

◆ Ad Veritatem ◆

Volume 6 Issue 4

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May 2001

MAY MEETING:

Dr. Thomas Dillon:
**“St. Thomas Aquinas:
 A Saint for Today”**



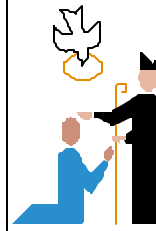
More points out that prosperity is not necessarily a sign of favor: “Prosperity hinders conversion and causes vices to increase.”

This month’s speaker will be Dr. Thomas Dillon, President of Thomas Aquinas College. Dr. Dillon received his B.A. in Liberal Arts from St. Mary’s College in 1968 and then earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Dillon serves on both federal and state advisory committees regarding education. Dedicated to intellectual and spiritual objectives of Thomas Aquinas College’s “Great Books” curriculum, Dr. Dillon has been prominent in academic forums, as well as on television, radio and in print in publicly defending and promoting the importance of Catholic education faithful to the Magisterium of the Church. He has also been an outspoken advocate of Pope John Paul II’s apostolic constitution on catholic higher education, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Married for 34 years, he and his wife Theresa have 4 children and 4 grandchildren.

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Immoral vs Illegal Behavior?

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



QUERY: *I know there’s a distinction between immoral and illegal behavior. At what point is it appropriate to make an immoral behavior also illegal? Is there some teaching of Catholic moral theology about this?*

ANSWER: The Holy Father’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its weighty and well-written declaration *Quaestio de abortu* published in 1874, gives us an example of the Catholic understanding of the relation between the moral order and the positive law:

*“The law is not required to punish every wrong, but it may not itself go against a law which is more profound and more lofty than any human law: the natural law which is written by the Creator in the heart of Man as a norm which his reason discovers, seeks to formulate, and always must make the effort of understanding better, but which it is always evil to contradict. The human law can decide not to punish a particular **Immoral v. Illegal!**”* (Continued on page 2)

MAY MEETING:

TOPIC: **Thomas Aquinas:
 A Saint for Today**

SPEAKER: **Dr. Thomas Dillon**

WHEN: **Lunch (\$10) Mtg
 Noon Wed. May 16th**

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

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

(Continued from page 1) ***Immoral v. Illegal*** wrong, but it cannot make morally right that which is contrary to the natural law, since such an opposition suffices to make a law no longer a law.” (*Quaestio de abortu*, 21)

It’s not at all Catholic to hold that everything which is wrong should be illegal. St. Thomas Aquinas points out that the human law should require and forbid only matters which fit the degree of virtue possessed by the general run of the citizens, and which serve the common good. Thus laws would not be formed which concern only individual goods, or degrees of virtue which exceed that which is ordinarily reached in a given society. This is because they would not be possible to observe or enforce, and so law would not be taken seriously. In his *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas says:

“Human law is framed for a number of human beings, the majority of whom are not perfect in virtue. Wherefore human laws do not forbid vices from which the virtuous abstain, but only the more grievous vices, from which it is possible for the majority to abstain, and chiefly those which are to the hurt of others, without the prohibition of which a human society could not be maintained: thus human law prohibits murder, theft, and suchlike.” (S.T. I-II, p.96, a. 2)

In our culture, we have a mentality which determines the morality of a thing by its legality: if it’s legal, its morally okay; if it’s illegal, it’s morally wrong. Morality is thus strongly influenced by human law, much more than it should be. This attitude is called “legal positivism” in philosophy. This legalistic view of morals is the result of two things: the impact of the Protestant refusal to distinguish between mortal and venial sins, and the false conception of human freedom which was inherited from the so-called “Enlightenment” of the 18th century.

