

# ◆ Ad Veritatem ◆

Volume 6 Issue 3

Official Publication of the St. Thomas More Society

April 2001

**APRIL MEETING:**  
**Dr. Vincent Fortanasce:**  
*“Who Lives?  
 Who Dies?  
 Who Decides?”*



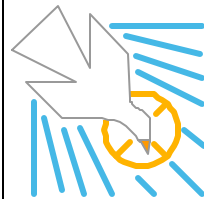
**Saint Thomas More pointed out that pride that has been allowed to develop “carries with it a blindness almost incurable.”**

This month’s speaker will be Dr Vincent Fortanasce, M.D., Ph.D, a nationally acclaimed neurologist, psychiatrist, bio-ethicist, former Olympic athlete, author, lecturer and family man. Dr. Fortanasce has served as spokesman for the California Medical Association and the Los Angeles Medical Association on patient rights in the California legislature. Currently a Clinical Professor of Neurology and Assistant Professor at the School of Physical Therapy and Biokinesiology at USC, he interned at Cornell University, completed his residency in Psychiatry at Yale and was the Chief Resident of Neurology at USC. He founded the Board of Bio Ethics at St. Luke's Hospital, Santa Teresita Hospital and became Chairman of the Ethics Committee at Arcadia Methodist Hospital in Southern California. He is a member of the prestigious Los Angeles County Board of Law and Ethics. Dr. Fortanasce is host of a new monthly segment on St. Joseph Radio Presents - *Medical Ethics, Issues and Answers.*

For more information, contact Dave Belz at (949) 347-0447 [dbelz@kuhnbelz.com](mailto:dbelz@kuhnbelz.com) or Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com). †

**Religion:**  
**Nothing to Get  
 Enthusiastic About**

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



***Enthusiasm:*** a quality we often associate with the pursuit of a particular hobby or avocation, meets with our approval often enough when we share the area of interest with the enthusiast. When we do not, however, then the zeal of the enthusiast can be a bit trying to our patience, especially when he tries to convince us to join him. What makes life more engaging for him fills us with a certain boredom, and we find ourselves looking for some polite way of escaping the room when the topic of the enthusiast’s passion comes up. Sometimes the matter actually holds some real interest for us, but the extreme concentration of the expert makes us want to avoid what we would ordinarily find interesting at least to some moderate degree. Our imagination can fill in the blanks; the enthusiasm can be for some sport, some luxury  
*Enthusiasm. (Continued on page 2)*

**APRIL MEETING:**

**TOPIC:** *Who Lives? Who Dies?  
 Who Decides?*

**SPEAKER:** **Dr Vincent Fortanasce**

**WHEN:** **Lunch (\$10) Mtg  
 Noon Wed. April 19<sup>th</sup>**

**PLACE:** **First American Title  
 3 First American Way, Santa Ana**

*Editor’s Note:  
 “Ad Veritatem”  
 is Latin for  
 “toward the truth”.*

**Inside This Issue:**

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(Continued from page 1) **Enthusiasm**

commodity, political issue, or area of entertainment. Those close to the enthusiast sometime can notice in him a certain lack of attention to other and more important areas of life: work, family, friends, religion.

**Religion.** Now, can someone become an enthusiast about religion? Every religion provides its followers with motivations for making its teachings the guiding influence, indeed the principal guiding influence in life. A devout practitioner of any faith does just that. Religious enthusiasm, however, is something more. Monsignor Ronald Knox, Catholic chaplain at Oxford University during the period between the two world wars, and perhaps the greatest priest author of this century, wrote a masterful study entitled **Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion.** Published by Oxford University Press in 1950, the work represented over thirty years of research, spanning the history of Christianity from apostolic times to the present century. In this work, he describes the fascinating and very enlightening history of the various movements and figures in the history of the Church which have ended up parting with her common teaching and practice as found among the devout and ordinary faithful, to pursue what are thought, or rather often felt to be more perfect, more spiritual, more personal and interior experiences of religion. He is thus able to detect general tendencies which characterize all these movements. The conclusions he draws are of great practical value for the reader, and in two directions. On the one hand, one can see what is to be avoided in order to be free from

spiritual self-deception, and on the other, one can see how necessary it is for one to persevere in the wholehearted profession and practice of the faith, so as not to give an excuse for the dissatisfaction of the zealot who wants to go beyond the limits of the true faith and discipline of the Church because of the lukewarmness he finds among the ordinary, orthodox faithful.

