

Ad Veritatem

Volume 8 Issue 4

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

APRIL 2003

*Because many things
demand our attention,
More stressed that active
mortifications and set
times of prayer are needed
to keep the "heart afire"
with the love of God.*

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

APRIL MEETING:

NOON WEDNESDAY APRIL 16, 2003

SISTER THERESE

"THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING"

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 fourteen member Board of Directors of lawyers and judges and a mailing list for the monthly newsletter of over 970.

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, or
Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 or email to alanphar@firstam.com.
VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.stthomasmore.net

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St. Michael's Abbey

AD VERITATEM
EDITORS
ANNE LANPHAR
RONALD GABLE

APRIL **MEETING**

SISTER THERESE ***“THE MYSTERY OF SUFFERING”***

Sister Therese is part of the Benedictine Sisters of Saint Lucy's Priory, Glendora, California. She was professed over 50 years ago. Sister Therese is a teacher and has been the Director of Development at Saint Lucy's High School and the Director of Development at Saint Andrew's Abby. Sister Therese has a Bachelor's Degree in History and Master's Degree in Theology.

Sister Therese will be discussing the “Mystery of Suffering.”

WHEN: Noon
Wed. Apr. 16th

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, or Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 or alanphar@firstam.com. **EVERYONE IS WELCOME!** †

MARYWOOD CONFERENCE ON BUSINESS ETHICS & MORALITY

**Wednesday, May 14
at 8am—2pm**

FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE 21

HOLD THE DATE!

**JUNE 11, 2003
SPECIAL DINNER MEETING
WITH GUEST SPEAKER:
PROF. RONALD RYCHLAK
AUTHOR OF:
HITLER, THE WAR & THE POPE**

CALENDAR REMINDERS



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By Scott Hahn

FAITH OF OUR FATHERS: BAPTISM

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:5, "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Jesus was speaking about baptism, the effects of which are eradication of original sin, remission of all actual sins, and an infusion of sanctifying grace.

In spite of the scriptural evidence (Acts 2:14-40, 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 6:11; Col. 2:11-12; Gal. 3:27; Titus 3:5; 1 Peter 3:21), most Protestants, along with the Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Mormons, deny that baptism is necessary for salvation and that it has any sacramental power to take away sin or bestow divine grace. Let's look at what the earliest Christians believed and taught on this subject.

HERMAS

"Before a man bears the name of the Son of God he is [spiritually] dead, but when he receives the seal he lays aside his deadness and receives life. The seal then is the water; they descend into the water dead and they arise alive. And to them accordingly was this seal preached, and they made use of it that they might enter into the kingdom of God" (The Shepherd 9:16 [A.D. 96]).

"Regarding [baptism], we have the evidence of Scripture that Israel would refuse to accept the washing which confers the remission of sins, and would set up a substitution of their own instead . . . Here he is saying that after we have stepped down into the water burdened with sin and defilement, we come up out of it bearing fruit, with reverence in our hearts and the hope of Jesus in our souls" (ibid. 11:1-10).



**THE BAPTISM OF
CHRIST**

*Giovanni Bellini
(1502)*

THE EPISTLE OF BARNABAS

"We descend into the water full of sins and defilement, but come up bearing fruit in our heart, having the fear of God and trust in Jesus in our spirit" (11 [A.D. 138]).

EPISTOLA APOSTOLORUM

Just as in the Gospels, baptism is an indispensable source of forgiveness and salvation, under the condition of faith and good works:

"[Christ says] And I poured out upon them with My right hand the water of life and forgiveness and salvation from all evil, as I have done unto you and to them that believe in Me. But if any believes in Me and does not follow My commandments, although he has confessed My Name he shall have no profit from It" (27 [A.D. 140]).

THE STRUGGLE TO FORGIVENESS

ANNE LANPHAR, ESQ.

Forgiving someone who has hurt us is completely counter-intuitive to human beings. When we are harmed, we naturally react with anger and demand “justice” and revenge on the person who is responsible.

Christ has told us repeatedly through His Gospels to forgive those who trespass against, not to seek revenge, and to even *love* our enemies! I had listened to these mandates over the years from the Gospels at Mass and the homilies from the pulpit. I had heard it so often that it seemed to go in one ear and out the other. It seems to be a nice idea – for everyone else. Did Christ really mean this? He could not be really serious – not for someone who had deliberately hurt me!

It also seems to be our natural inclination to impose conditions on Christ’s admonition: I will forgive *if* the person asks for it; I will forgive the person *if* they rectify what they have done; I will forgive if they admit their error, I will forgive *if*....

Unfortunately, Christ did not impose any conditions on this mandate of forgiveness.

Once I realized Christ *really* meant these mandates AND He meant them to apply to me AND He did not condition this obligation, I had an interesting dilemma. Well, what if I don’t chose to do it? What would be the consequence? Quite simply, Christ has made this obligation of forgiving our enemies a condition to our own forgiveness: “...and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us...” Rather a serious consequence.

I have struggled over the years with forgiveness. The initial step on this path to Christ and to forgiving others was when I admitted that Christ *really* meant it and He *really* meant for me to forgive all those people who had hurt me, those people who are not even sorry, those people who do not even deserve forgiveness!

The next question was: **How?**

Forgiveness may be a simple word but it is an extraordinarily difficult concept and pure anguish to think about much less accomplishing. I struggled to figure out the process and the following is the path I found.

The first step is to make a personal commitment to follow Christ’s words and to *try*. I came to realize that I had to offer up to Christ all the pain and anger and hatred against the person who had harmed me. Only by seeking His help and letting go of these emotions in Him and with His help could the healing even start. When I did finally give Him this commitment, I did so in not so nice a way. I told Him I did not want to do it, the person did not deserve it, but that I loved Him more than I hated them and was willing to try – with His assistance. That was the start – and I mean -- only the start. I found that forgiveness was not a single event in time, unfortunately, it was a process --- a long process.

