

◆ Ad Veritatem ◆

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March 2002

MARCH MEETING

BISHOP NORMAN F.
McFARLAND

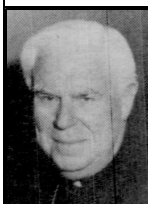
**“JESUS: THE HOUND
OF HEAVEN”**



*In “A Rueful
Lamentation,”
More warned
against “putting
your trust and
confidence,
in worldly joy and
frail prosperity”
instead of
“heavenly
things.”*

Thomas More On
Statesmanship
Gerard Wegemer

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



This month we will have a special speaker, **Bishop Norman McFarland!** Recently retired as Bishop of Orange Diocese, Bishop McFarland will address the Society on “*Jesus: the Hound of Heaven.*” Bishop McFarland was appointed Bishop of Orange in 1987 after having served as bishop in the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas (which covers the entire state of Nevada). Prior to that he served as the Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco while concurrently acting as the Vicar General and Pastor of Mission Dolores. A native Californian from Martinez, Bishop McFarland received his B.A. degree from St. Patrick's Seminary College in 1943 and completed his theological studies at St. Patrick's Theologate. He was ordained in 1946 in the Archdiocese of San Francisco.

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

MARCH MEETING:

TOPIC: ***The Hound of Heaven***

SPEAKER: **Bishop Norman F.
McFarland**

WHEN: **Wed. Mar 20th
@ Noon (Lunch \$10)**

PLACE: **First American Title
2 First American Way
Santa Ana**

How Does a Cloned Human Get a Soul?

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



QUESTION: *It is easy for me to see why the Church opposes the cloning of human beings.*

What I don't understand is how a cloned human gets a soul, since it comes to exist in such an unnatural way. Would God “go along” with such a process and give a soul to a cloned human?

ANSWER: God is the Author of nature. He, so to speak, obeys His own laws, when He infuses a rational, spiritual soul into an organism really disposed to function in a rational spiritual way. The moral circumstances of the

Will Clones Have Souls? (Continued on page 2)

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(Continued from page 1) **Will Clones Have Souls?**

conception do not determine whether or not God infuses the soul. After all, a conception which occurs out of wedlock, or by force of adultery, is brought about in an immoral way. But according to the laws of nature, which determine that when matter is properly organized, a human conception the infusion of a soul created directly by God, is the inevitable result. Whether the conception is by the union of human seed and ovum, or by some other artificial arrangement of bodily matter, doesn't change this fact. So God "goes along" with the laws of nature He has set in place.

This does not mean that He goes along with sin. Already the Holy Father has pointed out that in the case of in vitro fertilization, the human dignity of the fertilized eggs must be defended. In the end, the Church will be the one voice defending the rights and humanity of the human persons produced by cloning, just as She already does all the others. After all, original sin has marred us all from birth. One confusion may be lurking in your

God is the Author of nature. He, so to speak, obeys His own laws, when He infuses a rational, spiritual soul into an organism really disposed to function in a rational spiritual way.

question, however. In Catholic philosophical language, the "law of nature" means the physical laws not determined by human reason and freedom. The "natural law" refers to the moral order of human reason, faith and freedom. What is possible for human beings to do, making use of the laws of nature, is not always morally right according to what man knows to be true and good for his happiness. The same laws of nature are at work when a butcher uses a knife and when a murderer does, but the actions are infinitely different according to the natural law. †



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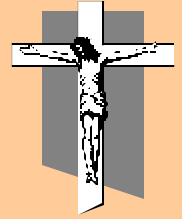
Fulton J. Sheen

"Spiritual fires never cool, because they are not fed by glands, but glow with the coals lighted at the furnace of Heaven, such as touched the lips of the prophet. Many of the false enthusiasms in the world today come from unhappy minds in unhappy bodies.

They find a spurious happiness in setting destructive fires, burning down the temples of worship and the home of morality." †



“I Do Not Know Him”



By: Anne Nelson Lanphar, Esq.