For the classical Protestant, there is no inner,

theological or philosophical basis for determining the seriousness of a sin, because all sins are of equal malice in the eyes of God. Thus the civil law must serve as a practical guide. That is why Protestants are more likely to desire to outlaw various kinds of sins for the purpose of moral instruction than are Catholics generally. The lax Protestant cultural attitude is, “Well, it may be wrong, but at least it’s not illegal.” The lax Catholic, on the other hand, is more likely to say: “Even if it’s illegal, it’s no sin.”

The “Age of Reason” made human freedom the most fundamental principle of society, and thus the attitude arose that anyone is free to do whatever he is not forbidden to do by law, which exists simply as a restraint on his individual liberty. Thus there’s the tendency to legalize everything which an individual finds necessary for his personal “happiness,” even if it’s against the natural law.

The result of these tendencies is the type of relation between morality and law we see in America, where many states made practically unenforceable and surprisingly detailed laws against various unchaste actions committed in private, and now seek to show their approval of individual liberty by “legalizing” these same actions. The Catholic principle given above is more sensible: the law does not have to punish every vice, but it cannot make right those acts which are contrary to the natural law.

To sum up, it might be said that three principles govern the Catholic approach to human law: conformity to the natural law, possibility of observance, and enforceability. A law is no law if it does not conform to the natural law, and it is harmful to law generally if it cannot be observed or enforced. This is a view which strikes a modern American as both more “conservative” and more “liberal” than the Protestant and positivist approach he is used to. †

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SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

**“The unholy like religion in the same way they like lions:
either dead or behind bars;
they fear religion when it breaks loose
and begins to challenge their consciences.” †**



The Seven Daily Habits of Holy Apostolic People



Reverend C. John McCloskey, III, STD

You are reading this because you are interested in taking your spiritual life more seriously from this point on. You heartily assent to one of the key points of the Second Vatican Council: the importance of the doctrine of the universal call to holiness. You also know that Jesus is the one way to holiness, *“I am the way, the truth and the life.”* The secret of holiness is constant prayer which could be defined as continual contact with the Holy Trinity, *“Pray always and do not lose heart.”* (Luke 18:1)

There are various ways to come to know Jesus. We are going to speak briefly about some of them in this article. You want to come to know, love and serve Jesus the same way you learn to love and stay in love with anybody: your spouse, family members, and close friends, i.e. by spending a considerable amount of time with him on a regular and, in this case, daily basis. The payoff, if you will, is the only true happiness in this life and the vision of God in the next. There are no easy substitutes. Sanctification is a work of a lifetime and it requires our determined effort to cooperate with God's sanctifying grace coming through the sacraments.

The seven daily habits that I propose to you are the morning offering, spiritual reading (New Testament and a spiritual book suggested to you by your spiritual advisor), the Holy Rosary, Holy Mass, and Communion, at least fifteen minutes of mental prayer, the recitation of the Angelus at

noon, and a brief examination of conscience at night.

These are the principal means to achieve holiness. If you are a person who wants to bring Christ to others through your friendship, these are the instruments by which you store up the spiritual energy that will enable you to do so. Apostolic action without the sacraments and a deep solid interior life

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will in the long run be ineffective. You can be sure that all the saints incorporated in one way or another all of these habits into their daily routine. Your goal is to be like them, contemplatives in the middle of the world.

I want to stress several points before examining the habits.

One, remember that growing in these daily habits, just like taking on a diet or a physical exercise program, is a gradual work in progress. Don't expect to insert all seven or even two or three of these in your daily schedule immediately, any more than you would attempt a 5K race after not having run regularly, or attempting to play

Liszt after your third piano lesson. This haste would be inviting failure and God wants you to succeed at both your pace and His. You should work closely with your spiritual advisor, and gradually and fruitfully incorporate the habits into your life over a period of time in a way that fits your particular situation. It may even be that your life circumstances require a modification of the seven habits.

