


# Ad Veritatem

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A detailed portrait of St. Thomas More, showing him from the chest up. He is wearing a dark brown, heavy robe with a large, ornate gold chain around his neck. The chain features a series of interlocking links and a large, circular medallion with a cross and other symbols. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right. The background is a dark green, draped fabric.

**"St. Thomas More  
never confused  
learning and  
intellectual agility with  
virtue and character."**

**Thomas More:  
Portrait of Courage  
By Gerard Wegemer**

## **DECEMBER MEETING:**

**NOON WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18, 2002**

**MONSIGNOR JOHN URELL**

**"THE SPIRITUALITY OF CHRISTMAS"**

**DETAILS ON PAGE 3**



## WHO WE ARE

In 1966, the movie *A Man For All Seasons* inspired the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to recognize this film as the Picture of the Year. This was one of the few occasions in the history of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences where the life of a religious figure won the hearts of the motion picture industry's elite. The central figure portrayed in *Man For All Seasons* was, of course, St. Thomas More, the great lawyer, statesman, apologist, husband, father and faithful Catholic. In 2000, St. Thomas was honored as the Lawyer of the Millennium by a secular panel of historians for the British Commonwealth. Shortly thereafter, John Paul II declared St. Thomas as the Patron Saint of Statesmen.

Inspired by a homily given by Bishop Norman McFarland at the 1995 Red Mass of Orange County, 5 "fearless" members of the Orange County bar met shortly thereafter at the law offices of Rutan and Tucker in Costa Mesa. These lawyers all shared the realization that the legal practice takes a severe toll on the personal and spiritual lives of those involved in it and that many in the legal profession had become too focused on the material life with the natural consequence being the de-emphasis on their spiritual life. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a new organization for lawyers and judges in the County of Orange with its mission being to publicly support and encourage the spiritual development of its members in their Catholic faith. The group chose as its patron St. Thomas More, the greatest lawyer of his time, who was a dedicated husband and father with a deep and profound commitment to his Catholic faith, his profession and his fellow man. Thus the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County was born.

Attendance at the monthly meetings in the early years was sporadic. Our spiritual director, Fr Hugh Barbour, wisely advised us not to worry about numbers because it was more important "to be than to do or say." He encouraged the virtues of patience and perseverance. His sage advice, together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and St. Thomas More, has led us to our current level of a thirteen member Board of Directors of lawyers and judges and a mailing list for the monthly newsletter of over 940.

The goal of the Society is to inspire and lift up the minds and hearts of the legal community of Orange County to follow the example of St. Thomas More by integrating God in every aspect of their professional and personal lives. The Society seeks to accomplish this goal through inspirational speakers at monthly meetings, this newsletter, the Red Mass, a website, an annual spiritual retreat and other events. The St. Thomas More Society also seeks to provide a haven where those who are committed to their Catholic faith as well as those who are seeking to learn more about the Church, can find fellowship and encouragement in the face of overwhelming media and cultural forces working against that pursuit.

*St. Thomas More, please pray for us. †*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

David Belz at (949) 347-0447 or email to [dbelz@kuhnbelz.com](mailto:dbelz@kuhnbelz.com), or  
Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 or email to [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com).

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at [www.stthomasmore.net](http://www.stthomasmore.net)

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**DEC.**  
**MEETING**

**MONSIGNOR JOHN URELL**

**“THE SPIRITUALITY OF CHRISTMAS”**

Monsignor John Urell was born in 1951 on Coronado island in San Diego. The Urell family eventually moved to Orange County where Monsignor. Urell attended public schools in Tustin graduating from Tustin High School in 1969. He attended California State College, Long Beach for a few years and then transferred to St. Johns Seminary College in Camarillo where he received his Bachelor of Science degree in Philosophy in 1974 and a Master’s Degree in Divinity in 1978. He also earned a Master’s Degree in Social Work from U.S.C. in 1986. Monsignor Urell was ordained to the priesthood on June 3, 1978 and was appointed as a monsignor on May 29, 1990. He has served as an associate pastor, pastor, secretary to both Bishops Johnson and McFarland, Chancellor of the Diocese of Orange, and now serves as Vicar General/Moderator of Curia effective August of 2000.