Although I did make this initial step, I would often sink into “reliving” the harm that was done to me – almost “refreshing” or “revisiting” the wrongs in my heart. The anger in me would renew itself together with the initial hatred and a deep desire for vengeance. I would often find myself reveling in these daydreams about the “wronges”



THE REPENTANT
PETER

El Greco
(1600)

(Continued from page 5) **Forgiveness**

done to me and how I would find vengeance— usually with brilliant words that drove home the error and injustice to the perpetrator. Gradually I came to realize that these “daydreams” kept the emotion of hatred alive in me and definitely forestalled any chances of reaching forgiveness on my part. And I also came to realize that these “daydreams” gradually were obsessing my mind and replayed themselves more and more often. The admonition from my Mother that “hatred hurts the person who harbors it, not the person who is hated” is true. My “enemy” was certainly not being harmed –I was! It gradually dawned on me that I was becoming hateful and obsessed by these thoughts of the harm done to me. It prevented any form of healing and, in fact, dug a deep hole in my soul and filled it with evil. As much as I hate to admit it, Mom was right. The more I allowed hatred in, the more I was harboring evil and hurting only myself. The idea of controlling hatred is as idiotic as believing that I could control Satan.



**THE RETURN OF
THE PRODIGAL SON**

Rembrandt
(1669)

Like a drunk or an addict, I finally hit bottom – sick to death of the evil in my heart – and so I reached out to Christ, asking His help and telling Him that I could not take it any more and begging Him to empty my heart of this hatred. That is all He needed – the cry for help. He was there. In a few moments, I felt my heart lighten and a sense of peace reigned. It was a great sense of relief.

But evil is persistent and habits are hard to break. Gradually the thoughts of the harm done to me revisited in my mind and I would sink back into the same processes of daydreaming and reliving the harm, dreaming of vengeance and wallowing in hatred. I started to realize that I could not allow this process to even start – I could not entertain evil and expect to control it. So I tried to be more aware of when the “daydreaming” would start and refused to entertain the thoughts – instead I would pray immediately and change what I was doing in order to distract myself.

And this was only just the beginning of the process! Reaching the state of forgiveness was still a distant hope.

Next, I came to understand that I had to pray for the person. I didn’t have to like him – just say a prayer every day for that person. Now, honestly, my heart wasn’t in it – it was more of a personal commitment than a task done with joy or love.

Amazingly, this process became ingrained in me and in time, I came to know that my soul was lighter and the depressing evils of hatred and vengeance were waning, gradually becoming mere memories.

And as time went on, the idea of fostering these “hate fests” in my mind seemed too much work and rather pointless. Like a child growing up, I left these “childish” actions left behind. It was too much work to wallow in such thoughts and the desire to do so gradually faded out. As I left behind the “things of a child,” I also realized that I much preferred the joy and love of praying and talking to Christ.

As the hatred gradually left me, vengeance became an abandoned thought and suddenly I realized that I loved Christ more than I hated anyone and with that thought, I was surprised to find that I had forgiven the person in my heart. Now I could actually pray that the person who had harmed me would come to find Christ because I knew that such prayers pleased Christ. The peace of forgiveness is worth the struggle because I found that the recipient of the gift of forgiveness was me! ☪

THE HOLY FATHER'S LENTEN MESSAGE

“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

On Thursday, February 6, the Holy See published the Holy Father's Message for Lent that he signed on January 7. The Holy Father pointed out that the three activities of Lent are prayer, fasting and concern for those in need. For his meditation this year, he took the phrase from the Acts of the Apostles (20,35): “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” The Holy Father summed up the connection between the new evangelization and the Gospel of charity: “For those who are ‘far-off,’ service to the needy can be a providential path leading to an encounter with Christ, since the Lord abundantly repays the good deeds done to one's neighbor (cf. Mt 25,40). It is my fervent hope that believers will find this Lent a favorable time for bearing witness to the Gospel of charity in every place, since the vocation to charity is the heart of all true evangelization.” The Holy Father also pointed to the need for divine charity to transform our social assistance. “The efforts of Christians to promote justice, their commitment in defense of the powerless, their humanitarian work in providing bread for the hungry and their care for the sick by responding to every emergency and need, draw their strength from that sole and inexhaustible treasury of love which is the complete gift of Jesus to the Father. Believers are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who, in perfect obedience to the will of the Father, emptied himself (cf. Phil 2,6 ff), and humbly gave himself to us in selfless and total love, even unto death on a cross.” Here is an official English translation of the Holy Father's Message.

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

1. Lent is a season of intense prayer, fasting and concern for those in need. It offers all Christians an opportunity to prepare for Easter by serious discernment about their lives, with particular attention to the word of God which enlightens the daily journey of all who believe.

“IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE” (ACTS 20, 35)

This year, as a guide for our Lenten meditation, I would offer a phrase taken from the Acts of the Apostles: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” (Acts 20,35) What we have here is not simply a moral exhortation, or a command which comes to us from without. The inclination to give is rooted in the depths of the human heart: every person is conscious of a desire to interact with others and everyone finds fulfillment in a free gift of self to others.

OUR GOAL MUST BE TO BUILD A CULTURE OF SOLIDARITY THAT REPLACES THE EMPHASIS ON GREED

2. Our age, regrettably, is particularly susceptible to the temptation toward selfishness which always lurks within the human heart. In society generally, and in the media, people are bombarded by messages which more or less openly exalt the ephemeral and the hedonistic. Concern for others is certainly shown whenever natural disasters, war and other emergencies strike, but in general it is difficult to build a culture of solidarity. The spirit of the world affects our inner propensity to give ourselves unselfishly to others and drives us to satisfy our own particular interests. The desire to possess ever more is encouraged. Surely it is natural and right that people, by using their own gifts and by their own labor, should work to obtain what they need to live, but an excessive Lenten Message (Continued on page 8)



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



**Reprinted from
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Romano, the official
newspaper of the
Holy See**

February 12, 2003

(Continued from page 7) **Lenten Message**

desire for possessions prevents human beings from being open to their Creator and to their brothers and sisters. The words of Paul to Timothy remain relevant in every age: "The love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs." (1 Tim 6, 10)

Exploitation of others, indifference towards the suffering of our brothers and sisters, and the violation of basic rules of morality are just a few fruits of the thirst for gain. Faced with the tragic situation of persistent poverty which afflicts so many people in our world, how can we fail to see that the quest for profit at any cost and the lack of effective, responsible concern for the common good have concentrated immense resources in the hands of a few while the rest of humanity suffers in poverty and neglect?

