Ad Veritatem

Volume 5 Issue 6

Official Publication of the St. Thomas More Society

June 2000

JUNE MEETING:

Attorney & Councilman Dennis O'Neil

"Conversion at 60"



More points out, however, prosperity is not necessarily a sign of favor. Prosperity hinders conversion and causes vices to increase.

Thomas More:
Portrait of Courage
Gerard B. Wegemer
(pg. 189)

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

Well-known Orange County attorney Dennis O'Neil will be our speaker this month on his recent conversion to Catholicism. Dennis, a successful public law attorney and Newport Beach councilman, was welcomed into the Church at the Easter vigil service at Our Lady Queen of Angels parish. Although highly successful as measured by this world with a successful law practice, loving family, a beautiful home, political success, Dennis came to question if there was something more, something he was missing, something that was beyond the here and now. His remarkable journey to the Faith was reported in the L.A. Times on April 22, 2000—a copy of the article is reprinted on page 3 of this newsletter.

Reservations are not required. For more information, contact Dave Belz at (949) 347-0447 *dbelz@kuhnbelz.com*, or Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 *alanphar@firstam.com*.

Everyone is welcome! \$\P\$

The Church and Homosexuality

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



QUESTION: If homosexuality were found to be a genetic trait, would the Church then be willing to change its teaching that homosexuality is "unnatural and sinful"? After all, a person can hardly be blamed for a

drive that is innate.

<u>ANSWER</u>: No, the Church wouldn't change its teaching. Here's why.

The Catechism explains that a great number of moral and social errors are based on a lack of an understanding of the fact that human beings have a fallen nature, caused by the inheritance of

<u>Homosexuality</u> (Continued on page 2)

JUNE MEETING:

TOPIC: "Conversion at 60"
SPEAKER: Dennis O'Neil
WHEN: LUNCH Meeting at
Noon on Wednesday June 21st
PLACE: First American Title
Lender's Advantage Bldg
3 First American Way, Santa Ana

(see map on page 11)

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(Continued from page 1) Homosexuality

Original Sin (CCC 407). Modern-day errors and misconceptions about homosexuality stem from this same problem. Let's analyze the reasons why homosexuality is unnatural.

First, remember that human nature is a composite of body and soul. We're not purely spiritual or purely physical in our makeup. Every aspect of human experience is shaped by both of these elements of our nature. So, while, science (in this case, genetic science) asserts that just about everything about us, positive or negative, is the result of some bodily, genetic trait, faith tells us that we must also take into account the spiritual dimension, the inheritance of Original Sin and its effects. This means we tend, in addition to our good and truly natural inclinations, to have a strong tendency toward evil, to excess in the fulfillment of our desires for pleasure, power, possessions, and reputation.

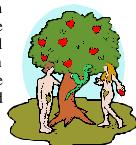
The Catechism says, "As a result of original sin human nature is weakened in its powers subject to ignorance, suffering, and the domination of death; and inclined to sin . . . We therefore hold with the Council of Trent, that Original Sin is transmitted with human nature, 'by propagation, not by imitation' and that it is proper to each" (CCC 418-419). Obviously, Christian moral teaching doesn't justify sinning simply because we have an inherited tendency to sin! To use a physical analogy, no one would regard blindness or a deformity as "good" or

"natural" just because a person is born with such a condition. A blind man isn't blamed for his blindness, but he's expected, nonetheless, to live in accordance with the reality of the visible world. This same principle is true in the area of moral "deformities." Even though we might be born with a certain physical, mental, or emotional handicap, we must always seek to struggle against our weaknesses and conform our behavior to the moral order God established.

The tendency to homosexuality is a source of temptation to sin. As a temptation, it must be resisted, no matter what its origin. This is true for all people, regardless of whether they are heterosexual or homosexual. We could see this more clearly, perhaps, if scientists were to discover a gene which predisposes people to theft or violence. This might explain the person's heightened tendency to steal cars and punch people, but it doesn't thereby provide a license for that person to commit those acts.

Homosexuality appears to be caused by a multiplicity of factors: circumstance, experience, deliber-

ate choice, and even, perhaps, a genetic trait. The Catechism points out that the absolute prohibition of homosexual acts is unrelated to the origin of the tendency or even the number of persons so afflicted (CCC 2357-2359). †



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"Religion starts with an emptying of self.

The Spirit cannot come into the soul until the ego begins to hang outside its tinsel dwelling the sigh: 'Immediate Occupancy.'