**WHEN:** Noon  
Wed. Dec. 18

**WHERE:**  
First American  
Title Ins. Co.  
2 First American  
Way, Santa Ana

**FOR DIRECTIONS**  
CALL (714) 800-3000

**COST:**  
\$10 for lunch

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

EVERYONE IS WELCOME! †

**FIRST THURSDAY MASS**

ATTEND MASS ON THE FIRST THURSDAY  
OF EVERY MONTH FOLLOWED BY LUNCH  
AT THE BUSCH FIRM COMMENCING  
THURSDAY OCTOBER 3RD.  
*FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE 15*

**ST. THOMAS MORE  
MCLE CLASS**

SATURDAY JANUARY 25, 2003  
EARN MCLE CREDITS!  
LEARN THE FAITH!  
*FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE 9*

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## HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT WHAT YOU BELIEVE IS TRUE?

BY: FR. HUGH BARBOUR, O. PRAEM, PH.D.

**QUESTION:** *How can I trust the claims of the Catholic Church without knowing all her theology and without being able to justify some of the dark chapters in her history? How can I have an assurance that the Catholic Church is Christ's Church when there are so many facts and details I cannot know?*

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



*The Throne of  
Saint Peter*

Gian Lorenzo Bernini  
(1657)

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

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

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

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

The normal, serene approach appropriate for human nature is to assume that knowledge, and knowledge of the truth, will lead to happiness and salvation. If one examines the Sacred Scriptures, those who have faith accept God’s word in simplicity because they are used to accepting what is presented in a reasonable and authoritative way. They ask questions: “*How can this be since I know not man?*” “*Can a man return to his mother’s womb?*” “*Then who can be saved?*” They ask such questions because they are reasonable and want explanations, not because they are driven by anxiety about their salvation. The biblical man knows that the truth will make him free and will lead him to salvation, so he seeks truth first trusting that happiness and salvation will follow: “*Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,*” said St. Peter just after our Lord pronounced the most unprovable and mysterious words he ever uttered in the sixth chapter of St. John’s Gospel, words which Protestants cannot accept on their clear meaning. St. Peter professed the truth in the hope of salvation. He did not say first, “*I am a sinner in need of a savior,*” but “*Depart from me, I am a sinful man.*” First came the objective fact, the holiness of God and His truth, and only then the gift of salvation. Protestantism “poisons the well” by beginning with a doubt as to whether man can know any truth at all, and then resolving it with a “leap of faith” which cannot and must not be explained rationally. Catholicism assumes man’s orientation toward the truth as part of his nature and presumes that the evidence, the testimony of the prophets and saints, their miracles and teachings, is sufficient to justify accepting the gift of faith

*How Do You Know?* (Continued on page 8)



## THE ARGUMENT OF DESIRE

MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

Saint Bonaventure wrote, "The world is a book in which God is written." Nowhere in creation is God mirrored with greater clarity than in man. We, as human beings, were created according to the image of God (*kat eikona*), and bear this image in our souls. This image is proper to our human nature; therefore, though it may be sullied by sin, something of God is indelibly etched in even the most callused sinner's heart.

In our species, there is evidence of this image everywhere. It manifests itself most clearly in the inexorable longing of all human beings for perfect happiness. No matter how estranged one is from God, he or she still cannot deny the drive for fulfillment, meaning, happiness--a happiness unhindered by the demands of time and mortality--a happiness which (unbeknownst to the ignorant) can only be found in God.

In our materialistic culture, this fundamental drive has provided endless fodder for a consumer-based economy. Millions have been invested in producing and marketing creams, formulas, diets and surgical processes to forestall or mask the aging process because our hearts cannot tolerate the idea of mortality, the ultimate spoiler of human happiness. We are barraged incessantly by advertisements for products that promise to fill this void and leave us perfectly contented. We encounter all manner of self-help books and programs designed to ensure our complete fulfillment.

All of these things, and more, pander to our undeniable hankering for the eternal. However, much to the consternation of godless man, nothing in this material universe can completely satisfy, because, as Augustine said, our hearts were made by God and for God and they are restless until they rest in God.

This desire, then, is the *stella polaris* of our souls. It tells us of God even when our minds are completely blind to His existence. In this sense, the heart, or will, is the truest and noblest of the spiritual faculties of man.

Here, a distinction must be made. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, the superiority of a faculty may be determined by the superiority of its object. The object of the intellect is the idea of a thing whereas the object of the will or heart is the thing itself. In itself, says Saint Thomas, the intellect is the higher of the spiritual faculties because the idea of an object is nobler than the object itself. However, the will is greater in a relative sense because it grasps the good itself, and the "love of God is greater than the knowledge of God."

Further, the will has God Himself as its object; it is directed toward God, and will not rest until it attains its ultimate object. The mind, on the other hand, can err in presenting its idea of God.