Let us hear Monsignor Knox's description of the phenomenon of religious enthusiasm: *"If I could have been certain of the reader's goodwill, I would have called my tendency 'ultrasupernaturalism' for that is the real character of the enthusiast; he expects more evident results from the grace of God than we others. He sees what effects religion can have, does sometimes have, in transforming a man's whole life and outlook; these exceptional cases (so we are content to think them) are for him the average standard of religious achievement. He will have no 'almost Christians,' no weaker brethren who plod and stumble, who (if the truth must be told) would like to have a foot in either world, whose ambition is to qualify, not to excel. He has before his eyes a picture of the early Church, visibly penetrated with supernatural influences; and nothing less will serve him for a model. Extenuate, accommodate, interpret, and he will part company with you."*

Even though the enthusiast does not necessarily reject the ordinary sacramental practice of the Church, his religion concentrates on the experience of the assurance of salvation and direct contact with God, unmediated

**Enthusiasm** (Continued on page 5)

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**SIMPLE TRUTHS**



**Fulton J. Sheen**

**"The nearer Christ comes to a heart, the more it becomes conscious of its guilt; it will then either ask for His mercy and find peace, or else it will turn against Him because it is not yet ready to give up its sinfulness. Thus He will separate the good from the bad, the wheat from the chaff. Man's reaction to the Divine Presence will be the test: either it will call out all the opposition of egoistic natures, or else galvanize them into a regeneration and a resurrection. †**

# A Plank In Your Eye

By Richard Neuland, Esq.



As attorneys we develop lots of skills that are particular to our type of work. One of those skills is learning to listen well. This is a skill that easily transfers into our private lives. Listening well to our spouse, children and friends can't help but enhance our relationships with them.

As attorneys we learn other skills. We learn to be suspicious. We are suspicious of anything the other side does or wants.

We lawyers also develop the skill of ascribing fault, ascribing blame, ascribing guilt, ascribing liability and ascribing responsibility - to others! We make these judgments and evaluations on organizations, parties, and individuals during the course of our work, whether it be contract law, family law, criminal, tort, or other civil matter. We get good at it and we can do it very quickly. Sometimes we can ascribe fault and blame without much thought or without even having facts sufficient to support our conclusion and judgment.

These last two skills don't translate well into our personal relationships. These skills are beneficial in our professional lives, but they can be devastating in our personal lives. While I am quick to ascribe blame and fault to those around me, even those whom I love the most, the result of such judgments when spoken aloud or written can injure others. The injury can be deep and long lasting.

I should also mention that while I can work very effectively, efficiently and quickly in determining the fault of others, it is interesting how much time I am willing to devote to the crafting of the excuse or excuses necessary to deflect any blame, fault, responsibility or liability from myself when my wife or children challenge my behavior. Often my defense will include a surging attack upon the individual who probes a little

too close to the truth and attempts to overcome or run around my defense. My family, of course, suffers the consequences of my "skills".

I am certain that this behavior is not exclusive to lawyers nor to our generation for there are clear warnings about such conduct found both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament Second Book of Samuel, Chapter 12, God calls the prophet Nathan to challenge King David. David was perhaps the most popular and powerful king Israel ever had. He was a devastating successful general, commanding the Israeli armies against their enemies. He was a swift and incisive insurgent when King Saul's own men looked to kill him. He was a marvelous administrator and an accomplished visionary who had the capability of not only seeing the vision but bringing it into reality. Most importantly, David loved God and was beloved by God.