Appealing to believers and to all people of good will, I would like to reaffirm a principle which is self-evident yet often ignored: our goal should not be the benefit of a privileged few, but rather the improvement of the living conditions of all. Only on this foundation can we build that international order truly marked by justice and solidarity which is the hope of everyone.

**DRAW STRENGTH FROM INEXHAUSTIBLE TREASURY OF DIVINE LOVE,
THE GIFT OF JESUS TO THE FATHER**

3. "*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*" When believers respond to the inner impulse to give themselves to others without expecting anything in return, they experience a profound interior satisfaction.

The efforts of Christians to promote justice, their commitment in defense of the powerless, their humanitarian work in providing bread for the hungry and their care for the sick by responding to every emergency and need, draw their strength from that sole and inexhaustible treasury of love which is the complete gift of Jesus to the Father. Believers are called to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, who, in perfect obedience to the will of the Father, emptied himself (cf. Phil 2,6 ff.), and humbly gave himself to us in selfless and total love, even unto death on a cross. Calvary eloquently proclaims the message of the Blessed Trinity's love for human beings of all times and places.

St Augustine points out that only God, as the Supreme Good, is capable of overcoming the various forms of poverty present in our world. Mercy and love for one's neighbor must therefore be the fruit of a living relationship with God and have God as their constant point of reference, since it is in closeness to Christ that we find our joy (cf. *De Civitate Dei*, X, 6; CCL 39: 1351 ff).

LOVE OF GOD HAS TO INSPIRE AND TRANSFORM WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

4. The Son of God loved us first, while "we were yet sinners" (Rom 5,6), with an unconditional love which asks nothing in return. If this is so, how can we fail to see the season of Lent as a providential opportunity to make courageous decisions inspired by altruism and generosity? Lent offers us the practical and effective weapons of fasting and almsgiving as a means of combating an excessive attachment to money. Giving not only from our abundance, but sacrificing something more in order to give to the needy, fosters that self-denial which is essential to authentic Christian living. Strengthened by constant prayer, the baptized reveal the priority which they have given to God in their lives.

The love of God poured into our hearts ought to inspire and transform who we are and what we do. Christians must not think that they can seek the true good of their brothers and sisters without embodying the charity of Christ. Even in those cases where they might succeed in improving important aspects of social or political life, without charity every change would remain short-lived. The possibility of giving oneself to others is itself a gift which comes from the grace of God. As Saint Paul teaches: "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure." (Phil 2,13)

Lenten Message (Continued on page 9)



**ST. PAUL VISITS ST
PETER IN PRISON**

*Filippino Lippi
(1481)*

(Continued from page 8) **Lenten Message**

SENSE OF COMPASSION, GOSPEL OF CHARITY

5. To modern men and women, often dissatisfied with a shallow and ephemeral existence and in search of authentic happiness and love, Christ offers his own example and issues the invitation to follow him. He asks those who hear his voice to give their lives for others. This sacrifice is a source of self-fulfillment and joy, as is seen in the eloquent example of those men and women who, leaving all security behind, have not hesitated to risk their lives as missionaries in different parts of the world. It can also be seen in the response of those young people who, prompted by faith, have embraced a vocation to the priesthood or the religious life in order to serve God's plan of salvation. It is likewise the experience of the growing number of volunteers who readily devote themselves to helping the poor, the elderly, the sick and all those in need.

Recently, we have witnessed a praiseworthy outpouring of solidarity for the victims of floods in Europe, earthquakes in Latin America and Italy, epidemics in Africa, volcanic eruptions in the Philippines, as well as for other areas of the world scarred by hatred, violence and war.

In these situations, the communications media play a significant role by allowing us to identify with and offer ready help to the suffering and those in distress. At times it is not the Christian command of love, but rather an innate sense of compassion which motivates our efforts to assist others. Even so, anyone who helps those in need always enjoys God's favor. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that the disciple Tabitha was saved because she had done good to her neighbor (cf. 9,36 ff.). The centurion Cornelius obtained eternal life on account of his generosity (cf. *ibid.*, 10,2-31).

For those who are "far-off," service to the needy can be a providential path leading to an encounter with Christ, since the Lord abundantly repays the good deeds done to one's neighbor (cf. Mt 25,40).

It is my fervent hope that believers will find this Lent a favorable time for bearing witness to the Gospel of charity in every place, since the vocation to charity is the heart of all true evangelization. To this end I invoke the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church and pray that she will accompany us on our Lenten journey. With these sentiments I affectionately impart to all my blessing. ✠

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- ✠ Lieutenant Seth Wolcott & his family.
- ✠ US Air Force Pilot John Flynn
(son of Carol Flynn).
- ✠ All members of the US Armed Forces
and their families.
- ✠ Robyn Belz(serious illness).
- ✠ Fr Hugh Barbour's Father (serious illness).
- ✠ Terry & Julie N (special intention).
- ✠ Darren M (questioning the Faith).
- ✠ Georgia Frederick (serious illness)
- ✠ Fr. Matt Munoz (special intention).
- ✠ Ryan McEachon (special intention).
- ✠ Mary Erickson (personal intention).
- ✠ For employment for John Thompson.
- ✠ Selma Mann's family (2 medical conditions).
- ✠ Cindie Burnes, a young mother
recovering from chemotherapy.
- ✠ Michael Shonafelt (special intention).
- ✠ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
- ✠ Ron Gable (special intention). ✠

***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***

PRAYER PETITIONS



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

(Continued from page 4) ***Faith of our Fathers***

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR

This great apologist for the Catholic Faith is worth quoting more than once. He defended the Church's teachings against pagan attacks.