Nevertheless, the will is blind without the intellect, and it cannot proceed without the intellect presenting the idea of the good. It is in this that so many human beings so easily come to err. The intellect is darkened by sin, and therefore, prone to continual error. It may perceive an advertisement for the new Mercedes E Class, for example, and, believing it to be the perfect automobile and the ultimate good for the soul, will present it to the will as such. The will may go along with this idea for a while, but soon, perhaps after the first ding on the driver's side door, will check the

*The Argument of Desire* (Continued on page 6)



*The Triumph of  
St. Thomas Aquinas*

Benozzo Gozzoli  
(1471)

(Continued from page 5) *The Argument of Desire*

intellect and send it back on its search once more. The cycle continues, and modern materialistic human beings are once more sent down the primrose path toward some other phantom promise of perfect happiness. In this context, the malignancy of sin and ignorance may metastasize in the form of psychosis, neurosis, or despair.

Yet it is this very search, this insatiable longing, that reveals the eternal nature of the human soul and shows that it belongs to God. The desire of the soul for perfect happiness is, therefore, a window for evangelism. A perfect starting place for the intellectual assent to God, because everyone knows this desire intimately. It is a common ground to all human beings.

In the **Summa Contra Gentiles**, Saint Thomas Aquinas writes that every inclination of an agent tends toward a definite end, in which the agent's desire is satisfied when it is attained. In all the drives found in nature, there always exists an object to satisfy them. When we hunger or thirst in a physical sense, a sufficient quantity of food or water will satisfy this drive. The same can be said of drive of inanimate objects to find their place.

In syllogistic form, the argument can be stated as follows: Major Premise: every natural or innate desire bespeaks a corresponding object which can satisfy it; Minor Premise: Human beings experience a desire which nothing in time or space can fully satisfy; Conclusion: There exists something outside time and space which can satisfy this desire.

C.S. Lewis called this argument, "The Argument of Desire." In **Mere Christianity** he wrote:

*Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for these desires exists. A baby feels hunger; well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim; well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire; well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.*

The heart "knows" of God, though the mind may deny His existence. The certainty of this desire is the foundation for the argument of desire. It is an intuitive certainty. G.K. Chesterton compared this intuitive "knowledge" to the residual impact of a dream, long lost to mind and memory, but somehow present.

*As when one dreameth and remembereth not  
Waking, what were his pleasures or his pains,  
With every feature of the dream forgot,  
The printed passion of the dream remains:  
Even such am I; in whose thoughts resides  
No picture of that sight nor any part,  
Nor any memory: in whom abides  
Only a happiness within the heart,  
A secret happiness that soaks the heart  
As the hills are soaked by slow unsealing snow,  
Or secret as that wind without a chart  
Whereon did the wild leaves of Sibyl go.*

The heart provides the firmest footing in our quest for God. It is in our deepest longing in His absence that we can really begin to see His presence. †



***The Gift of  
a Dandelion***

**G.K. Chesterton  
(1874-1936)**

## ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY\*

1. "Woman, behold your Son!" (Jn 19:26). As we near the end of this Jubilee Year, when you, O Mother, have offered us Jesus anew, the blessed fruit of your womb most pure, the Word made flesh, the world's Redeemer, we hear more clearly the sweet echo of his words entrusting us to you, making you our Mother: "Woman, behold your Son!" When he entrusted to you the Apostle John, and with him the children of the Church and all people, Christ did not diminish but affirmed anew the role which is his alone as the Savior of the world. You are the splendor which in no way dims the light of Christ, for you exist in him and through him. Everything in you is fiat: you are the Immaculate One, through you there shines the fullness of grace. Here, then, are your children, gathered before you at the dawn of the new millennium. The Church today, through the voice of the Successor of Peter, in union with so many Pastors assembled here from every corner of the world, seeks refuge in your motherly protection and trustingly begs your intercession as she faces the challenges which lie hidden in the future.

2. In this year of grace, countless people have known the overflowing joy of the mercy which the Father has given us in Christ. In the particular Churches throughout the world, and still more in this center of Christianity, the widest array of people have accepted this gift. Here the enthusiasm of the young rang out, here the sick have lifted up their prayer. Here have gathered priests and religious, artists and journalists, workers and people of learning, children and adults, and all have acknowledged in your beloved Son the Word of God made flesh in your womb. O Mother, intercede for us, that the fruits of this Year will not be lost and that the seeds of grace will grow to the full measure of the holiness to which we are all called.