The ego or the selfish part of existence has to be broken like the shell of an egg before there can be the development of the personality which at the beginning is as helpless as a chick."



SPIRITUAL QUESTION SPARKS LONG JOURNEY

By WILLIAM LOBDELL

Editor of Times Community News, Looks at Faith as a Regular Contributor to The Times' Orange County Religion Page.

Printed in LA Times April 22, 2000

A year ago, Thais O'Neil--a reawakened Catholic--hung a crucifix on her bedroom wall.

"That made me really uncomfortable," said her husband, Dennis, who had never ventured inside a church except for an occasional wedding or funeral.

The fact was, for most of his 62 years, Dennis O'Neil had never given God much thought at all. And when you think about it, why should he?

"Newport Beach Councilman Dennis"
O'Neil first felt 'the

His life was just fine, thank you. He had a thriving Irvine law practice, a sturdy 35-year marriage, a loving daughter, a beautiful home in Corona del Mar, and enough friends in town to easily elect him to two terms on the Newport Beach City Council.

So why did he begin to wonder, "Am I missing something?"

"Newport Beach
Councilman Dennis
O'Neil first felt 'the
presence of something'
at a funeral. The quest
began then, and
continues. He becomes
a Catholic in
ceremonies today."

April 22, 2000 L.A. Times

And this kept creeping into his thoughts: I'm getting older, and I'd better not leave this God thing unexplored before I die.

So began O'Neil's spiritual journey, which started with a few tentative steps and, 12 months later, is in full sprint.

"It's an experiment for me," O'Neil said. "The more I examine it, the more I feel it's worthwhile. I now believe there is a broader meaning to life--there is a spiritual side. It's a fascinating experience."

O'Neil will become a Catholic today, and he's not alone. Fifty-nine others in his church, 1,100 in Orange County, and hundreds of thousands of others throughout the world will be brought into the faith during Easter Vigil services.

Maybe it started back in 1995 when he attended, as a newly elected councilman, the funeral of slain Newport Beach Police Officer Bob Henry.

"I felt something that day," said O'Neil, struggling to explain what happened. "There was more going on there than just a funeral. I felt the presence of something. The Holy Spirit was there."

Then there was his wife, who has found an amazing serenity after she recently rejoined the Catholic Church.

At O'Neil's church--Our Lady Queen of Angels in Newport Beach--about a third of soon-to-be Catholics have spouses already in the faith. Other people have stories that are as unique as O'Neil's: a recovering alcoholic who's looking for a more defined "higher power;" a Mormon who fell in love with Catholicism; a Buddhist who's making the leap to Christianity.

"It's like having the world come to your doorstep," said Diane Brounstein, a Catholic teacher

Spiritual Journey (Continued on page 4)

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(Continued from page 3) Spiritual Journey

who works in the program at Our Lady Queen of Angels.

Tonight's ceremony, which for O'Neil includes baptism, confirmation and communion, is the culmination of a 12- to 18-month process--called the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults or "catechumenate" -- that has its roots in the 1st century Catholic Church.

* * *

The idea is to build and strengthen a new believer's faith over an extended period through teaching biblical and church doctrine, building relationships within the congregation (newcomers are assigned a sponsor who's an active church member) and doing community work.

The catechumenate participants at Our Lady Queen of Angels met twice a week, on Tuesday nights and during Mass on Sundays.

"People who lived in the Roman Empire during the church's early years had to be countercultural to join the Catholic faith," Brounstein said. "With active persecution, becoming a Catholic had to be a very gradual process. To make that kind of choice, they had to be solid about their faith in Jesus Christ."

A series of small milestones are built into the program that make the process less intimidating and also encourage participants to stick with it. O'Neil's graduating class had no dropouts.

"They make little commitments as they go along," explained Father Vincent Gilmore, the priest who oversees the program at Our Lady Queen of Angels.

The commitments range from something as simple as just agreeing to attend a social get-together to vowing to learn more about Jesus to finally deciding to become a Catholic.

The danger of the long process--it takes maybe

six weeks to join most churches--is that it could scare away potential Catholics.

* * *

"At first, there can be a kind of reluctance for the long-term commitments that it requires," Brounstein said. "But the kind of Christian formed in this way is the kind of Christian who knows his faith and lives it. We try to explain that this is a spiritual formation process."

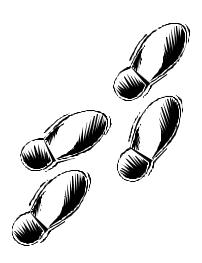
"And if you want to use a business term, we have a good retention rate. These people stay in church community and become active members."