"Then they [catechumens] are brought by us to where there is water, and they are reborn in the same manner in which we were ourselves reborn. For in the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.' . . . That they may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again and has repented of his sins, the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe . . . But also in the Name of Jesus Christ Who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and in the Name of the Holy Spirit, Who through the prophets foretold all things about Jesus, he who is illuminated is washed" (First Apology 61 [ante A.D. 165]).



**ALTARPIECE
OF THE
CHURCH FATHERS:
ST. JEROME**

*Michael Pacher
(1483)*

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

This great defender of the Faith refuted the prominent heresy of his day, Gnosticism (an early version of today's New Age Movement). He was a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was himself a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. Irenaeus speaks of how Polycarp taught him the truths of the Faith and how he often heard Polycarp reminisce about his personal encounters with St. John.

"Before all else the Faith insistently invites us to remember that we have received baptism for the remission of sins in the Name of God the Father and in the Name of Jesus Christ, Son of God incarnate, dead and risen, and in the Holy Spirit of God, that baptism is the seal of eternal life, the new birth in God, so that we are no longer sons of mortal men, but of God, eternal and indestructible" (Demonstration of the Apostolic Teaching 3 [A.D. 175]).

"The baptism which makes us be born again passes through these three articles of faith (in the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), and permits us to be reborn to God the Father through His Son and in the Holy Spirit" (ibid. 7 [A.D.175]).

ST. THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH

Theophilus, like Ignatius, was bishop of Antioch in Syria. He wrote a treatise to a pagan friend explaining Christianity and answering his friend's objections. Interestingly, he is the first Christian writer to use the word "trinity" (Greek: triados, the cognate of the Latin, Trinitas) in reference to the mystery of three Persons in one God. Here he discusses the divine life which is at the heart of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration:

"Those three days of creation before the lights in the heavens are an image

Faith of our Fathers (Continued on page 11)

(Continued from page 10) ***Faith of our Fathers***

of the Trinity, of God, of His Word, and His Wisdom (i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). God blessed the creatures of the water, so that this might be a sign that men would receive penance and remission of sins through water and the bath of rebirth, as many, that is, as came to the truth and were reborn, and received blessing from God" (Ad Autolycum 2:15 [A.D. 181]).

TERTULLIAN

While he was still a Catholic, during the time of persecutions before the legalization of Christianity in the Roman Empire, Tertullian wrote the only complete work on a sacrament of baptism. This treatise, *On Baptism*, is a powerful defense of baptismal regeneration. Specifically, he refutes those who claim that faith in Christ alone (apart from the sacrament of baptism) is sufficient for the forgiveness of sins and spiritual rebirth described by Christ in John 3:3-5:

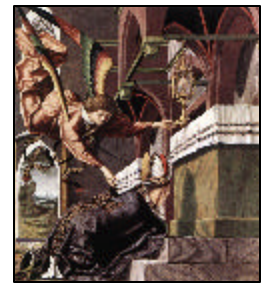
"A treatise on our sacrament of water, by which the sins of our earlier blindness are washed away and we are released for eternal life will not be superfluous. . . [t]aking away death by the washing away of sins. The guilt being removed, the penalty, of course, is also removed. . . . Baptism itself is a corporal act by which we are plunged into the water, while its effect is spiritual, in that we are freed from our sins" (On Baptism 1:1; 5:6; 7:2 [circa A.D.198]).

"Good enough, but faith means faith in all Christ did and said to do, so it includes being baptized. . . . And so they say, 'Baptism is not necessary to them to whom faith is sufficient, for after all, Abraham pleased God by no sacrament of water, but of faith.' But in all cases it is the later precedent that proves the point. Grant, for the sake of argument, that in days gone by, there was salvation by means of bare faith, before the Passion and Resurrection of the Lord. But now that faith has been enlarged, and has become a faith which believes in His Nativity, Passion, and Resurrection, there has been an amplification added to the faith; this is the sealing act of baptism. . . . For the law of baptism has been imposed, and the formula prescribed:

'Go,' He said 'and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' The comparison of this law with that definition, 'Unless a man be born again of water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven,' has tied faith to the necessity of baptism" (Ibid. 13 [A.D. 198]).

ST. CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

"When we are baptized we are enlightened. Being enlightened, we are adopted as sons. Adopted as sons, we are made perfect. Made perfect, we become immortal. 'I say,' God declares, 'you are gods and sons all of the Most High' (Psalm 81:6). This work is variously called grace, illumination, perfection, and washing. It is a washing by which we are cleansed of sins; a gift of grace by which the punishments due our sins are remitted; an illumination by which we behold that holy light of salvation - that is, by which we see God clearly; and we call that perfection



**ALTARPIECE
OF THE
CHURCH FATHERS:
VISION OF
ST SIGISBERT**

*Michael Pacher
(1483)*

(Continued from page 11) ***Faith of our Fathers***

which leaves nothing lacking. Indeed, if a man knows God, what more does he need? Certainly, it were out of place to call that which is not complete a true gift of God's grace. Because God is perfect the gifts he bestows are perfect" (The Instructor of Children 1:6, 26:1 [ante A.D. 202]).

ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

"As water extinguishes fire, so almsgiving quenches sin.' Here also is shown and proved, that as in the bath of saving water the fire of hell is extinguished, so by almsgiving and works of righteousness the flame of sins is subdued. And because in baptism the remission of sins is granted once only, constant and ceaseless labor, following the likeness of baptism, once again bestows the mercy of God. . . ." (On Works and Alms 2 [A.D. 254]).