3. Today we wish to entrust to you the future that awaits us, and we ask you to be with us on our way. We are the men and women of an extraordinary time, exhilarating yet full of contradictions. Humanity now has instruments of unprecedented power: we can turn this world into a garden, or reduce it to a pile of rubble. We have devised the astounding capacity to intervene in the very well-springs of life: man can use this power for good, within the bounds of the moral law, or he can succumb to the short-sighted pride of a science which accepts no limits, but tramples on the respect due to every human being. Today as never before in the past, humanity stands at a crossroads. And once again, O Virgin Most Holy, salvation lies fully and uniquely in Jesus, your Son.

4. Therefore, O Mother, like the Apostle John, we wish to take you into our home (cf. Jn 19:27), that we may learn from you to become like your Son. "Woman, behold your son!" Here we stand before you to entrust to your maternal care ourselves, the Church, the entire world. Plead for us with your beloved Son that he may give us in abundance the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth which is the fountain of life. Receive the Spirit for us and with us, as happened in the first community gathered round you in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost (cf. Act 1:24). May the Spirit open our hearts to justice and love, and guide people and nations to mutual understanding and a firm desire for peace. We entrust to you all people, beginning with the weakest: the babies yet unborn, and those born into poverty and suffering, the young in search of meaning, the

*Act of Entrustment* (Continued on page 9)



**FROM  
PETER'S  
SUCCESSOR,  
POPE  
JOHN  
PAUL  
II**



\* Issued by  
**John Paul II from  
St. Peter's, Rome  
October 8, 2000**



**Christ Handing the  
Keys to St. Peter**

**Pietro Perugino  
(1481-2)**

(Continued from page 4) **How Do You Know?**

which is offered to all by “*the light which enlighteneth every man coming into the world.*” For those who need proof of the Christian faith by miracles, or insist on proof without miracles, St. Thomas Aquinas has this masterful, serene, and very Catholic advice:

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

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

## PRAYER PETITIONS



**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**

*We all need prayers—at some times more than others. If you have a special need for prayer, please let us know so we can join in prayer for each other. Leave a message on Anne Lanphar’s voicemail (714) 800-3225, or email your request to [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com)*

**Special Thanks:** Frank Werve’s sister (Mary Clare Ligh) passed away in October. He extends his heartfelt thanks for all the prayers. His sister specifically told him that she could “feel” all the prayers. Thank you!

## **PLEASE PRAY FOR:**

- ✘ Fr. Matt Munoz (special intention).
- ✘ Ryan McEachon (special intention).
- ✘ Mary Clare Ligh (sister of Fred Werve) who passed away in October.
- ✘ Mary Erickson (personal intention).
- ✘ David Belz’s niece who is awaiting a desperately needed liver transplant.
- ✘ For employment for John Thompson.
- ✘ Selma Mann’s family (2 medical conditions).
- ✘ Patricia Knefel (Deborah’s sister) who is recovering from a very serious illness.
  - ✘ Cindie Burnes, a young mother recovering from chemotherapy.
- ✘ Michael Shonafelt (special intention).
- ✘ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
  - ✘ Ron Gable (special intention).
- ✘ Father of Paul Hammann (serious illness) †





# YOU ARE INVITED TO A THOMAS MORE MCLE SEMINAR

Saturday, January 25, 2003

**“A LAWYER'S PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:  
THE LAWYER OF THE MILLENNIUM'S PERSPECTIVE”**



St. Thomas More was elected "*Lawyer of the Millennium*" by the Law Society of Great Britain in December 1999, and on November 4, 2000, he was celebrated as "*Patron of Statesmen*" at the Vatican by thousands of political and cultural leaders from around the world. In honor of our patron, St. Thomas More, this seminar will focus on ethics, elimination of bias and controlling substance abuse from the Catholic perspective.

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

**WHEN:** January 25, 2003 8:30 am - 11:40 am

**WHERE:** First American Title Insurance Company  
1 First American Way, Santa Ana (on MacArthur Blvd just west of the 55 freeway, north on Imperial Promenade, right at First American Way)

**COST:** \$30 (no CLE credit) \$60 (with CLE credit)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

8:00—8:30 am	Registration & Continental Breakfast (included)	
8:30—9:30 am	<b>SESSION 1:</b> (1 hr Substance Abuse)	<b>FR. JOHN MCANDREW</b> <i>San Francisco Solano Catholic Church—Rancho Santa Margarita</i>
9:35—10:35 am	<b>SESSION 2:</b> (1 hr Legal Ethics)	<b>GERARD WEGEMER</b> <i>Noted Author "Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage"</i>
10:40—11:40am	<b>SESSION 3:</b> (1 hr Elimination of Bias)	<b>FR. ROBERT SCHOLLA</b> <i>Loyola Law School</i>
11:45am	<b>MASS</b> (optional)	

**Please RSVP on the voicemail of Anne Lanphar (714) 800-3215  
or sending an email to [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com). Thank you! †**

*(Continued from page 7) Act of Entrustment*

unemployed, and those suffering hunger and disease. We entrust to you all troubled families, the elderly with no one to help them, and all who are alone and without hope.