The old cliché *‘Silence is golden’* is certainly near and dear to the hearts of any parent with more than one child. Actually one of my favorite quotes is from Bill Cosby who astutely observed that *‘Parents don’t want justice, they want silence!’*

Silence.

Silence is very rare in our lives. It is rare in our society. There is such a constant level noise from televisions, VCRs, radios, CD players, telephones, pagers, even our computers are now considered antiquated unless we have all the latest audio equipment. We have radios designed to operate in showers and even telephones in our bathrooms! We have become so accustomed to the cacophony of noise that we have developed a fear of silence. Noise helps us to block out those things about which we do not want to think. Noise distracts us. I know it is hard to be at peace with silence because it took me a long time to be able to turn off the radio in the car on the way to work and pray the rosary. For a long time I would find that while I was praying, I was also thinking and when I hit into an area that was painful, my hand would automatically reach out for the knob to turn on the radio. It surprised me every time it happened. It also made me think about why I was hiding from the issue. It has taken some time but now I love to drive to work praying the rosary – I arrive at work in much greater peace. Silence gives us a chance to become quiet and peaceful so we can hear God in our hearts. Without some silence in our lives, how can we hear God without Him having to use a megaphone and a baseball bat to get our attention?

Silence is important but it is not always golden.

Our patron saint, Thomas More, is probably the most famous person who used silence as a shield under the law but whose silence was, in fact, a deafening proclamation of his faith.

A Man for all Seasons is a play written by Robert Bolt in 1960 that immortalized the brilliance, integrity and martyrdom of Thomas More. In 1966 the play became an Academy Award winning movie starring Paul Scofield as More. This literary depiction of More’s life is remarkable in its historic accuracy!

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More who lived in the early 1500’s was one of the most renowned lawyers in England. He was known and respected across Europe as a scholar and author having written a number of books including **Utopia** but more importantly he had penned a number of clever, articulate and often humorous responses to the destructive heresies promulgated by Luther and other Protestant “reformers.” He was a respected judge and served his country as a statesman in numerous positions. A devoted husband and father, he was dedicated to the education (both secular and religious) of his four children and his ward. More was loved by his neighbors and

was cherished by friends primarily because of his honesty, his kindness, his intelligence, his generosity of spirit, his humor and, most importantly, his integrity which was solidly based on a deep religious faith.

As the Chancellor of England, More held the highest public office in England during one of the most tumultuous times in history. King Henry VIII was rapidly deteriorating into a self-centered egotistical tyrant willing to forfeit all his beliefs in

(Continued from page 3) ***"I Do Not Know Him"***

order to satisfy his immediate earthly desires. Encouraged by weak men who sought to ingratiate themselves to the King and solidify their power and wealth, the King finally declared himself to be the head of the Church in England and granted himself the divorce that had been denied by the Pope.

During these dangerous times, More, being a brilliant lawyer, carefully crafted a defensive strategy based upon established English legal principles designed to survive the winds of oppression sweeping the country. More could not support the King's break with the Papacy and so resigned his position without comment. However, seeking to please the King, Cromwell sought to force More to support the King or face imprisonment. Without comment, More refused to take the oath that Cromwell had pushed through Parliament and which was required of all citizens. More maintained his silence for which he was imprisoned for almost a year in the Tower of London. Eventually More was charged with treason for refusing to take the oath. The following is an excerpt from the trial of More as depicted in **A Man for All Seasons**.

NORFOLK: Be seated. Master Secretary Cromwell, have you the charge?

CROMWELL: I have, my lord.

NORFOLK: Then read the charge.

CROMWELL: (*Formally*) That you did conspire traitorously and maliciously to deny and deprive our liege lord Henry of his undoubted title, Supreme Head of the Church in England.

MORE: (*With surprise, shock and indignation*) But I have never denied this title!

CROMWELL: You refused the oath tendered to you at the Tower and elsewhere—

MORE: (*Again shocked and indignant*) Silence is not denial. And for my silence I am punished, with imprisonment. Why have I been called again? (*At this point he is sensing that the trial has been in some way rigged*)

NORFOLK: On a charge of High Treason, Sir Thomas.