"In the baptism of water is received the remission of sins, in the baptism of blood, the reward of virtues," (To Fortunatus preface [A.D. 257]).

ST. EPHRAIM THE SYRIAN

Outside the Roman Empire, coming from a background that was neither Latin nor Greek, the teachings of this Syrian Father, St. Ephraim, are proof that the Catholic Faith is not some Greco-Roman perversion of the New Testament Church. Here is a passage from one of his hymns for use in liturgical worship, a hymn still used today by Syrian Catholics. It is addressed to the newly baptized:

"Your garments glisten as snow; and fair is your shining in the likeness of angels. . . . Woe in paradise did Adam receive, but you have received glory this day. . . . The good things of heaven you have received; beware of the devil lest he deceive you. . . . The evil one made war and deceived Adam's house; through your baptism, behold! he is overcome today. . . . Glory to them that are robed in the birth that is from the water; let them rejoice and be blessed!" (Hymn for the Feast of the Epiphany: of the Baptized 12 [A.D. 370]).

ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

"If any man does not receive baptism, he does not have salvation. The only exception is the martyrs, who, even without water will receive baptism, for the Savior calls martyrdom a baptism (cf., Mark 10:38). . . . Bearing your sins, you go down into the water; but the calling down of grace seals your soul and does not permit that you afterwards be swallowed up by the fearsome dragon. You go down dead in your sins, and you come up made alive in righteousness" (Catechetical Lectures 3:10,12 [circa A.D. 350]).

ST. BASIL THE GREAT

"For prisoners, baptism is ransom, forgiveness of debts, death of sin, regeneration of the soul, a resplendent garment, an unbreakable seal, a chariot to heaven, a protector royal, a gift of adoption" (Sermons on Moral and Practical Subjects: On Baptism 13:5 [ante A.D. 379]).



**THE MASS OF
ST. BASIL**

Pierre Subleyras
(1743)

(Continued from page 12) ***Faith of our Fathers***

ST. AMBROSE OF MILAN

"The Lord was baptized, not to be cleansed himself but to cleanse the waters, so that those waters, cleansed by the Flesh of Christ which knew no sin, might have the power of baptism. Whoever comes, therefore, to the washing of Christ lays aside his sins" (Commentary on the Gospel of Luke 2:83 [circa A.D. 389]).

ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

"How then shall we be able to give an account of the unseen birth by baptism, which is far more exalted than these?... Even angels stand in awe while that birth takes place . . . the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work it all. Let us then believe the declaration of God, for that is more trustworthy than actual seeing. The sight often is in error, but God's Word cannot fail; let us then believe it. . . . What then does it say? That what happens is a birth. . . . If any inquire, 'Why is water needed?' let us ask in return, 'Why did God use earth to form man?'. . . Do not be over-curious. That the need of water is absolute and indispensable you may learn in this way" (Homily 25 on John 2 [A.D. 391]).

ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

Baptism is not merely an external sign of faith already possessed by the one to be baptized; it is the power of God cleansing the soul of the sinner, even in the case of infants:

"The cleansing would not at all be attributed to a passing and corruptible element, unless the word were added to it. This word possesses such power that through the medium of him who in faith presents, blesses, and pours it, even a tiny infant is cleansed, although he is as yet unable to believe with the heart unto justice, and to make profession with the mouth for salvation" (Commentaries on St. John 80:3 [A.D. 411]).

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Additional texts from the Church Fathers on baptismal regeneration:

St. Ignatius of Antioch: Epistle to the Smyrnaeans 7 (A.D. 117); St. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho 14 (ante A.D. 165); Didymus the Blind: On the Trinity 2:12 (A.D. 391); St. Cyril of Jerusalem: Catechetical Lectures 2:4; Protocatechesis 16 (A.D. 350); St. John Chrysostom: Homilies on John 10:3, 25:2 (A.D. 391); Homilies on Hebrews 5:3, 19:2-3 (A.D. 403); St. Ambrose of Milan: On the Mysteries 1-7 (A.D. 390); St. Pacian of Barcelona: Sermon on Baptism (ante A.D. 392); St. Jerome: Letter 69 5-7 (A.D. 397); Dialogue Against the Pelagians 3:1 (A.D. 413); St. Augustine of Hippo: Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Charity 64 (A.D. 421); On Marriage and Concupiscence 1:33-38 (A.D. 419); On Adulterous Spouses 2:16 (A.D. 420); On the City of God 20:6 (A.D. 426); On Forgiveness of Sins and Baptism 1:9, 24; 2:27 (A.D. 412); On Baptism 1:12 (A.D. 400); Sermon on the Creed 1:7 214 (A.D. 418?); On the Gospel of John 6:7, 15-16 (A.D. 408); Pope St. Leo the Great: Letter 16 2-7 (A.D. 447).

(Catholic teaching on the sacrament of baptism is explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church #1213-1284.) ✚



**ST. AMBROSE
CONVERTING
THEODOSIUS**

*Pierre Subleyras
(1745)*

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*

*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"



WHAT IS EASTER?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

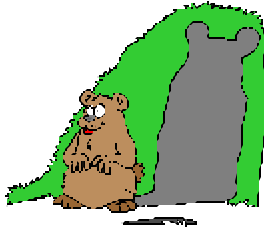
The third blonde smiles confidently and looks St. Peter in the eyes, "I know what Easter is."

"Oh?" says St. Peter, incredulously.