5. O Mother, you know the sufferings and hopes of the Church and the world: come to the aid of your children in the daily trials which life brings to each one, and grant that, thanks to the efforts of all, the darkness will not prevail over the light. To you, Dawn of Salvation, we commit our journey through the new Millennium, so that with you as guide all people may know Christ, the light of the world and its only Savior, who reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen. †



## THE DOLL



### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

I hurried into the local department store to grab some last minute Christmas gifts. I looked at all the people and grumbled to myself. I would be in here forever and I just had so much to do. Christmas was beginning to become such a drag. I wished that I could just sleep through Christmas. But I hurried the best I could through all the people to the toy department. Once again I mumbled to myself at the prices of all these toys, and wondered if the grandkids would even play with them. I found myself in the doll aisle. Out of the corner of my eye I saw a little boy, about 5, holding a lovely doll. He kept touching her hair and he held her so gently. I could not seem to help myself, I just kept looking over at the little boy and wondered who the doll was for. I watched him turn to a woman and he called his aunt by name and said, "Are you sure I don't have enough money." She replied a bit impatiently, "You know that you don't have enough money for it." The aunt told the little boy not to go anywhere that she had to go get some other things and would be back in a few minutes. And then she left the aisle.

The boy continued to hold the doll. After a bit, I asked the boy who the doll was for. He said, "It is the doll my sister wanted so badly for Christmas. She just knew that Santa would bring it." I told him that maybe Santa was going to bring it. He said, "No, Santa can't go where my sister is...I have to give the doll to my Mamma to take to her". I asked him where his sister was. He looked at me with the saddest eyes and said "She has gone to be with Jesus. My Daddy says that Mama is going to have to go to be with her."

My heart nearly stopped beating. Then the boy looked at me again and said, "I told my Daddy to tell Mama not to go yet. I told him to tell her to wait till I got back from the store." Then he asked me if I wanted to see his picture. I told him I would love to. He pulled out some pictures he'd had taken at the front of the store. He said "I want my Mamma to take this with her so she don't ever forget me. I love my Mama so very much and I wish she did not have to leave me. But Daddy says she will need to be with my sister."

I saw that the little boy had lowered his head and had grown so very quiet. While he was not looking I reached into my purse and pulled out a handful of bills. I asked the little boy, "Shall we count that money one more time?" He grew excited and said, "Yes, I just know it has to be enough". So I slipped my money in with his and we began to count it.

Of course it was plenty for the doll. He softly said, "Thank you Jesus, for giving me enough money."

Then the boy said, "I just asked Jesus to give me enough money to buy this doll so Mama can take it with her to give to my sister. And he heard my prayer. I wanted to ask him for enough to buy my Mama a white rose, but I didn't ask him, but he gave me enough to buy the doll and a rose for my Mama. She loves white roses so very, very much."

In a few minutes the aunt came back, and I wheeled my cart away. I could not keep from thinking about the little boy as I finished my shopping, in a totally different spirit than when I had started. And I kept remembering a story I had seen in the newspaper several days earlier about a drunk driver hitting a car and killing a little girl, and the Mother was in serious condition. The family was deciding on whether to remove the life support. Now surely this little boy did not belong with that story.

Two days later I read in the paper where the family had disconnected the life support and the young woman had died. I could not forget the little boy and just kept wondering if the two were somehow connected.

Later that day, I could not help myself and I went out and bought some white roses and took them to the funeral home where the young woman was. There she was, holding a lovely white rose, the beautiful doll, and the picture of the little boy in the store. I left there in tears, my life changed forever.