By the catechumenate's end, the new members have bonded with their faith, their church and each other.

"It is going to be such joy to have them fully initiated in our faith," Brounstein said. "We've grown so close that it's like watching your family. It's going to be like heaven on Earth."

Thais O'Neil would agree.

"I always wanted and prayed that someday Dennis and I would walk hand-in-hand into church, and now it's happening," O'Neil said. "I'm sure I'll cry. I think he will too." \$\frac{1}{4}\$





Scriptural Corner:

³⁸And in his teaching he said, "Beware of the scribes, who like to go about in long robes, and to have salutations in the market places ³⁹and the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at feasts, ⁴⁰who devour widows' houses and for a pretence make long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.

Comment from the Navarre Bible*:

³⁸⁻⁴⁰ Our Lord reproves disordered desire for human honours: "We should notice that salutations in the marketplace are not forbidden, nor people taking the best seats if that befits their position; rather, the faithful are warned to avoid, as they would evil men, those who set too much store by such honours" (St Bede, *In Marci Evangelium expositio*, *in loc*.).

*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. &

From the Writings of St. Thomas More

MORE ON PAPAL AUTHORITY

One source of public agreement which came under particular attack was law, both ecclesiastical and civil. Luther was convinced that the Roman Church had set up its own laws in opposition to the spirit and teaching of the gospels. In his fervor, he made extravagant claims that he would later have to modify. He insisted, for example, that "either pope, nor bishop, nor any individual has the right to impose a single syllable on a Christian person, unless this is done by the latter's consent." Any such imposition would constitute tyranny.

The lawyer in Moore was quick to draw out the absurdity of this position. "Happy, therefore," he retorted, "are thieves and murderers, who will never be so insane as to agree to a law according to which they will pay penalties. Indeed, this farsighted father does not see that according to this reasoning, should everyone unanimously agree, yet the law can have force only until a new citizen is born or someone else is enrolled as a citizen."



More went on to show the extreme political danger of Luther's position. Without the guidance of good law, he pointed our, a country "would rush forth into every kind of crime." Indeed, if Luther's teaching about law were to be widely accepted, it would result in "the utter and inescapable destruction of all peoples." \$\frac{1}{4}\$

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage By: Gerard B. Wegemer (Pg. 98-99)

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From the Library



The Size of Chesterton's Catholicism

David W. Fagerberg

English writer Gilbert Keith Chesterton was widely known not only for his newspaper columns, novels, poetry, plays, and detective stores, but also for his theological and Catholic apologetical works, This celebration of Chesterton's passion for his faith builds on his own words to reveal the Catholic paradox he was so fond of exploring and which he articulated with zeal, wit, and total lack of animosity. David W. Fagerberg draws on Chesterton's theological writings—avoiding secondary sources so that the reader can encounter his thought as directly as possible—to show how Chesterton championed a Catholicism of great robustness accessible by a thousand doors.

Through these doors Fagerberg shows how Chesterton believed the Church to be a living institution that confounds its critics. He organizes Chesterton's material around seven themes, fashioning a mosaic from the illustrations and arguments found in these apologetical works. We see how Chesterton responded to accusations that the Church avoids the world with a defense of ordinary life, and to the allegation of blind obedience with a defense of doctrinal complexity. We explore his affinity with paganism and ritual and share his response to the objections of liberal Protestantism.

Chesterton is shown to be an apologist for a Catholic Catholicism and he saw in every heresy an effort to narrow the Church. Chesterton said about the Church "that it is not only larger than me, but larger than anything in the world; that it is indeed larger than the world."

Fagerberg suggests that the ultimate apology Chesterton made for Catholicism is that it is capacious enough to accommodate the paradoxical combinations which reveal reality—that the Church is a trysting-place for all the truths in the world. Thoughtful readers will find this book to be a trysting-place for many of the truths espoused by G. K. Chesterton.

University of Notre Dame Press

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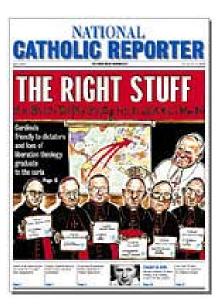
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Catholic Web Sites



Parents and the Cardinal Virtues

James Hirsch, Esq.

Admittedly, there are many variables that determine a nation's direction. Political, economic and international events converge to impact an unfolding future. Recently, a cliché has been used to advance the viewpoint that government intervention is needed. It is said that the public should line up behind one proposed program or another "for the sake of the children."