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

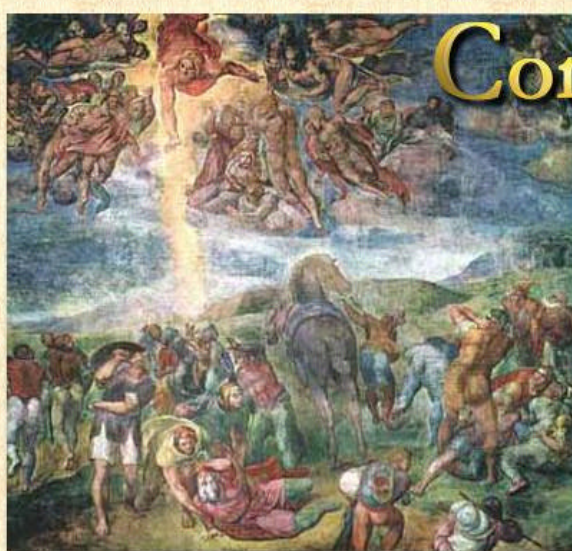
St. Peter smiles broadly with delight.

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



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**CONVERSION IS THE PATH
TO RENEWAL**

Conversio -- Our Mission in Brief

Conversio is a new Catholic association, dedicated to the full implementation of Vatican II, and to the belief that the key to the Church's renewal is conversion, i.e., the removal of all within us that obscures Christ.

Dialogue within the Church, and with other denominations, religions, and even unbelievers of good will, approached with fidelity to the teachings of the Church, and with the genuine humility inspired by the gift God has made of Himself on the Cross, is one of the chief means chosen by the Holy Spirit to facilitate this conversion, of which the Church remains always in need.

FLYING SAINTS

MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

If the accounts are accurate, over 200 canonized saints have experienced the “gift” of levitation. The accounts describe the unaided lifting in the air of the body, in defiance of the laws of gravity, usually during ecstasies and visions. This phenomenon occurred with such frequency in life of St. Teresa of Avila that she viewed it as an embarrassing annoyance. When she would perceive herself leaving the ground, she would beseech her fellow nuns to sit on her to hold her down. Even more astounding are the stories of St. Joseph of Cupertino, who took to flight hundreds of times, once in the presence of Pope Urban VIII. His penchant for flight earned St. Joseph of Cupertino the title of patron saint of aviators.

Many have dismissed such stories as the stuff of fanciful legend, attributable solely to pious hagiography. The skeptics cite Newton as the definitive authority for dismissing the phenomenon of levitation, whether practiced by the Indian fakir, street magician, or Catholic saint.

If modern science looks askance on any account of levitation, it is correct to do so. The unaided levitation of the human body defies the laws of physics, from which no physical body is exempt. As people of faith, we would do well to incorporate a healthy dose of skepticism, born of a proper understanding of Newton’s laws of gravity, into our discernment of the authenticity of such extraordinary phenomena as levitation.

At the same time, however, our faith allows us to look beyond the quantifiable, material realm in which the scientific method is inextricably mired. Our faith tells us that we are more than our bodies, and that our essence is spiritual, not corporeal. This reality serves as the crux of a proper understanding of the phenomenon of “flying saints.”

Human beings are a curious union of two seemingly incompatible principles: matter and spirit. Half of us is subject to the laws of physics, but the other half has no use for such laws. In our fallen state, these two components of our nature are embraced in a very strange struggle, which manifests itself in, among other things, a universal impatience with the limitations of time and space.

Who among us has not at some time harbored an intense desire to break the bonds of gravity and take to flight like a bird? This desire is rooted in our souls, which are not meant to be earthbound. The same desire has very practical application -- it is the human desire to break the bonds of gravity that has given rise to the aerospace industry and the advances in space travel.

At present, then, we need hulking machines and Bernoulli's Principle to lift us off the ground. But there will be a time when the union of our souls and bodies will be harmonized in the same way God intended for us before the fall. After we have died, and our bodies have been reunited to our souls in the General Resurrection, we will not need airplanes or rockets to fly. In fact, no physical law will hold sway over us.

The full impact of the reality of the “spiritualized body” after the resurrection is

TRUTH OR MYTH?



POPE URBAN VIII

*Gian Lorenzo Bernini
(1632)*

(Continued from page 15) *Flying Saints*

largely a mystery that will only be fully plumbed at the end of time. Nevertheless, both accounts of Christ's resurrection and logical conclusions about the principles of immaterial reality allow us to confidently conclude that the resurrected body will have the following qualities:



**THREE DOMINICAN
SAINTS**

*Giovanni Battista
Piazzetta*

(1738)

- ♦ **Immortality:** The body will be subject to the soul, not vice versa. Accordingly, the body will no longer be subject to death, decay, or the ravages of age.
- ♦ **Impassability:** The body will not be subject to suffering.
- ♦ **Subtlety:** The body will not be subject to other material objects. As an example, the body will be able to pass through the walls.
- ♦ **Agility:** The body will not be subject to the limits of space and time and will be able to pass immediately from point A to point B, not at the speed of light which is fast enough, but instantaneously.
- ♦ **Integrity:** The body will be complete, perfect, and, consequently, beautiful.

This brings us back to the phenomenon of flying saints. The saints earned their canonical status by living lives of exemplary holiness. Such holiness, in many instances, is so intense, that in some, the powers of the soul periodically overwhelm the body and result in a temporary suspension of laws of physics. When such extraordinary occurrences take place, we are provided a rare glimpse into the qualities of the resurrected body. This is what occurs when saints levitate. Their bodies are so transfigured by grace, that they experience a foretaste of bodily agility and subtlety, qualities that will be fully enjoyed only after the resurrection.

If the idea of flying saints appeals more to our piety than to our common sense, it is only because we are too easily distracted by ordinariness of the material world in which we carry out our daily existence. The reality that we too easily overlook is that each of us is possessed of a spiritual nature that transcends physical laws and exceeds in its grandeur the entirety of the physical universe.