Is it any wonder that Nathan was reluctant to tell David that God was unhappy with him? In his wonderful book, That Man is You, Louis Evely tells the story of Nathan and King David. Nathan, fortunately, had the gift of wisdom and chose to tell David a story rather than directly accuse him. The story Nathan told David goes like this:

*Two men lived in the same town. One was rich; the other, poor. The rich man had a great many flocks and herds, whereas the poor man had only a little ewe lamb, which he raised in his own house along with his children. It shared his food, drank from his cup and even slept in his arms. It was like a daughter to him. One day, the rich man entertained a guest, but, instead of slaughtering one of his own animals, he stole the*

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(Continued from page 3) **A Plank in Your Eye**  
 poor man's single ewe and served her up to the visitor.

David burned with anger against the man and could not contain himself further. He quickly ascribed blame and judgment and said to Nathan, "As surely as the Lord lives, the man who did this deserves to die! He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity." And Nathan said to David, "That man is you!"

In the New Testament, we find Matthew recounting Jesus' warning in Chapter 7, Verse 1-5: *"Do not judge. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* Boy, am I in trouble! When I read this, I want to employ another lawyer skill: that of interpreting the words contrary to what the words say. Jesus continues, *"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ...You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye".*

Just as Nathan used a tremendous word picture to help David understand his sin, so Jesus uses this picture to illustrate several points which still have applicability for us today.

First, since sawdust and a plank are both made from wood, it suggests that the sin, or the basis of the sin, is the same. Perhaps this is why the speck is so easily recognized.

Second, we can look at the speck or sliver as well as the plank, in order to analyze and evaluate the difficulty of the fix or the effort it will take to cure the sinful habit. If we consider a speck of sawdust, we know that while it may be a source of irritation, it can easily be removed, sometimes simply by blinking. Certainly we can conclude that the speck represents those that we might call minor sin. On the other hand, the plank is clearly intended to represent a major sin in our lives and will take far more effort to be removed. This effort will have to be directed not only to cleaning out the plank but also the debris left over by the plank.

Third, it is also interesting to note that the relative size of the speck and the plank makes us wonder whether or not Jesus was also intending to mention the fact that we really had to look closely to find something wrong with our neighbor's conduct. This may be because our neighbor, like us, works hard at covering up those areas of our lives which provide the opportunity for others to find fault. Or, it may be that our neighbor is a genuinely good person. This certainly makes the

warning, *"Judge not, lest ye be judged"* more fearsome.

Fourth, one of the most obvious thoughts that flows from Jesus parable is simply the comparison of the wrongs. The weight and magnitude of the plank when compared with the speck certainly makes the speck seem insignificant, trivial. It is almost as if Jesus is teaching us comparative negligence.

(As an aside, isn't it interesting how frequently our legal terms and legal concepts run through and parallel these religious or moral principles. For isn't that exactly what our practice and life's work is really about when we are lawyers? Isn't the law simply a statement of the behavior that God expects from us? You've heard the statement from the Bible: *"It is not what a man puts into his mouth, but what comes out of it, that defiles him."* As a profession which uses words to a greater extent than any other (except perhaps writers), we are clearly in harm's way.)

Lastly, it is also interesting and important to note that with a plank in our eye, our entire vision is distorted. This plank or sin is not limited to the obvious area of our behavior which we term "sin" but impacts us enormously in much of what we do.

It is also clear that this is not simply a story intended to direct our efforts into self-examination rather than a critique of others. Fixing or correcting any sin, even the small one, can be painful but at least the fixing brings relief. So long as we continue to sin, even the small one, there will be continuing injury and pain.

The purpose of recognizing the existence of the plank in our own eye is to then bring to bear our own efforts and talents to rid ourselves of the plank and its injurious affects. Like the story of the woman of John's Gospel who was found in adultery, Jesus dismissed all of those righteous men of the town who stood so arrogantly to condemn her through his writing in the sand and the challenge, *"if any one of you is without sin..."*. Jesus forgives the woman and all sinners with the direction, instruction and admonition to *"Go, and sin no more."*

Most of us recognize that we don't just start with plank-size sin. It is a result that we have worked at over a relatively long period of time. Thus, the fix is likely to take some time and we will experience periodic failure in our efforts. What other purpose (than rectification) could there be in the recognition of our own plank?