CROMWELL: For which the punishment is not imprisonment.

MORE: Death.....comes for us all, my lords. Yes, even for Kings he comes, to whom amidst all their royalty and brute strength he will neither kneel nor make them any reverence nor pleasantly desire them to come forth, but roughly grasp them by the very breast and rattle them until they be stark dead! So causing their bodies to be buried in a pit and sending them to a judgment...whereof at their death their success is uncertain.

.....

CROMWELL: Now, Sir Thomas, you stand upon your silence.

MORE: I do.

CROMWELL: But, Gentlemen of the Jury, there are many kinds of silence. Consider the silence of a man when he is dead. Let us say we go into the room where he is lying; and let us say us say it is in the dead of night—there's nothing like darkness for sharpening the ears and we listen. What do we hear? Silence. What does it betoken, this silence? Nothing. This is silence, pure and simple. But consider another case. Suppose I were to draw a dagger from my sleeve and make to kill the prisoner with it, and suppose their lordships there, instead of crying out for me to stop or crying out for help to stop me, maintain their silence. That *would* betoken! It would betoken a willingness that I should do it, and under the law they would be guilty with me. So silence can, according to circumstances, speak. Consider, now, the circumstances of the prisoner's silence. The oath was put to good and faithful subjects up and down the country and they had declared His Grace's title to be just and good. And when it came to the prisoner he refused. He calls this silence. Yet is there a man in this court, is there a man in this country, who does not *know* Sir Thomas More's opinion of the King's title? Of course not! But now how can that be? Because this silence betokened—nay, this silence *was* not silence at all but most eloquent denial.

MORE: (*With some of the academic's impatience for a shoddy line of reasoning*) Not so, Master Secretary, the maxim is "*qui tacet*"

"I Do Not Know Him" (Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4) ***“I Do Not Know Him”***

consentire.” (Turns to Common Man) The maxim of the law is (Very carefully) ***“Silence gives consent.”*** If, therefore, you wish to construe what my silence “betokened,” you must construe that I consented, not that I denied.

CROMWELL: Is that what the world in fact construes from it? Do you pretend that is what you wish the world to construe from it?

MORE: The world must construe according to its wits. This Court must construe according to the law.

More’s brilliant strategy was designed to protect his life by operating carefully within the protections offered by the secular laws **BUT** his technical legal strategy was also carefully crafted to ensure that his real position was, in fact, made known to the world. As Cromwell accurately observed, the world, in fact, construed More’s silence as his refusal to condone the King’s actions. More’s silence, his refusal to take the oath even to the point of losing his position, his wealth, his freedom, and ultimately his life, spoke by far louder than words! Although he was technically “silent,” he was, in fact, ***clearly, loudly and unequivocally proclaiming his beliefs to the world.***

Today we have many opportunities to proclaim the truth of Christ and His Church. We often hear people discuss and support, directly or indirectly, abortion, sexual promiscuity, homosexuality, adultery, pornography, assisted suicide, obscenities, profanity, birth control, superstitions, astrology, capital punishment, and much more. Do we proclaim Christ’s truth or do we hide behind our silence? If we choose to be silent, Sir Thomas More would remind us ***“qui tacet consentire” – our silence implies our consent!***

But why is it necessary that ***I*** speak? Isn’t it the responsibility of the priests to teach and proclaim the teachings of Christ and His Church? After all, I know the truth and I follow the rules of the Church,

attending Mass every Sunday and on Holy Days of Obligation, giving money to the Church, refraining from sin. I have a responsibility to support my family so I cannot afford to speak and lose this client or irritate that partner who provides work to me. Trust God? Of course, I trust God – up to a point; but, after all, I have to be practical.