Saintly levitation therefore reminds us of the spiritual dimension in our lives. It is a sign of contradiction to a world that denies the transcendent. Most importantly, the phenomenon serves as a reminder of our inheritance, the inheritance of the children of God who one day will possess in perfect fullness the glory of the Risen Lord. ✚

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CHRIST'S MERCY

Mark that moment well (Jesus looking at the good thief from the cross), when Jesus Christ was hanging at the high point of all history, when the redemption of the entire human race was being gathered into one supreme act of crucifixion, when Christ was twisting under the torment of His own death agony; yet did He find time to fix His divine attention on one man, and to provide for one man's happiness.

For on that day when neither Herod, nor his entire court could make him speak, nor all the power of Jerusalem, could make Him step down from that cross, He turns to a single quivering life beside Him, speaks and saves a thief.

If Christ could give so much attention and care to one lonely criminal, would it not be good to remind ourselves that our own individual happiness means just as much to Him?

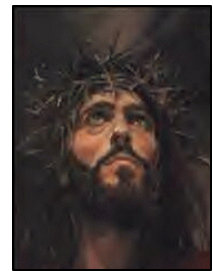
Would it not be a good idea to remind ourselves that we are still God's own dear individual children?

For this is the magnificent intimacy of Christianity – it is the intimacy of God stepping down in the broad field of life to touch one blade of grass. It is the intimacy of the Divine Shepherd who leaves the 99 wounds of His suffering on the cross, to go out and heal our 1.

*From Bishop Norman Macfarland's presentation entitled "The Hound of Heaven"
given to the Society in March 2002 †*



**THOUGHT
FOR
THE
DAY**



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"Dante in his description of hell said that when he first entered it, he found some spirits that were neither rebellious nor faithful, but existed solely for themselves. They were 'hateful, distasteful to God and to His enemies.' When these indifferent souls steal, they do not restore; when they have moral collapse, disgusting to the moral sense, they do not repent, but creep back into an old respectability; they judge themselves by the accepted standards of the group in which they move; social refinement is regarded as the flower and the aroma of virtue; secular conventions are given the force of Divine commands; and finally, they may call themselves stupid, but never sinful." †

MORE ON KEEPING THE FAITH IN THE FACE OF TERROR

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



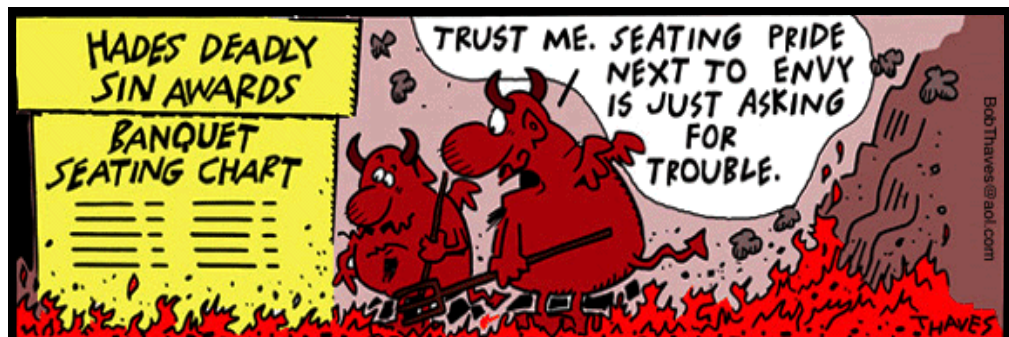
Reason tells us that the enduring of a temporary pain is worthwhile if by it a greater good is gained thereof; such is the case with certain medical treatments (such as the surgical procedures in More's own day) that a reasonable man will willingly undergo. Should not, then, reason building on the foundation of faith enjoin us to accept a painful death in order to attain the eternal joys of heaven and escape the unending pains of hell?

As to the terrible physical pains that can come with martyrdom, More now addresses the question of whether it is better to placate one's persecutors by exteriorly pretending to renounce the faith while interiorly continuing to adhere to it, and thereby escape the risk of faltering during torture and dying thereupon in apostasy. More finds such reasoning utterly unsound, comparing it to an unstable three-legged stool that collapses as soon as anyone attempts to sit upon it. In this analogy the three legs symbolize obsessive fear, false faith, and false hope. To begin with, it is absurd to think that the profession of one's faith in the face of persecution is a risky proposition, as if God would leave a person unaided and fail to grant him the grace to repent abandoning him summarily to damnation, if he faltered while suffering for Him. Furthermore, those who deny their faith exteriorly have a false faith, no matter what they may claim to profess interiorly. Finally, it is nothing less than a presumptuous and false hope to assume that if we deny Christ for the present in order to satisfy our persecutors, we can count on the grace of reconciliation with God when the threat of persecution has passed. Nor can we count upon suffering an easier death thereafter, for natural death can be just as painful, if not more so, in its duration and intensity than violent death.

The horrible end of those who renounce their faith to escape martyrdom becomes all the more evident when it is remembered that the pains of those who die in apostasy are but the prelude to the endless torments they will suffer in hell. Yet few realize that hell is actually a manifestation of God's mercy to us—a means for directing your steps here on earth toward heaven:

"But surely God in that thing wherein he may seem most rigorous is very merciful to us, and that is (which many men would little ween) in that he provided hell. For I suppose very surely, Cousin, that many a man and woman too, of whom there now sit some, and more shall hereafter sit full gloriously crowned in heaven, had they not first been afraid of hell, would toward heaven never have set foot forward."

James Monti The King's Good Servant But God's First p. 351-2 †



JOHN 20: 21-22

²¹Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, ²²"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

The Church has always understood—and has in fact defined—that Jesus Christ here conferred on the Apostles authority to forgive sins, a power which is exercised in the sacrament of Penance. *"The Lord then especially instituted the sacrament of Penance when, after being risen from the dead, he breathed upon his disciples and said: "Receive the Holy Spirit..." The consensus of all the Fathers has always acknowledged that by this action so sublime and words so clear the power of forgiving and retaining sins was given to the Apostles and their lawful successors for reconciling the faithful who have fallen after Baptism"* (Council of Trent, *De Paenitentia*, chap. 1).