Christ works through each of us to reach His people in need. We are His hands on this earth. Let us always be open to His voice but especially during this Christmas season. ☩



## ARE THE BISHOPS THE DIRECT SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES?

MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

One of the most startling claims of Catholicism, a claim that separates it from every Protestant sect, is that the Church traces its provenance, by a direct and physical chain of "laying on of hands," to the Twelve Apostles themselves. Every Sunday, when we recite the Nicene Creed, we announce our belief in this amazing doctrine, one of the four essential attributes of the Roman Catholic Church - - that she is one, holy, catholic, and *apostolic*. But what do we mean when we say that the Church is "apostolic?"

In the textbook response, the term derives from the Greek *apostolos* meaning "messenger" or "emissary." The apostles were the emissaries of Christ. They sat at his feet when he recited the beatitudes; they witnessed the miracle of the loaves and fishes; they lived day by day with the Lord, and were present at every moment of his earthly ministry; most importantly, they beheld His resurrection. Thus blessed and transformed by the presence of the Redeemer, they ventured off into the world, as emissaries, to "make disciples of all nations; baptize in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" and to teach all of the commands of Christ. (Matt. 28:19-20.)

In designating His emissaries, Christ did not merely send ambassadors, he also imparted powers. He gave them such authority that, "*whatsoever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatsoever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.*" (Matt. 18:18.) He communicated to them the ability to reenact His actions at the Last Supper, "*do this in remembrance of me.*" (Lk. 22:14.) He also imparted the power to forgive sins, "*If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.*" (Jn. 20:22-23.) Thus, as John Hardon, S.J., states,

*The apostles were not only commissioned to carry on his work; they were consecrated to do so. Their right to teach, govern, and sanctify was rooted in their ordination to a share in Christ's priesthood, which took place at the first Lord's Supper. In virtue of this ordination, they received all the graces necessary to exercise their apostolate effectively for the people of God.* (Hardon, *The Catholic Catechism*, (Doubleday 1981) p. 220.)

The apostles were also enabled to communicate the essentials of their office to their successors by the laying on of hands. In this manner, the powers imparted by Christ have been handed on throughout the generations. This reality becomes more personal when we realize that the bishop who confirmed us can ultimately trace his apostolic succession to Christ Himself. The priest from whom we receive the Eucharist at each mass can trace the power of his priesthood to the moment the first apostle laid hands upon his successor.

The apostolic succession also manifests the truth of the Catholic Church by firmly establishing its link with the apostles and their teachings. Nowhere is this succession more eloquently expressed than in the early writings of the Church Fathers, many of whom sat at the feet of the Apostles, or their immediate successors. As an example, Saint Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, recorded a first-hand account of his link with the Apostles. In exhorting against the heresy of gnosticism, he made clear to the faithful

## TRUTH OR MYTH?



*Appearance While  
Apostles are  
at Table*

Duccio  
di Buoninsegna  
(1308-11)

## MORE ON EDUCATION

### THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



More's fundamental principle in education was crystal clear: *"Put virtue in the first place..., learning in the second."* In this way, as we have seen, he was convinced that his children would grow to be *"inwardly calm and at peace and neither stirred by praise of flatterers nor stung by the follies of unlearned mockers of learning."* In stating this principle, More was simply reaffirming the commonsense observations of Plato and Aristotle that a person needs stability of character to see the world with objectivity. Since passion and pride cloud the intellect, he realized, the point of a complete education is to help a person achieve the self-mastery needed for reason to reign.

The liberal arts, he said, can foster this self-mastery not only by developing reason, but also by helping people reach *"the contemplation of celestial realities through the study of nature."* Such contemplation can bring about a profound grasp of first principles. When this depth of understanding is combined with the experience found especially in the study of history, law, and literature, students can *"learn prudence in human affairs"*—and thus acquire the *"one special thing without which all learning is half lame...; [a] good mother wit."*

More considered a well-trained wit to be one of the greatest helps available in this world. Nevertheless, he saw clearly that it cannot ensure the preservation of virtue. Lucifer, after all became so enamored with the power and beauty of his brilliant wit that he failed to remain loyal to his first love. Similarly, Adam and Eve became so caught up in the attractive power of their own *"fond fantasies"* that they neglected to attend to the true demands of life. Such is the drama of freedom, More would say. And the best defense of that freedom is vigilance in virtue, aided by the best mother wit one can fashion. †

From Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage Gerald B. Wegemer Scepter Publishers (p. 91)†

## Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\* \*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"



### A CHRISTMAS LEGEND

Santa was very cross. It was Christmas Eve and NOTHING was going right.

Mrs. Claus had burned all the cookies. The elves were complaining about not getting paid for the overtime they had while making the toys. The reindeer had been drinking all afternoon and were dead drunk. To make matters worse, they had taken the sleigh out for a spin earlier in the day and had crashed it into a tree.