However, this attempt at manipulation holds within it a profound truth. Our children indeed are our future. This makes the challenging role of raising children a distinctly meaningful and extremely consequential endeavor.

The parenting advice industry has taken many twists and turns since the days when Dr. Spock's methods reigned supreme and parents faithfully adhered to his every recommendation. It seems, though, that today's parents are generally more inconstant, and oftentimes more impotent, than their predecessors.

Despite societal confusion concerning the optimum approaches to child rearing, age-old wisdom is available for the taking, and it is surprisingly beneficial in helping to guide parents toward success in their appointed tasks.

Saint Thomas Aquinas referred to these instructional signposts as the Cardinal Virtues. C.S. Lewis wrote that the Cardinal Virtues are "those which all civilized people recognize." The virtues have traditionally been considered to be pivotal, and other moral attributes emanate from them. Their universal applicability is precisely what makes them so enlightening for parents. They consist of Prudence, Justice, Fortitude and Temperance.

PRUDENCE

Because the word has fallen out of vogue, the

notion itself has lost some of its appeal. For some, the term may have a negative connotation, such as that associated with "prude." But in actuality, prudence is basically an informed common sense. It involves paying attention to what is occurring at the moment and using reason and conscience to determine the correct steps to take. The Book of Proverbs states, "The prudent man looks where he is going." Prudent parents discern the truth regarding the everyday circumstances of their child. Keeping abreast of what children are being taught, particularly as it relates to the values aspect of the school curriculum, is an exercise of this virtue. With regard to teens, peers are the sum and substance of their world. Prudent parents make it a point to know exactly who it is that comprises this influential group.

JUSTICE

In many of our courtrooms, a depiction of a blindfolded woman holding the scales of justice is on display. As Americans, we pledge allegiance to the flag and declare that our nation has "justice for all." This statement incorporates the elements of equity, honesty and willingness to meet our commitments. Impartiality is an essential component of justice. Within the family, this virtue manifests itself in the form of unwavering fairness. A child should be able to predict the outcome of a violation of family rules, and the consequences should be administered consistently and without favoritism.

TEMPERANCE

Temperance will forever be connected with the movement against the consumption of alcohol, and many still believe that this is the singular meaning of the word. However, temperance has relevance for all sources of pleasure and involves moderation

Cardinal Virtues (Continued on page 10)

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Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*



*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

The Bible as Retold by Children

In the first book of the Bible, Guinessis, 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.



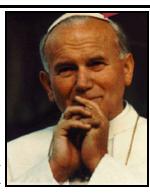




GENERAL INTENTION

That the followers of the various religions may grow in respecting one another and collaborating to consolidate justice and peace in the world

God calls men to serve him in spirit and in truth. Consequently they are bound to him in conscience but not ω -erced. God has regard for the dignity of the human person which he himself created; the human person is to be guided by his own judgment and to enjoy freedom....



The Pope's Prayer Intentions for Inne

When the principle of religious freedom is not just proclaimed in words or incorporated in law but is implemented sincerely in practice, only then does the Church enjoy in law and in fact those stable conditions which give her the independence necessary for fulfilling her divine mission. Ecclesiastical authorities have been insistent in claiming this independence in society. At the same time the Christian faithful, in common with the rest of men, have the civil right of freedom from interference in leading their lives according to their conscience. A harmony exists therefore between the freedom of the Church and that religious freedom which must be recognized as the right of all men and all communities....

It is clear that with the passage of time all nations are coming into a closer unity, men of different cultures and religions are being bound together by closer links, and there is a growing awareness of individual responsibility. Consequently, to establish and strengthen peaceful relations and harmony in the human race, religious freedom must be given effective constitutional protection everywhere and that highest of man's rights and duties--to lead a religious life, with freedom in society-must be respected.

May God, the Father of all, grant the human family by carefully observing the principle of religious liberty in society may be brought by the grace of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to that "glorious freedom of the children of God" (Rom 8:21) which is sublime and everlasting.

--Vatican II, Dignitatis humanae, (Declaration on Religious Liberty), December 7, 1965



Scriptures for reflection

John 4:21-24. Worship in spirit and truth.

Hebrews 8:10-12. "... they shall be my people."

Acts 17:22-34. Paul speaks to those who honor "an unknown god."

Catechism of the Catholic Church:

1907, 2104-9, 2211, 1782, 1730-31, 1738

For this intercession we can ask the intercession of Our Lady, Queen of Peace, and Saint Francis of Assisi, who prayed "Lord, make me an instrument of your peace."