Nearly all organizations that help individuals overcome addictive/abusive behavior have at least three

(Continued from page 2) ***Enthusiasm***

by priest, sacrament or community. Visions, revelations, inner voices, extraordinary manifestations of the power of God, all become the focus of his practice of religion. Whereas the ordinary, orthodox believer accepts the possibility and reality of these things, while pursuing the time-tested practice of the faith in his day-to-day life, the enthusiast makes them the focus of his interest and attention to things divine. In fact, the enthusiast makes them the test, as it were of the authenticity and depth of his own and his neighbor's life of faith.

Monsignor Knox noted how particularly susceptible to religious enthusiasm were his American cousins. Of our continent he said *"In these days, it is the last refuge of the enthusiast."* Our Church, particularly with the upheavals she has been undergoing in the last thirty-some years, has suffered from a radical *'de-supernaturalization.'* There is barely an area of her tradition and practice in catechetics, liturgy, devotional life, and religious institutes which has not been turned upside down in attempts, well-intentioned, perhaps, but often misguided, to bring her into line with the expectations of the prevailing culture. The practical secularization of the atmosphere of Catholic worship, preaching, and education in the faith has left a real vacuum which must be filled. If *"nature abhors a vacuum"* how much more must the supernatural! The extreme reaction in this dialectic is not a renewal and return to the authentic roots of religious observance (this was the real desire of Vatican Council II), but the *'ultrasupernaturalism'* of the religious enthusiast.

There are many movements in today's Church. All of them can be of some help to one's faith, otherwise the Church would not approve of their existence, or give

them any encouragement. Even so, the primary emphasis of one's life as a Catholic should follow the paths traced by our forbearers in the faith, many of whom were saints. The practice of personal prayer, worthy and frequent reception of the sacraments, study of the catechism, works of charity: all these should far exceed in importance any interest in or even experience of the extraordinary or evidently supernatural. If we hope to win our neighbor to the faith, there is no surer way than by the example of a holy life. In the end, this way is more truly supernatural than the extraordinary ways found in various movements in today's Church.

St. Therese of Lisieux, the *"Little Flower"* as she is called, was named by Pope Pius XI *"the greatest saint of modern times."* Her life was one of hidden prayer and contemplation, full of merits, hard work, and suffering in the practice of what she called her *"little way"* which was nothing less than the wholehearted pursuit of Love. It is this highest of God's gifts, which the Apostle Paul values above all extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit, that should really fuel our practice of the faith. This will protect us from the exaggerations of the enthusiast, and lead us to real holiness of life. Religion, after all, is not a hobby, it is rather as simple and earnest, as well as dramatic and passionate as life itself. What is real cannot be made more so by exaggeration, or improved by enthusiasm. That which is real simply is like the God who made it. Perhaps this is the lesson which most of all needs to be learned by the religious enthusiast: that religion is about God more than it is about us, about Him, more than about our experience of Him.

*"Blessed are they who have not seen and yet believe."*



(Continued from page 4) ***A Plank in Your Eye***

things in common: (i) the recognition of God, or a transcendent being; (ii) the acknowledgement that you need help from others to get through the difficult parts of the recovery; and (iii) the recognition of the "plank in your eye" whether it be alcohol, drugs or whatever. While it may be self-deflating to acknowledge to yourself that the plank exists (and C.S. Lewis tells us that Satan will surely exploit this fact), it should also provide the opportunity for hope: because it is the first step toward healing.

As we end one calendar year and begin a new one, it is popular and fashionable to establish goals for the upcoming year. Let us resolve to do several things in both our professional and private lives:

- To listen more carefully.
- To be less suspicious.

- To use less frequently our skilled ability to find fault, ascribe blame and determine guilt.
- To begin the process of removing either the plank in our eye or one of several planks which we may acknowledge have taken up residence there.