(Continued from page 3) ***Seven Habits***

Second, at the same time you must make a firm commitment with the help of the Holy Spirit and your special intercessors, to make them the priority of your life -- more important than meals, sleep, work and recreation. I want to make it clear that these habits cannot be acquired on the run. That is not the way we want to deal with people we love. They must be done when we are most alert, during the day, in a place that is silent and without distractions, where it is easy to put ourselves in God's presence and address him. After all, is not eternal life more important than our temporal life? All that will remain at the time of your particular judgment will be the amount of the love of God in your heart.

Third, I want to point out that living the seven daily habits is not a zero sum game. You are not losing time but rather, in reality, gaining it. I have never met a person who lived them on a daily basis who became a less productive worker as a result, or a worse spouse, or who had less time for his friends, or could no longer grow in his cultural life. Quite the contrary, God always rewards those who put him first. Our Lord will multiply our time amazingly as he did with those few loaves and fishes that fed the multitude with plenty left over. You can be sure that Pope John Paul II, Mother Theresa, or St. Maximilian Kolbe pray, or prayed, a lot more than the one and one-half hours that is required for the seven daily habits spread throughout the day.

The first habit is the morning offering, when you kneel down and using your own words, or a formula, you briefly offer up all the day ahead for God's glory. What is not so simple is what has to happen before the offering. As the founder of Opus Dei put it "*Conquer yourself each day from the very first moment, getting up on the dot, at a set time, without granting a single minute to laziness. If with the help of God, you conquer yourself in the moment, you have accomplished a great deal for the rest of the day. It's so discouraging to find yourself beaten in the first skirmish*" (The Way, 191). In my pastoral experience, those who can live the "*heroic moment*" in the morning and in the evening going to bed on time will have both the physical and spiritual energy throughout the day to stop what they are doing in order to live the other habits.

The second habit is at least 15 minutes of silent prayer. Over time you may want to augment this with an extra 15 minutes at another time during the day. After all, who will not seek more time with such excellent company? Prayer is simply one on one direct conversation with Jesus Christ, preferably before the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. This is your "*face time*" or "*quality time*" if you will, when you can open up in speaking about what is on your mind and in your heart. At the same time you will be able to acquire the habit of listening carefully and prayerfully like another Mary (Lk. 10:38-42) to see what Jesus is asking of you and what he wants to give you. It is there that we come to understand his saying, "*Without Me, you can do nothing.*"

The third habit is fifteen minutes of spiritual reading, usually consisting of a few minutes of systematic reading of the New Testament to identify ourselves with the words and actions of our Savior, and the rest of the time spent on a classic book of Catholic spirituality recommended by your spiritual advisor. As Bl. Josemaria Escriva puts it, "*Don't neglect your spiritual reading. Reading has made many saints*" (The Way, 116). In a way it is the most practical of our habits because over the course of years of practicing it we will read many times the life of Christ and acquire the wisdom of saints and the Church by reading dozens of books which enlighten our intellect so we can put the ideas expressed there into action.

The fourth daily habit is participating in Holy Mass and receiving Holy Communion in the state of grace. This is the most important habit of all the seven (cfr. John 6:22-65). As such, it has to be at the very center of our interior life and consequently our day. It is the most intimate act possible to man. There we encounter the living Christ, participate in the renewal of His sacrifice for us and unite body soul, to the Risen Christ and ourselves. As Pope John Paul II says in his Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*: "*The Eucharist is the living and lasting center around which the entire community of the Church gathers*" (no. 35).

The fifth daily habit takes but a moment or two. It is to stop what we are doing to pray the Angelus or Regina Coeli prayer to our Blessed Mother,

Seven Habits (Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4) ***Seven Habits***

according to the liturgical season, each day at noon. This is a Catholic custom that goes back many centuries. It is a wonderful way both to greet our Blessed Mother for a moment, as any good child remembers his mother during the day and meditate on the Incarnation and Resurrection of our Lord, which give such meaning to our entire existence.