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Thought for the Day

THE STARFISH

Once upon a time there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day he was walking along the shore. As he looked down the beach, he saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself to think of someone who would dance to the day. So he began to walk faster to catch up.

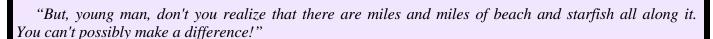
As he got closer, he saw that it was a young man and the young man wasn't dancing, but instead he was reaching down to the shore, picking up something and very gently throwing it into the ocean.

As he got closer he called out, "Good morning! What are you doing?"

The young man paused, looked up and replied, "Throwing starfish in the ocean."

"I guess I should have asked, why are you throwing starfish in the ocean?"

"The sun is up and the tide is going out. And if I don't throw them in they'll die."



The young man listened politely. Then bent down, picked another starfish and threw it into the sea, past the breaking waves and said, "It made a difference for that one." \$\displaystar{T}\$

(Continued from page 7) **Cardinal Virtues**

rather than abstinence. Temperate persons control appetites and exercise self-restraint. They seek balance. The most impressive parenting is accomplished in a reserved, composed and quiet state, even in the face of feigned or genuine hysterics. Temperance is also a contagious virtue. Before too long, children can move from agitation to composure in a shorter and more facile manner when a temperate demeanor is repeatedly modeled.

FORTITUDE

Resolve, strength, perseverance and courage are all a part of fortitude. C.S. Lewis wrote that the nearest modern English synonym for this word is "guts." All parents possess a modicum of guts. But positive results cannot be achieved without

cultivating a generous supply of this attribute, for it takes fortitude to continually exercise these virtues.

When it comes to parenting, these powerful beacons of ideal behavior dovetail elegantly with one another. Justice applied without temperance may be excessive. Fortitude is required to resist the peculiar talent that children have for eroding the will of their parents through repetition. Prudence serves to guide all of the other virtues through the adroit use of judgment.

Practice of these principles is an ideal for which to strive. Through the grace and providence of our Ultimate Parent, these Cardinal Virtues, when utilized conscientiously, will enhance our family relationships immensely and ensure a most promising future. \$\Psi\$



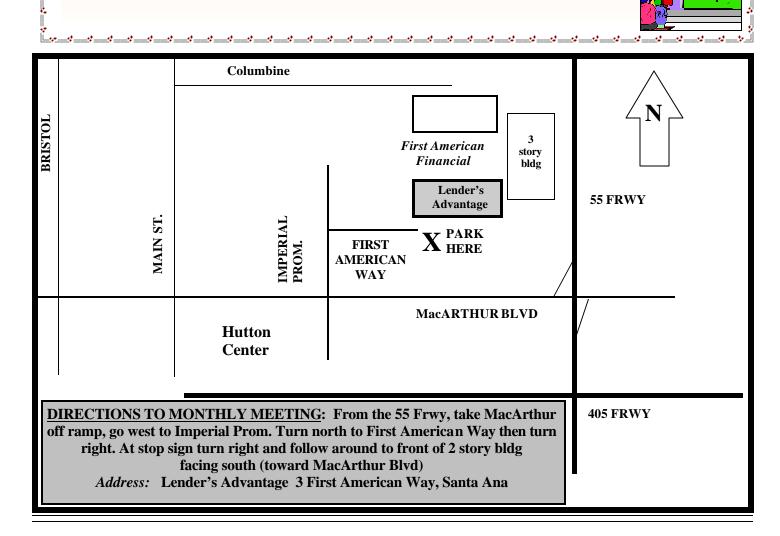
A PERSONAL INVITATION!

You are invited to attend a Special Mass celebrating the Feast
Day of St. Thomas More which will be held at Noon on June 22,
2000 at the private chapel in the law offices of Timothy Busch
(Busch Firm) located at 2532 Dupont Drive, Irvine.

Lunch will be provided following Mass.

Please RSVP on or before June 20, 2000 by contacting Malda Aguilera at (949)474-7368 ext. 101 or by e-mail at maguiler@buschfirm.com.

HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE! &



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AD VERITATEM

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Our Next Meeting:

<u>WHEN:</u> Wednesday June 21st @ NOON (Lunch)

TOPIC: "Conversion at 60"

SPEAKER: Notable Orange County Attorney Dennis O'Neal

PLACE: First American Financial Headquarters

— Lender's Advantage Bldg., 3 First American Way, Santa Ana

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