The sacrament of Penance is the most sublime expression of God's love and mercy towards men, described so vividly in Jesus' Parable of the prodigal son (cf. Lk 15:11-32). The Lord always awaits us, with his arms wide open, waiting for us to repent—and then he will forgive us and restore us to the dignity of being his sons. ✠

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.*



FROM A FEDERAL PRISON WARDEN WHO WITNESSED A BISHOP MINISTER TO INMATES*

He stood barely five feet tall and was slight of stature, very quiet, and humble. When as part of his tour he asked to visit the segregation unit at the Miami Federal Metropolitan Correctional Center in 1988, I hesitated. After nearly twenty years in prison work I knew that segregation units could be dangerous, loud, and often depressing places. This was where we placed those who couldn't or wouldn't, behave in the general inmate population. Here were the predators, the malcontents, those who threatened authority, as well as those...who were the victims...unwilling or unable to live with other inmates. Such units are usually terribly noisy, and the air is often filled with threats, cursing, and, at times, crying.

Augustin Roma, the auxiliary bishop of Miami, was at the center fulfilling his pastoral duties. As warden I was responsible for his safety and would never forgive myself if he were embarrassed, abused, or hurt. It would be better, I tried to explain to him, if he bypassed the unit. He looked up at me with gentle dark eyes and pleaded that he must tour the unit, for there were those most in need of God's care.

As we entered the unit, it was more raucous than usual, and I was concerned that the bishop would become a target of vulgar verbal abuse. Unfazed by the noise, he went to the first cell. He visited there briefly with the inmates, blessed them, and moved on. As he moved down-range, the unit became increasingly silent. I followed him and saw inmates I knew to be violent street thugs with tears in their eyes, kneeling, blessing themselves, and asking for his prayers. As we left, the unit was as silent as a tomb. The bishop's face was radiant as he smiled and thanked me. I thanked him, for I had been a witness to God's work. ✠

*To volunteer for prison ministry, contact Sister Anne Joseph (714) 547-7082
or visit the Diocesan website at www.rcbo.org/services/detention.htm*



SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER



*** Responsibility,
Rehabilitation, &
Restoration:
A Catholic Perspective on
Crime & Criminal Justice
(A Statement of the Catholic
Bishops of the U. S.)
December 2000, Page 38**

Coming Next May 14th - The Inaugural
Marywood Conference
on Business Ethics and Morality



Michael Novak noted author of *Business as a Calling*, lecturer and U.S. Ambassador will be the keynote speaker at the first **Marywood Conference on Business Ethics and Morality**, a gathering of Orange County business and community leaders who will examine issues of business ethics and morality and the role of Catholic schools in forming our future leaders and their mentors on **May 14, 2003, from 8AM to 2PM.**

Reservations for tickets to what will surely be a sellout event at Marywood can be made by calling Pat Jackson at The Diocese of Orange (714) 282-3020. Individual **tickets** are \$100. each and are **tax deductible**. Business firms, organizations and parishes are encouraged to **reserve tables** of ten at \$1,000.

Proceeds from this event will go to the URBAN SCHOOL ASSISTANCE PROJECT and benefit financially needy schools and kids within the Diocese.

Appearing on the program with Mr. Novak will be:

- **Fr. Robert J. Spitzer S.J. PhD** President of Gonzaga University, National Chaplain for Legatus and author of *Spirit of Leadership* and *Ethical Leadership at the Competitive Edge*.
- **Mr. Lance Izumi J.D.** Director at the Pacific Research Institute and author of studies on school choice and the achievements of Catholic Schools in urban school communities.
- **Dr. George Saint-Laurent**, Professor Emeritus of Comparative Religion at CSU Fullerton

And ...

Bishop Tod D. Brown will be presenting a special award for **EXEMPLARY ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN BUSINESS** to Mr. Carl Karcher and Mr. Peter Muth.

GET THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR and Make Reservations NOW!

May 14, 2003

8AM Hospitality, 9:15 Program, Noon Luncheon, Mr. Novak speaks

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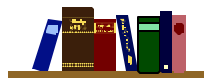
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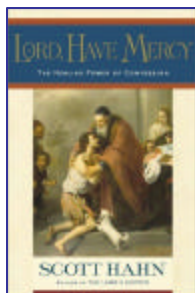
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LORD, HAVE MERCY THE HEALING POWER OF CONFESSION

BY SCOTT HAHN

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Jesus told his first clergy, "If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." In *Lord, Have Mercy*, Scott Hahn explores the sacrament of reconciliation and shows why it is the key to spiritual growth, particularly in these times of intense anxiety and uncertainty.

Drawing on the history of ancient Israel, the Gospels, the writings of the early Church, and the lives of the saints, Hahn reveals the living, scriptural heart of the Church's teachings on penance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. It is a story that begins with the sin of Adam and Eve, continues in the biographies of Moses, King David, and the Apostle Peter, and reverberates in the lives of believers today. Hahn presents the Catholic and biblical perspective on sin and mercy, elucidating in clear, easily understood language the true import of Jesus' simple, yet profound promise—"I am the door; if anyone enters by Me, he will be saved (John 10:9).

Like Hahn's earlier books, *Lord, Have Mercy* offers thoughtful, authoritative insights into controversial issues and disputed doctrines in a manner that will enlighten lay readers yet is thorough enough for scholars to appreciate. More than just a Bible study, it is a guide for the perplexed, providing practical advice and inspiration that will help readers come to a deeper knowledge of themselves and of Jesus through the sacrament of penance.

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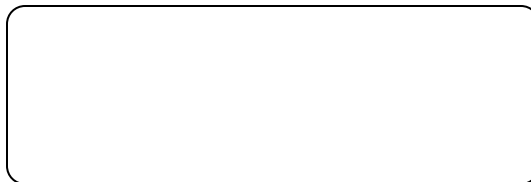
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