The sixth habit is also Marian -- praying the Holy Rosary each day and meditating on its mysteries, which surround the life of Our Lord and Our Lady. As Bl. Josemaria puts it *“For those who use their intelligence and their study as a weapon, the Rosary is most effective, because this apparently monotonous way of beseeching Our Lady, as children do their mother, can destroy every seed of vainglory and pride.”* (Furrow, 474). The Rosary is a habit that, once acquired, is hard to break. By repeating words of love to Mary and offering up each decade for our intentions, we take the shortcut to Jesus, which is to pass through the heart of Mary. He cannot refuse her anything!

The seventh habit is the brief examination of conscience at night before going to bed. Again the holy Founder of Opus Dei says *“Examination of conscience. A daily task. Bookkeeping -- never neglected by anyone in business. And is there any business worth more than that of eternal life?”* (The Way, 235). You sit down, call on the Holy Spirit for light and for several minutes go over your day in God's presence asking if you behaved as a child of God at home, at work, with your friends. You also look at that one particular area which you have identified with the help of spiritual direction in which you know you need to improve in order to become a saint. You may also take a quick look to see if you have been faithful to those daily habits that we have discussed in this article. Then you make an act of gratitude for all the good that you have done and an act of contrition for those areas in which you have willfully failed. Then it is off to your well-deserved rest, which you strive to make holy through your interior dialogue with the Holy Trinity and your mother Mary as you drift off to sleep.

If a person honestly looks at their day, no matter how busy he is, (and I never seem to meet people who admit they are not busy unless they are

permanently retired), he can usually find that he wastes some time each day. Think of that needless extra cup of coffee when you might have been able to drop by and visit the Blessed Sacrament for 15 minutes before beginning work. Or the half-hour or much more wasted on watching vapid and inane television programs or videos. Then there is the commuting time spent sleeping on the train, or listening to the radio in the car that could be used for the Rosary. How about that newspaper that could be read in ten minutes rather than twenty minutes, leaving room for your spiritual reading? And that lunch which could be finished in a half-hour, leaving time for noon Mass? Don't forget that half hour spent frittering away time at the end of the day when you could have done some good spiritual reading, examined your conscience and gone to bed at a fixed time restoring your energy for the next day's battles. The list goes on. Make up your own. Be honest with yourself, and with God.

These habits, lived well, enable us to obey the second part of the great commandment *“to love our neighbor as ourselves.”* We are on earth, as was the Lord, *“to serve and not to be served.”* This can only be achieved by our gradual transformation into another Christ through prayer and the sacraments. To live the seven habits will enable us to become holy and apostolic, always, assured that when we fail in something big or small, we always have the loving Father awaiting us in the Sacrament of Penance and the prayerful help of our spiritual advisor to put us back on the right track. †

The Reverend C. John McCloskey, III, STD, is a priest of the Prelature of Opus Dei and is the Director of the Catholic Information Center of the Archdiocese of Washington. A native of Washington, D.C., he graduated from Columbia University majoring in Economics in 1975. After having worked professionally on Wall Street for some years, he studied in Rome and Spain where he received his doctorate in Theology with a specialty in Church History. He was ordained in 1981 in Spain by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray and has spent most of his pastoral work as a priest dealing with university students and priests on the East Coast. Father C. John has done extensive work in radio and television, most notably at EWTN where he has hosted series on Cardinal Newman and Catholic authors and has worked as a commentator on Papal trips. He serves as an adviser to Christendom College, the Coming Home Network, Culture of Life, and to Single Catholics. He is the U.S. representative for the ecclesiastical faculties of the Pontifical University of the Holy Cross in Rome and the University of Navarre in Pamplona Spain. Father McCloskey is an avid squash player.

Thought
For
The
Day



THE THREE RED MARBLES

During the waning years of the depression in a small south eastern Idaho community, I used to stop by Mr. Miller's roadside stand for farm-fresh produce as the season made it available. Food and money were still extremely scarce and bartering was used, extensively. One particular day Mr. Miller was bagging some new potatoes for me. I noticed a small boy, delicate of bone and feature ragged but clean, hungrily apprising a basket of freshly picked green peas.