I personally followed this reasoning for years then I ran into a situation where my failure to speak will haunt me all the days of my life. It was December of 1989. The real estate market was



The Denial of Peter
By Gerrit Van Honthorst

collapsing and with it, real estate legal work was rapidly drying up. The real estate department in my firm was concerned with making budget and with the decreasing income, we needed to cut costs. With less work, we had less need for secretarial support. It was proposed that we eliminate the “over flow” secretary. Logically this made perfect business sense. **But** the woman who held this position was the sole support of 2 young children as her husband was dying of cancer in the hospital. Being good business people, we fired this unnecessary staff person two weeks before Christmas so that we could maintain a little extra money in our 6 figure incomes. I believed this decision was wrong at the time but because my partnership compensation depended on some of the people who were promoting this decision, I remained silent. I did not vote for it but I did not object either: I cleverly remained silent. My failure to speak was morally wrong and has haunted me ever since I made that decision. It was a terrible decision but one that has taught me the utter foolishness of thinking silence exempted me from responsibility.

One of the oldest questions known to man is “*Am I my brother’s keeper?*” It is certainly clear in the Bible, especially the New Testament, that God’s answer is a resounding “**YES!**” We are charged with responsibility to help others, both physically and spiritually.

“I Do Not Know Him” (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) ***"I Do Not Know Him"***

In the Old Testament, the requirements imposed by God primarily demanded that one refrain from those acts succinctly enumerated in the Ten Commandments. However, in the New Testament Christ required more: we must love our neighbor as ourselves. We must speak the truth and spread the word about Christ and His teachings. We cannot be inactive: Christ mandated that we be **proactive**. This obligation to act is clearly reflected in the Act of Contrition that is said at every Mass: *"I confession to Almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have sinned through my own fault, in my thoughts and in my words, and in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do;..."*

By failing to speak we deny Christ as Peter did on the first Good Friday. The story of Peter's denial of Christ is told in all four Gospels. Peter refused to acknowledge that he was a disciple of Christ – even denying that he knew Christ at all. *"I do not know Him."* Luke 22:57 Fear was the reason for Peter's denial but fear is not an excuse. When Peter heard the cock crow and recalled Christ's words, Peter knew that he had sinned by his denial and went out

and wept bitterly.

We too cannot deny Christ, either overtly or by our silence. We **cannot** proclaim ourselves to be Christians and then hide the light of Christ under a bushel of silence. Our silence is really a declaration that *"I do not know Him."*

Where would we be today if the Apostles had been more concerned about their comfort and survival rather than spreading the Good News of Christ? We are responsible to our fellow man to speak the truth and we will most certainly be amply rewarded for speaking for Christ. More importantly we must realize that we will not be alone but rather, if we pray for guidance, the Holy Spirit will strengthen our souls and provide us with the words. †



El Greco's depiction of the repentant Peter after his denial of Christ.

FIRST FRIDAY MASS

**You are invited to attend First Friday Mass
Private Chapel @ Busch Law Firm
2532 Dupont Drive, Irvine
R.S.V.P. (949) 474-7368
Lunch is provided following Mass. †**

UP COMING SPEAKERS!

**Our Speaker in April will be
Dr. Rex Greene on
Stem Cell Research †**

PETITIONS

R *We all need prayers—at some times*
A *more than others. If you or someone you*
Y *know has a special need for prayer, please*
E *let us know and it will be placed in this*
R *newsletter so we can join in prayer for*
each other.

*You can leave a message on
voicemail (714) 800-3225 or email your
request to alanphar@firstam.com*



*Heavenly Father,
I offer you this day
all that I shall think or do or say,
uniting it with what was done
by Jesus Christ, your only Son. Amen*

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

*Judge Matt Anderson, his wife Mary who is
suffering from a serious illness
and their family.*

*Delray Tuttle and her husband William Riddle
who lost triplets by premature birth and
William who broke his back in an accident. †*