### ***YOUR TASK:***

*Your task, to build a better world,  
God said. I asked him how?  
This world is such a large vast place,  
so complicated now.  
And I so small and useless am,  
there's nothing I can do.  
But God in all his wisdom said:  
Just build a better you. †*



Thought  
For  
The  
Day



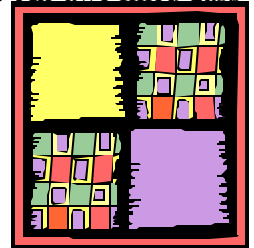
## THE QUILT

As I faced my Maker at the last Judgment, I knelt before the Lord along with the other souls. Before each of us laid our lives, like the squares of a quilt, in many piles. An Angel sat before each of us sewing our quilt squares together into a tapestry that is our life. But, as my Angel took each piece of cloth off the pile, I noticed how ragged and empty each of my squares was. They were filled with giant holes. Each square was labeled with a part of my life that had been difficult, the challenges and temptations I was faced with in everyday life. I saw hardships that I had endured, which were the largest holes of all.

I glanced around me. Nobody else had such squares. Other than a tiny hole here and there, the other tapestries were filled with rich color and the bright hues of worldly fortune. I gazed upon my own life and was disheartened. My Angel was sewing the ragged pieces of cloth together, threadbare and empty, like binding air. Finally the time came when each life was to be displayed, held up to the light, the scrutiny of truth. The others rose, each in turn, holding up their tapestries. So filled their lives had been.

My Angel looked upon me, and nodded for me to rise. My gaze dropped to the ground in shame. I hadn't had all the earthly fortunes. I had love in my life, and laughter. But there had also been trials of illness and death, and false accusations that took from me my world as I knew it. I had to start over many times. I often struggled with the temptation to quit, only to somehow muster the strength to pick up and begin again. I had spent many nights on my knees in prayer, asking for help and guidance in my life. I had often been held up to ridicule, which I endured painfully; each time offering it up to the Father in hopes that I would not melt within my skin beneath the judgmental gaze of those who unfairly judged me. And now, I had to face the truth. My life was what it was, and I had to accept it for what it had been.

I rose and slowly lifted the combined squares of my life to the light. An awe-filled gasp filled the air. I gazed around at the others who stared at me with eyes wide. Then, I looked upon the tapestry before me. Light flooded the many holes, creating an image. The face of Christ. Then our Lord stood before me, with warmth and love in His eyes. He said, *"Every time you gave over your life to Me, it became My life, My hardships, and My struggles. Each point of light in your life is when you stepped aside and let Me shine through, until there was more of Me than there was of you."* †



## 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:\***

"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. †*

## Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\*



\*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

### What is Easter?

Three blondes died in an accident trying to jump the Grand Canyon. They are at the pearly gates of Heaven. St. Peter tells them that they can enter the gates only if they can answer one simple religious question.

The question posed by St. Peter is: "What is Easter?"

The first blonde replies, "Oh, that's easy! It's the holiday in November when we all get together, eat turkey and are thankful."

"Wrong!, you are not welcome here, I'm afraid. You must go to the other place!" replies St. Peter. Then he turns to the second blonde, and asks her the same question "What is Easter?"

The second blonde replies, "Easter is the holiday in December when we put up a nice tree, exchange presents, and celebrate the birth of Jesus."

St. Peter looks at the second blonde, bangs his head on the pearly gates in disgust and tells her she's wrong and will have to join her friend in the other place; she is not welcome in Heaven.

He then peers over his glasses at the third blonde and asks, "Do YOU know what Easter is?"

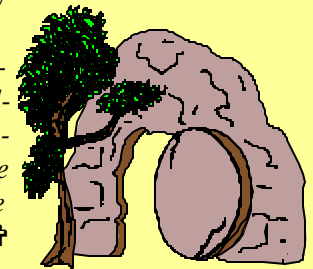
The third blonde smiles confidently and looks St. Peter in the eyes, "I know what Easter is."

"Oh?" says St. Peter, incredulously.

"Easter is the Christian holiday that coincides with the Jewish celebration of Passover. Jesus and his disciples were eating at the last supper and Jesus was later deceived and turned over to the Romans by one of his disciples. The Romans took him to be crucified and he was stabbed in the side, made to wear a crown of thorns, and was hung on a cross with nails through his hands and feet. He was buried in a nearby cave which was sealed off by a large boulder."