I paid for my potatoes but was also drawn to the display of fresh green peas. I am a pushover for creamed peas and new potatoes. Pondering the peas, I couldn't help overhearing the conversation between Brother Miller and the ragged boy next to me.

"Hello Barry, how are you today?"

"H'lo, Mr. Miller. Fine, thank ya. Jus' admirin' them peas ...sure look good."

"They are good, Barry. How's your Ma?"

"Fine. Gittin' stronger alla' time."

"Good. Anything I can help you with?"

"No, Sir. Jus' admirin' them peas."

"Would you like to take some home?"

"No, Sir. Got nuthin' to pay for 'em with."

"Well, what have you to trade me for some of those peas?"

"All I got's my prize marble here."

"Is that right? Let me see it."

"Here 'tis. She's a dandy."

"I can see that. Hmmmm, only thing is this one is blue and I sort of go for red. Do you have a red one like this at home?" "Not 'zackley ...but, almost."

"Tell you what. Take this sack of peas home with you and next trip this way let me look at that red marble."

"Sure will. Thanks, Mr. Miller."

Mrs. Miller, who had been standing nearby, came over to help me. With a smile she said: "There are two other boys like him in our community, all three are in very poor circumstances. Jim just loves to bargain with them for peas, apples, tomatoes or whatever. When they come back with their red marbles, and they always do, he decides he doesn't like red after all and he sends them home with a bag of produce for a green marble or an orange one, perhaps."

I left the stand, smiling to myself, impressed with this man. A short time later I moved to Utah but I never forgot the story of this man, the boys and their bartering. Several years went by each more rapid than the previous one.

Just recently I had occasion to visit some old friends in that Idaho community and while I was there learned that Mr. Miller had died. They were having his viewing that evening and knowing my friends wanted to go, I agreed to accompany them. Upon our arrival at the mortuary we fell into line to meet the relatives of the deceased and to offer whatever words of comfort we could. Ahead of us in line were three young men.

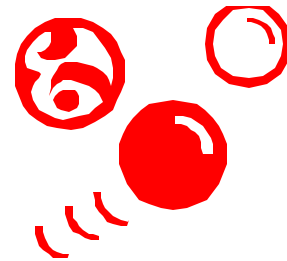
One was in an army uniform and the other two wore nice haircuts, dark suits and white shirts ... very professional looking. They approached Mrs. Miller, standing smiling and composed, by her husband's casket.

Each of the young men hugged her, kissed her on the cheek, spoke briefly with her and moved on to the casket. Her misty light blue eyes followed them as, one by one, each young man stopped briefly and placed his own warm hand over the cold pale hand in the casket. Each left the mortuary, awkwardly, wiping his eyes. Our turn came to meet Mrs. Miller. I told her who I was and mentioned the story she had told me about the marbles.

Eyes glistening she took my hand and led me to the casket. "Those three young men, that just left, were the boys I told you about. They just told me how they appreciated the things Jim 'traded' them. Now, at last, when Jim could not change his mind about color or size...they came to pay their debt."

"We've never had a great deal of the wealth of this world," she confided, "but, right now, Jim would consider himself the richest man in Idaho." With loving gentleness she lifted the lifeless fingers of her deceased husband. Resting underneath were three, magnificently shiny, red marbles.

We will not be remembered by our words, but by our kind deeds. †



Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*



*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing he said was, "Don't."

"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit," God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve we have forbidden fruit!"

"No way!"

"Yes, way!"

"Do NOT eat the fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" God replied, (wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants).

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and was He ticked!

"Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" God, as our first parent, asked?

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?" said the Father.

"I don't know," said Eve.

"She started it!" Adam said.

"Did not!"

"Did too!"

"DID NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus, the pattern was set, and it has never changed!