**Thought
For
The
Day**



**WORDS OF WISDOM
ANDY ROONEY**

- I've learned....**
*that the best classroom
in the world is at the feet
of an elderly person.*
- I've learned....**
that when you're in love, it shows.
- I've learned....**
*that just one person saying to me,
"You've made my day!"
makes my day.*
- I've learned....**
*that having a child fall asleep in
your arms is one of the most
peaceful feelings in the world.*
- I've learned....**
*that being kind is more
important than being right.*
- I've learned....**
*that you should never say no
to a gift from a child.*
- I've learned....**
*that I can always pray for some-
one when I don't have the strength
to help him in some other way.*
- I've learned....**
*that no matter how serious your
life requires you to be, everyone
needs a friend to act goofy with.*
- I've learned....**
*that sometimes all a person
needs is a hand to hold and a
heart to understand.*
- I've learned....**
*that simple walks with my father
around the block on summer
nights when I was a child did
wonders for me as an adult.*
- I've learned....**
*that life is like a roll of toilet
paper: the closer it gets to
the end, the faster it goes.*
- I've learned....**
*that we should be glad God does
not give us everything we ask for.*
- I've learned....**
that money doesn't buy class.
- I've learned....**
*that it's those small daily
happenings that make
life so spectacular.*
- I've learned....**
*that under everyone's hard
shell is someone who wants
to be appreciated and loved.*
- I've learned....**
*that the Lord didn't do it all in one
day. What makes me think I can?*
- I've learned....**
*that to ignore the facts does not
change the facts.*
- I've learned....**
*that when you plan to get even
with someone, you are only letting
that person continue to hurt you.*
- I've learned....**
*that love, not time,
heals all wounds.*
- I've learned....**
*that the easiest way for me to grow
as a person is to surround myself
with people smarter than I am.*
- I've learned....**
*that everyone you meet deserves to
be greeted with a smile.*
- I've learned....**
*that there's nothing sweeter than
sleeping with your babies and
feeling their breath
on your cheeks.*
- I've learned....**
*that no one is perfect until
you fall in love with them.*
- I've learned....**
that life is tough, but I'm tougher.
- I've learned....**
*that opportunities are never lost;
someone will take the*
- ones you miss.*
- I've learned....**
*that when you harbor bitterness,
happiness will dock elsewhere.*
- I've learned....**
*that I wish I could have told my
Mom that I love her one more time
before she passed away.*
- I've learned....**
*that one should keep his words
both soft and tender, because to-
morrow he may have to eat them.*
- I've learned....**
*that a smile is an inexpensive way
to improve your looks.*
- I've learned....**
*that I can't choose how I feel, but I
can choose what I do about it.*
- I've learned....**
*that when your newly born
grandchild holds your little
finger in his little fist,
that you're hooked for life.*
- I've learned....**
*that everyone wants to live on top
of the mountain, but all the happi-
ness and growth occurs while
you're climbing it.*
- I've learned....**
*that it is best to give advice in
only two circumstances; when
it is requested and when it is a
life-threatening situation.*
- I've learned....**
*that the less time I have to work
with, the more things I get done.* †



The Writings of Thomas More

MORE ON PRACTICING LAW

As a lawyer, he acquired a reputation for honesty and integrity. One early biographer reports that *"to his clients [More] never failed to give advice that was wise and straightforward, always looking to their interests rather than to his own. In most cases he used his best endeavors to get the litigants to come to terms. If he was unsuccessful in this, he would then show them how to carry on the action at least expense. He was so honorable and painstaking that he never accepted any case until he had first examined the whole matter thoroughly and satisfied himself of its justice. It was all the same whether those who came to him were his friends or strangers...: his first warning was ever that they should not in a single detail turn aside from the truth. Then he would say: "If your case is as you have stated it, it seems to me that you will win." But if they had no justice on their side, he would tell them so plainly, and beg them to give up the case, saying that it was not right either for him or for them to go on with it. But if they refused him, he would refer them to other lawyers, himself giving them no further assistance."*



Erasmus gives a similar account of More's conduct as a lawyer. More, he says, gave all of his clients *"helpful and reliable advice, thinking much more of their advantage than of his own; the majority he used to persuade to settle their actions, on the grounds that this would save them expense."* This emphasis on the money these litigants could save was probably another shrewd and diplomatic way of addressing a more fundamental problem, one that every lawyer has to face: *"Some men are so made that they actually enjoy going to law."* Wise lawyer that he was More recognized that the passion for justice, like all other passions, has to be moderated in this fallen world. And, as usual, he found an indirect, subtle way of achieving what would be next to impossible to accomplish in a direct, blunt way. His ability as a counselor and diplomat owed much to his deep appreciation of the frailty of human nature and the hardening effects of pride.

From Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage by Gerard B. Wegemer Scepter Publishers (p. 51-52) †

**"In essentials, unity; in doubtful matters, liberty;
in all things, charity."**

-- Pope John XXIII



FRANK ERNEST

COME, GET INSPIRED!

SPEND A MORNING WITH
FELLOW LEGAL PROFESSIONALS AND DISCOVER
"You Are Not Alone"

IN THE "BURN OUT" & TRIBULATIONS OF
THE PRACTICE OF LAW. LEARN FROM THE PERSONAL
EXPERIENCES OF OTHERS,
THE GREAT INSPIRATION & STRENGTH FOUND IN
DOING GOD'S WILL IN THE PRACTICE OF LAW.

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A NON-DENOMINATIONAL CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE ON
THE CONTINUING THEME OF "YOU ARE NOT ALONE." YOU'LL
HAVE THE CHANCE TO SHARE EXPERIENCES, DISCUSS TOUGH
ISSUES AND DISCOVER GOD'S SOLUTIONS. PROMINENT
ATTORNEYS AND JUDGES FROM VARIOUS FIELDS WILL SHARE
THEIR EXPERIENCES IN STARTING TO LIVE OUT GOD'S WILL
IN THEIR OWN PRACTICES AND COURTROOMS.

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ATTORNEY DAVID BELZ
ATTORNEY CLIFFORD ROBERTS
HONORABLE THOMAS SCHULTE
HONORABLE KIRK NAKAMURA

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Scriptural Corner:

⁵⁴Then they seized him and led him away, bringing him into the high priest's house. Peter followed at a distance, ⁵⁵and when they had kindled a fire in the middle of the courtyard and sat down together, Peter sat among them. ⁵⁶Then a maid, seeing him as he sat in the light and gazing at him, said, "This man also was with him." ⁵⁷But he denied it, saying, "Woman, I do not know him." ⁵⁸And a little later some one else saw him and said, "You also are one of them." But Peter said, "Man, I am not." ⁵⁹And after an interval of about an hour still another insisted, saying, "Certainly this man also was with him; for he is a Galilean." ⁶⁰But Peter said, "Man, I do not know what you are saying." And immediately, while he was still speaking, the cock crowed. ⁶¹And the Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remember the word of the Lord, how he had said to him, "Before the cock crows today, you will deny me three times." ⁶²And he went out and wept bitterly." Luke 22:54-62

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

Peter, who has been following the throng of people hustling our Lord, enters the house of the high priest. While Jesus is undergoing his first trial the saddest event in the Apostle's life takes place. The evangelists give vivid accounts of the scene. Peter is in a state of shock and is all confused. Inevitably, that night, people would have spoken about Jesus and his disciples a number of times. In conversation Peter says three times that he does not know Jesus, that he is not a follower of his. He does want to continue to follow our Lord; but wanting is not enough: he has a duty not to disguise the fact that he is a disciple, even though it is obviously risky to do so; that is why his denial is a grave sin. No one is justified in denying or disguising his faith, the fact that he is a Christian, a follower of Christ.

After the cock crows Jesus' glance meets Peter's. The Apostle is moved by this silent and tender gesture. Peter realizes the seriousness of this sin and the fact that it fulfils our Lord's prophecy about his betrayal. "He went out and wept bitterly." Tears like these are the natural reaction of a noble heart moved by God's grace; this love-sorrow, this contrition when it is sincere, leads a person to make the firm resolution to do anything necessary to erase the least trace of the sin he has committed.

**The Navarre Bible, a renown edition of Sacred Scripture prepared by members of the Faculty of Theology of Navarre University, consisting of the New Vulgate, the Revised Standard Version and commentaries. †*

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*

**Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"*



A Little Irish Humor

An Irishman who had a little too much to drink is driving home from the city one night and, of course, his car is weaving violently all over the road.