Santa was furious, "I can't believe it! I've got to deliver millions of presents all over the world in just a few hours - all of my reindeer are drunk, the elves are on strike and I don't even have a Christmas tree!"

"I sent that stupid Little Angel out HOURS ago to find a tree and he isn't even back yet! What am I going to do?"

Just then, the Little Angel opened the front door and stepped in from the snowy night, dragging a Christmas tree. He says "Yo, Fat Man! Where do you want me to stick the tree this year?"

And thus the tradition of angels atop the Christmas trees came to pass..... †





## JOHN 19: 26-27

<sup>26</sup> When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing near, he said to his mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" <sup>27</sup> Then he said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home.

### Comment from the Navarre Bible:\*

<sup>26-27</sup>. "The spotless purity of John's whole life makes him strong before the Cross. The other apostles fly from Golgotha: he, with the Mother of Christ, remains. Don't forget that purity strengthens and invigorates the character" (J. Escriva, *The Way*, 144).

Our Lord's gesture in entrusting his Blessed Mother to the disciple's care, has a dual meaning (see p. 19 above and pp. 35ff). For one thing it expresses his filial love for the Virgin Mary. St Augustine sees it as a lesson Jesus gives us on how to keep the fourth commandment: "Here is a lesson in morals. He is doing what he tells us to do and, like a good Teacher, he instructs his own by example, that it is the duty of good children to take care of their parents; as though the wood on which his dying members were fixed were also the chair of the teaching Master" (St Augustine, *In Ioann. Evang.*, 119,2).

Our Lord's words also declare that Mary is our Mother: "The Blessed Virgin also advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son unto the cross, where she stood, in keeping with the divine plan, enduring with her only begotten Son the intensity of his suffering, associating herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of this victim who was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus dying on the cross as a mother to his disciple" (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium*, 58).

All Christians, who are represented in the person of John, are children of Mary. By giving us his Mother to be our Mother, Christ demonstrates his love for his own to the end (cf. Jn 13:1). Our Lady's acceptance of John as her son shows her motherly care for us: "the Son of God, and your Son, from the Cross indicated a man to you, Mary, and said: 'Behold, your son' (Jn 19:26). And in that man he entrusted to you every person, he entrusted everyone to you. And you, who at the moment of the Annunciation, concentrated the whole program of your life in those simple words: 'Behold I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word' (Lk 1:38): embrace everyone, draw close to everyone, seek everyone out with motherly care. Thus is accomplished what the last Council said about your presence in the mystery of Christ and the Church. In a wonderful way you are always found in the mystery of Christ, your only Son, because you are present wherever men and women, his brothers and sisters, are present, wherever the Church is present" (John Paul II, *Homily in the Basilica of Guadalupe*, 27 January 1979).

John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, brought Mary into his home, into his life. Spiritual writers have seen these words of the Gospel as an invitation to all Christians to bring Mary into their lives. Mary certainly wants us to invoke her, to approach her confidently, to appeal to her as our mother, asking her to 'show that you are our mother'" (J. Escriva, *Christ is passing by*, 140).

John Paul II constantly treats our Lady as his Mother. In bidding farewell to the Virgin of Czestochowa he prayed in this way: "Our Lady of the Bright Mountain, Mother of the Church! Once more I consecrate myself to you 'in your maternal slavery of love'. *Totus tuus!* I am all yours! I consecrate to you the whole Church--everywhere and to the ends of the earth! I consecrate to you humanity; I consecrate to you all men and women, my brothers and sisters. All peoples and all nations. I consecrate to you Europe and all the continents. I consecrate to you Rome and Poland, united, through your servant, by a fresh bond of love. Mother, accept us! Mother, do not abandon us! Mother, be our guide!" (Farewell Address at Jasna Gora Shrine, 6 June 1979). †



## SCRIPTURAL CORNER

*\*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.*

(Continued from page 11) **Bishops as the Direct Successors**

that his authority in setting forth the true teachings of the Church came not from himself, but directly from the Apostles. Irenaeus was, in fact, the disciple of Saint Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, who, in turn, sat at the feet of the Saint John the Apostle himself. Saint Irenaeus wrote,

*These [heresies] were not taught you by the bishops who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance, and of his whole exterior; and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ, the words he had heard from their mouths. I can protest before God that if this holy bishop had heard of any error like yours, he would have immediately stopped his ears and cried out, according to his custom, "Good God! That I should be reserved to these times to hear such things!"*

