so we can be successful and accomplished in this world?

How does one go about cutting back this terrible weed of pride in our lives? First and foremost, we must pray – especially by attending Mass. In addition to our Sunday obligation, we must try to attend daily Mass as often as possible starting with at least one day a week. Only through the Eucharist can we actually start to subordinate our will to God's and to acknowledge God as the source of all blessings. Second, we should avoid day dreaming and reliving and bragging about our "successes". Whenever this temptation strikes, we should immediately say a prayer and refuse to allow ourselves to engage in this self grandizing. By prayer we acknowledge God's greatness in all things and that we are blessed to be able to serve as His instrument in all we do. Third, we must *take action* as Christ directed time and time again – we must serve the poor and needy. If we wish to see Him, we must be able to recognize Him in the least of our brothers and sisters. By "take action" I mean *actively* serving those who are considered "least" by this world – and writing a check won't cut it. And we need to serve because we love God! But how do we come to know in what way He wants us to serve? If we pray, He will let us know—provided we are willing to ***be quiet and to listen!*** We have to make time to pray quietly—no radios, no telephones, no other demands for our attention. For type A personalities, this is definitely a challenge!

Saint Thomas More also suggested that one way to stay properly focused on what is truly important is to contemplate the "last things": death, judgment, heaven and hell. It is all too easy to assume that death is far away and that there will be plenty of time to do "good" *after* we "make it"! Pride leads us to think that we are independent of God which in turn leads us not to trust in Him but to try to "be wise in the ways of this world", that is, to take care of ourselves, ensuring our savings are large and our future secure. *Trust God?* A novel idea, and not at all easy to do. But if we quietly contemplate the inevitability of death and consider that it could come at any time, like "a thief in the night", (like it recently did for Princess Diana and Billionaire Dodi Fhyad), we will naturally focus on the proper order of importance of all matters in our life. An elderly priest who had attended to many dying people over his numerous years once said that he had never heard a dying person say that he wished he had earned more money or had gone to Europe or had bought a bigger house or Mercedes--rather the dying had always focused on what they should have done and hadn't—and were fearful now that it was too late!

Saint Thomas More, please help us to avoid pride and to stay focused on what God would have us do. Help us to not be driven by success in this world but to focus on the inevitability of death, judgment, heaven and hell. Please lead us to our Lord in our daily life. Amen. †

Anne Lanphar graduated from University of California, Hasting College of the Law in 1977. Until recently she was partner in the real estate department of Rutan & Tucker having been with the firm for over 18 years. She is now a Senior Underwriter with First American Title Insurance Company. Anne has been married to her husband Bob for over 21 years and they have 3 sons, ages 17, 15 and 11.

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem

Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"



Biblical Interpretations

These bloopers written by children are all genuine, authentic, and unretouched. It is truly astonishing what happens to Bible stories when they are retold by young scholars around the world!

"In the first book of the Bible, Guinnessis, God got tired of creating the world, so he took the Sabbath off. Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark. Noah built an ark, which the animals came on to in pears. Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night."

"The Jews were a proud people and throughout history they had trouble with the unsympathetic Genitals. Sampson was a strongman who let himself be led astray by a Jezebel like Delilah. Sampson slayed the Philistines with the axe of the apostles."

"Moses led the Hebrews to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread, which is bread made without any ingredients. The Egyptians wondered in the dessert. Afterward, Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the Ten Amendments. The First Commandment was when Eve told Adam to eat the apple. The Fifth Commandment is humor thy father and mother. The Seventh Commandment is thou shalt not admit adultery."

"Moses died before he ever reached Canada. Then Joshua led the Hebrews in the battle of Geritol. The greatest miracle in the Bible is when Joshua told his son to stand still and he obeyed him."

"David was a Hebrew King skilled at playing the liar. He fought with the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times. Solomon, one of David's sons, had 300 wives and 700 porcupines."

"When Mary heard that she was the Mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta. When the three wise guys from the East Side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger. Jesus was born because Mary had a immaculate contraption. St. John, the Blacksmith, dumped water on his head."

"Jesus enunciated the Golden Rule, which says to do one to others before they do one to you. He also explained, "Man doth not live by sweat along." It was a miracle when Jesus rose from the dead and managed to get the tomb stone off the entrance."

"The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels. The epistles were the wives of the apostles. One of the opossums was St. Matthew, who was by profession a taximan. St. Paul cavorted to Christianity. He preached holy acrimony, which is another name for marriage. A Christian should have only one wife. This is called monotony." †

Scriptural Corner:

As Jesus was starting on His way again, a man ran up knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to receive eternal life?"

"Why do you call me good?" Jesus asked him. "No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not accuse anyone falsely; do not cheat; respect your father and your mother.'"

"Teacher," the man said, "ever since I was young, I have obeyed all these commandments."

Jesus looked straight at him with love and said, "You need only one thing. Go and sell all you have and give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven; then come and follow me." When the young man heard this, gloom spread over his face, and he went away sad, because he was very rich.

Jesus looked around at his disciples and said to them, "How hard it will be for rich people to enter the Kingdom of God."

The disciples were shocked at these words, but Jesus went on to say. "My children, how hard it is to enter the Kingdom of God! It is much harder for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle."

At this the disciples were completely amazed and asked one another, "Who, then, can be saved?"

Jesus looked straight at them and answered, "This is impossible for man but not for God; everything is possible with God."

Luke

AD VERITATEM

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**Our
Next
Meeting:**

DATE: Thursday, September 18th @ NOON

PLACE: Village Farmer's Restaurant

1651 Sunflower, Costa Mesa

TOPIC: St. Terese of Lisieux - the newest

Doctor of the Church

SPEAKERS: John Flynn, Esq. & Sr. Carmella

FOR INFORMATION: Anne Lanphar @ 647-2155 or Dave Belz @ 347-0447