A cop pulls him over. "So," says the cop to the driver, "where have you been?"

"Why, I've been to the pub of course" slurs the drunk.

"Well," says the cop, "it looks like you've had quite a few to many to drink this evening."

"I did all right," the drunk says with a smile.

"Did you know," says the cop, standing straight and folding his arms across his chest, "that a few intersections back, your wife fell out of your car?"

"Oh, thank heavens," sighs the drunk. "For a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf." †



THE HOLY FATHER'S LENTEN MESSAGE

Dear Brothers and Sisters,



1. We are preparing to follow the path of Lent, which will lead us to the solemn celebration of the central mystery of faith, the mystery of the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Christ. We are preparing for the favorable time which the Church offers the faithful so that they may contemplate the work of salvation accomplished by our Lord on the Cross. The heavenly Father's saving plan was completed in the free and total gift to us of the only begotten Son. *"No one takes my life from me, but I lay it down of my own accord,"* (Jn 10:18) Jesus declares, leaving no doubt that he decides to sacrifice his own life for the salvation of the world. In confirmation of so great a gift of love, the Redeemer goes on: *"Greater love has no one than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."* (Jn 15:13)

Lent, the providential time for conversion, helps us to contemplate this stupendous mystery of love. It is a return to the roots of our faith, so that by pondering the measureless gift of grace which is Redemption, we cannot fail to realize that all has been given to us by God's loving initiative. In order to meditate upon this aspect of the mystery of salvation, I have chosen as the theme for this year's Lenten Message the Lord's words: *"You received without paying, give without pay."* (Mt 10:8)

2. God has freely given us his Son: who has deserved or could ever deserve such a privilege? Saint Paul says: *"All have sinned and have fallen short of the glory of God, but they are justified by his grace as a gift."* (Rom 3:23-24) In his infinite mercy God loved us, not permitting himself to be blocked by the grievous state of separation to which man had been consigned by sin. He graciously stooped down to our weakness, and made it the cause of a new and still more wondrous outpouring of his love. The Church does not cease to proclaim this mystery of infinite goodness, exalting God's free choice and his desire not to condemn man but to draw him back into communion with himself.

"You received without paying, give without pay." May these words of the Gospel echo in the heart of all Christian communities on their penitential pilgrimage to Easter. May Lent, recalling the mystery of the Lord's Death and Resurrection, lead all Christians to marvel in their heart of hearts at the greatness of such a gift. Yes! We have received without pay. Is not our entire life marked by God's kindness? The beginning of life and its marvelous development: this is a gift. And because it is gift, life can never be regarded as a possession or as private property, even if the capabilities we now have to improve the quality of life can lead us to think that man is the *"master"* of life. The achievements of medicine and biotechnology can sometimes lead man to think of himself as his own creator, and to succumb to the temptation of tampering with *"the tree of life."* (Gn 3:24)

It is also worth repeating here that not everything that is technically possible is morally acceptable. Scientific work aimed at securing a quality of life more in keeping with human dignity is admirable, but it must never be forgotten that human life is a gift, and that it remains precious even when marked by suffering and limitations. A gift to be accepted and to be loved at all times: received without pay and to be placed without pay at the service of others.

3. In setting before us the example of Christ offering himself for us on Calvary, Lent helps us in a unique way to understand that life is redeemed in him. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus renews our life and makes us sharers in the divine life which draws us into the intimate life of God and enables us to experience his love for us. This is a sublime gift, which the Christian cannot fail to proclaim with joy. In his Gospel, Saint John writes: *"This is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom*

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you have sent." (Jn 17:3) This life is passed on to us in Baptism, and we must nourish it constantly by responding to it faithfully, both individually and communally, through prayer, the celebration of the Sacraments and evangelical witness.