St. Peter smiles broadly with delight.

Then the third blonde continues ... "Every year the boulder is moved aside so that Jesus can come out and, if he sees his shadow, there will be six more weeks of winter!" †



## The Writings of Thomas More

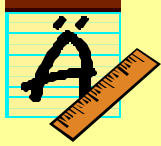
### MORE ON PRAYER

What follows is another brilliant image to help us realize the nature of prayer. More suggests that we imagine we have "committed a crime of high treason" against a prince who is willing to commute or even cancel the death penalty if we show ourselves contrite. His irony then brings into high relief the absurdity of slothful prayer:

*"Now when you have been brought into the presence of the prince, go ahead and speak to him carelessly, casually, without the least concern...Then yawn, stretch, sneeze, spit without giving if a thought, and belch up the fumes of your gluttony. In short, conduct yourself in such a way that he can clearly see from your face, your voice, your gestures, and your whole bodily deportment that while you are addressing him you are thinking about something else. Tell me now, what success could you hope for from such a plea as this?"*



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## THE HOLY FATHER

The Roman Pontiff, as the successor of Peter, is the perpetual and visible principle and foundation of unity of both the bishops and of the faithful.

LUMEN GENTIUM, 23



### HOLY FATHER'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR MARCH

His general prayer intention: *"That consecrated people, answering the call of their particular vocation, may radiate the spirit of the Gospel beatitudes in the present-day world."*

His missionary intention is: *"That in Rwanda the recently celebrated centennial of the Church may reinforce Christian brotherhood and speed national reconciliation."* †





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- ✕ Judge Pro Tem, Orange County Superior Court (since 1989)
- ✕ Frequent speaker, Continuing Education Programs on Design of Alternative Dispute Resolution Systems



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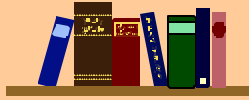
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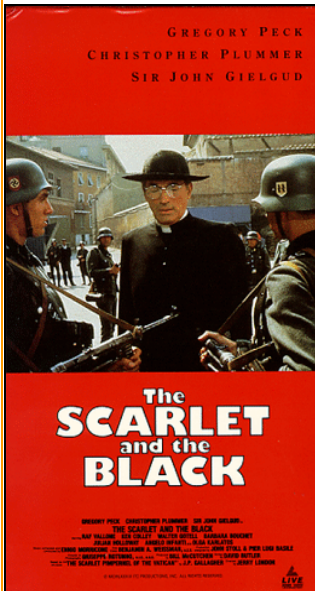
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# From the Video Library



## THE SCARLET AND THE BLACK

The true story of Monsignor Hugh O'Flaherty (Gregory Peck) a courageous Irish priest working in the Vatican during the German occupation. O'Flaherty devotes all his time and energy to hiding refugees and Allied POWs from the Nazis, building a network of hundreds of people to help him with his efforts. Colonel Kappler (Christopher Plummer), the local Gestapo chief, learns of O'Flaherty's activities. The priest has diplomatic immunity because of his Vatican post, but Kappler orders that he be captured or killed if seen outside the Vatican walls. Working closely with a brave widow of an aristocrat, O'Flaherty uses disguises to slip and out of the Vatican, continuing his dangerous mission until Rome is liberated, and saving thousands of innocent people from death. The intelligence and compassion of this man truly shows through and shows how much Father O'Flaherty deserved the awards and decorations he received from the Allies after the war. The ending is *very surprising* but truly an example of Christianity to the entire world!

1983

SBN: 0-7840-0109-X

Director: Jerry London

Amazon Price: \$ 11.99 †

## AD VERITATEM

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**Our  
Next  
Meeting:**

**WHEN:** Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup> @ NOON (Lunch) \$10

**TOPIC:** "Who Lives? Who Dies? Who Decides?"

**SPEAKER:** Dr. Vincent Fortanasce

**PLACE:** First American Financial Headquarters

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

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