The early bishops, who could recite their pedigrees to the twelve apostles themselves, asserted this authority to lay bear the heresies of their day and to continually realign the faithful with the true doctrine of the Church. Also, in the writings of these Apostolic Fathers, we already see the hierarchical and sacramental structure of the Catholic Church. For example, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, a colleague of Saint Polycarp who preceded the latter to martyrdom, and who also sat at the feet of the Apostle John, writes,

*Use one Eucharist; for the flesh of the Lord Jesus Christ is one and the cup is one, to unite us all in His blood. There is one altar, as there is one bishop, together with the body of the priesthood and the deacons my fellow servants, that whatever you do, you may do according to God. (Letter to the Philadelphians.)*

Ignatius further denounces heretics "who confess not that the Eucharist is the flesh of our Savior Jesus Christ, which flesh suffered for our sins and which in His loving-kindness the Father raised up." In his letter to the Smyrnaeans, he states "the sole Eucharist you should consider valid is one that is celebrated by the bishop himself, or by some person authorized by him." Ignatius also constantly commends the faithful to their bishop. In the same letter, he writes, "Wherever the bishop appears, there let the people be, even as wherever Christ Jesus is, there is the Catholic Church." Ignatius also exhorts,

*...let me urge on you the need for godly unanimity in everything you do. Let the bishop preside in the place of God, and his clergy in place of the Apostolic conclave, and let my special friends the deacons be entrusted with the service of Jesus Christ, who was with the Father from all eternity and in these last days has been made manifest.*

He goes on to say,

*In the same way as the Lord was wholly one with the Father, and never acted independently of Him, either in person or through the Apostles, so you yourselves must never act independently of your bishop and clergy. On no account persuade*

**Bishops as the Direct Successors** (Continued on page 15)



**Calling of the  
First Apostles**

**Domenico  
Ghirlandio  
(1481)**

(Continued from page 14) *Bishops as the Direct Successors*

*yourselves that it is right and proper to follow your own private judgment; have a single service of prayer which everyone attends; one united supplication, one mind, one hope, in love and innocent joyfulness, which is Jesus Christ, than whom nothing is better.* (Letter to the Magnesians.)

In the present era, when Christianity is splintered into a confusing tangle of sects, schisms, factions and cults, the guiding beacon of the true church is its apostolicity -- its spiritual *and* physical link through time to Christ Himself. The apostolic nature of the Church, is, in essence, a human chain of joined hands, spanning the past two millennia, and linking with Christ in the upper room where He delivered His commands and imparted His priestly powers to the first apostles. We should thank God daily that we are part of the blessed communion of the apostles and that we can partake daily of the unblemished deposit of faith which was handed on, like a torch, to each succeeding generation of bishops down to the present day. †



*Holy Bishop*

*Unknown Artist  
from Budapest  
(c. 1500)*

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**Fulton J. Sheen**

"The powerful are always under obligation to the weak. Advantage of any kind is not a personal possession but a trust. St. Paul said: 'I am obligated to both Greeks and barbarians; to the wise and the foolish alike' (Romans 1:14). In reality, of course, he owed the Greeks nothing - they had persecuted him; and the barbarians he had never seen. But Paul was conscious that God had conferred upon him great gifts and he felt bound to share these gifts with others who did not yet possess them." †

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The St. Thomas More Society of Orange County is an independent organization sponsored by lawyers and judges who are practicing members of the Roman Catholic Church.

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The legal profession is a high calling with corresponding responsibilities to society.

The principal objective of every lawyer is to promote and seek justice.

Catholic lawyers pursue truth in both their spiritual and professional lives.

The duty of a Catholic lawyer is to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, His Church and its teachings at all times despite the personal consequences.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose and objective of the Society is:

- ✘ To encourage its members to live a Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their daily lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- ✘ To promote and foster high ethical principles in the legal profession generally and, in particular, in the community of Catholic lawyers.
- ✘ To assist in the spiritual growth of its members.
- ✘ To encourage interfaith understanding and brotherhood.
- ✘ To sponsor the annual Red Mass for elected and appointed officials and members of the legal profession.
- ✘ To sponsor an annual retreat and any other activities that fulfill the mission of the society.

### **MEMBER COMMITMENTS**

Each member of the Society shall strive to:

- ✘ To live an exemplary Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their daily lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- ✘ To attend monthly meetings and provide personal support to the St. Thomas More Society.
- ✘ To attend and support the Red Mass. †



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\*\*\*\*\*

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