Since we have received this life freely, we must in turn offer it freely to our brothers and sisters. This is what Jesus asked of the disciples when he sent them out as his witnesses in the world: "*You received without paying, give without pay.*" And the first gift to be given is the gift of a holy life, bearing witness to the freely given love of God. May the Lenten journey be for all believers an unceasing summons to enter more deeply into this special vocation of ours. As believers, we must be open to a life marked by "*gratuitousness*", by the giving of ourselves unreservedly to God and neighbor.

4. "*What do you have,*" Saint Paul asks, "*that you did not receive?*" (1 Cor 4:7) The demand which follows this recognition is that of loving our brothers and sisters, and of dedicating ourselves to them. The more needy they are, the more urgent the believer's duty to serve them. Does not God permit human need so that by responding to the needs of others we may learn to free ourselves from our egoism and to practice authentic Gospel love? The command of Jesus is clear: "*If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax-collectors do the same?*" (Mt 5:46) The world prizes human relationships based on self-interest and personal gain, and this fosters an egocentric vision of life, in which too often there is no room for the poor and weak. Every person, even the least gifted, must be welcomed and loved for themselves, regardless of their qualities and defects. Indeed, the greater their hardship, the more they must be the object of our practical love. This is the love to which the Church, through her countless institutions, bears witness in accepting responsibility for the sick, the marginalized, the poor and the exploited. In this way, Christians become apostles of hope and builders of the civilization of love.

It is highly significant that Jesus spoke the words "*You received without paying, give without pay*" as he sent the Apostles out to spread the Gospel of salvation, which is his first and foremost gift to humanity. Christ wants his Kingdom, which is already close at hand (cf. Mt 10:5ff.), to be spread through gestures of gratuitous love accomplished by his disciples. This is what the Apostles did in the early days of Christianity, and those who met them saw them as bearers of a message greater than themselves. In our own day too the good done by believers becomes a sign, and often an invitation to believe. When, like the Good Samaritan, Christians respond to the needs of their neighbor, theirs is never merely material assistance. It is always a proclamation of the Kingdom as well, and speaks of the full meaning of life, hope and love.

5. Dear Brothers and Sisters! Let this be how we prepare to live this Lent: in practical generosity toward the poorest of our brothers and sisters! By opening our hearts to them, we realize ever more deeply that what we give to others is our response to the many gifts which the Lord continues to give to us. We have received without paying, let us give without pay!

What better time is there than Lent for offering this testimony of gratuitousness which the world so badly needs? In the very love which God has for us, there lies the call to give ourselves freely to others in turn. I thank all those throughout the world— lay people, religious, and priests – who offer this witness of charity. May it be true of all Christians, whatever the circumstances in which they live.

May the Virgin Mary, Mother of Fair Love and Hope, be our guide and strength on this Lenten journey. Assuring you all of an affectionate remembrance in my prayers, I gladly impart my Apostolic Blessing to each of you, especially to those engaged day after day on the many frontiers of charity.

From the Vatican, October 4, 2001, Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi.
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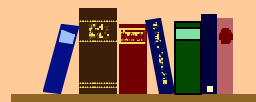
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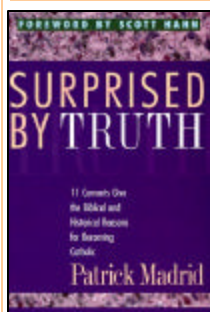
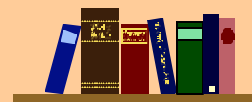
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About the Author

Patrick Madrid is the editor-in-chief of Envoy Magazine. For over 10 years, he has been active in the full-time apostolate of Catholic apologetics. His other books include “Any Friend of God's Is a Friend of Mine” and “Pope Fiction: Answers to 30 Myths and Misconceptions About the Papacy.”

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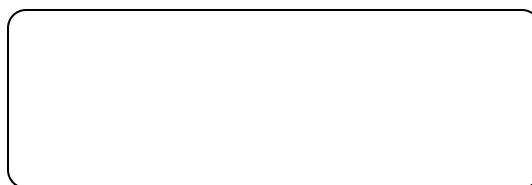
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