But there is reassurance in this story... If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom, and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you? †



The Writings of Thomas More

MORE ON THE TRUE CHURCH

After being condemned in his trial, More made a final statement before being condemned to death. Aware that his words would echo throughout England, throughout Europe, and throughout subsequent history, Sir Thomas More now brought into full play all of the rhetorical power and legal expertise that a lifetime of training had placed at his disposal. Challenging the very ground on which Audley and the rest of the judges intended to condemn him, he said:

Inasmuch, my lord, as this indictment is grounded upon an Act of Parliament directly repugnant to the laws of God and His Holy Church, the supreme government of which, or of any part thereof, may no temporal prince presume by any law to take upon him, as rightfully belonging to the See of Rome, a spiritual preeminence by the mouth of our Savior Himself, personally present upon the earth, only to St. Peter and his successors, bishops of the same See, by special prerogative guaranteed, it is therefore in law among Christian men insufficient to charge any Christian man.





Scriptural Corner:

On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." And leaving the crowd, they took him with them just as he was, in the boat. And other boats were with him. And a great storm of wind arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" And he awoke and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" And they were filled with awe, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey him?" Mark 4:35-41

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

The episode of the calming of the storm, the memory of which must often have helped the Apostles regain their serenity in the midst of struggles and difficulties, also helps us never lose the supernatural way of looking at things: a Christian's life is like a ship: "As a vessel on the sea is exposed to a thousand dangers—pirates, quicksands, hidden rocks, tempests—so man in this life, is encompassed with perils, arising from the temptations of hell, from the occasions of sin, from the scandals or bad counsels of men, from human respect, and above all from the passions of corrupt nature [...]. This should not cause him to lose confidence. Rather [...] when you find yourself assaulted by a violent passion [...] take whatever steps you can to avoid the occasions [of sin] and place your reliance on God [...]: when the tempest is violent, the pilot never takes his eyes from the light which guides him to port. In like manner, we should keep our eyes always turned to God, who alone can deliver us from the many dangers to which we are exposed." (St. Augustine, *Sermon 51*; for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany).

*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 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



SPECIAL PAPAL PRAYER REQUEST

Pope John Paul recently spoke of his forthcoming pilgrimage to Greece, Syria and Malta, and asked the faithful to accompany him in prayer "on this trip which is so meaningful to me." Pope John Paul leaves the morning of May 4 for Greece. He will travel to Syria on May 5 and will go to Malta on the 8th for the final leg of his pilgrimage. At today's audience the Pope said he was "fulfilling a desire, expressed within the perspective of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000, to go personally to pray where God's initiative for the salvation of man was concretely expressed. After having been on the Sinai, where God revealed Himself to Moses, and in the Holy Land, I am now about to leave for several cities linked in special ways to St. Paul. My pilgrimage in the footsteps of the great apostle will be a return to the roots of the Church." The Holy Father said his trip would take him to Athens, "in whose areopago St. Paul gave a very illuminating speech about the encounter of the Gospel message with an important culture like that of Greece. I will then proceed to Damascus, the place which evokes the conversion of Saul, and lastly, Malta where the apostle of the people was shipwrecked as he was being brought to Rome as a prisoner." In asking for prayers for his trip, John Paul II said: "May this be a happy occasion to increase understanding with our Orthodox brothers, favoring further advances on the path to the full unity of Christians. I also hope that my visit to Syria and, in particular, the great mosque of Damascus will help to reinforce interreligious dialogue with the followers of Islam." †



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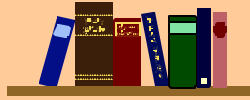
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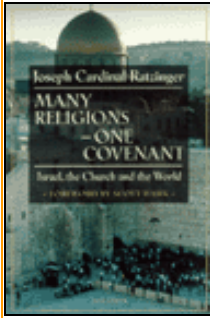
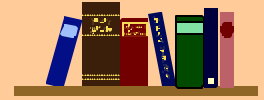
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