

Ad Veritatem

Volume 9 Issue 2

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

FEBRUARY 2004

St. Thomas More pointed out that pride that has been allowed to develop "carries with it a blindness almost incurable."

Thomas More:
Portrait of Courage
By Gerard Wegemer

FEBRUARY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 18, 2004 NOON

**PROFESSOR JAMES GORDLEY,
U.C. BERKELEY SCHOOL OF LAW**

"CATHOLICISM & THE ORIGINS OF MODERN LAW"

DETAILS ON PAGE 3



"Ad Veritatem" is Latin for "Toward the truth."



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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FEBRUARY **MEETING**

PROFESSOR JAMES GORDLEY ***“CATHOLICISM AND THE ORIGINS OF MODERN LAW”***

WHEN:**NOON****Wed. Feb. 18th****WHERE:****First American
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CALL (714) 800-3000****COST:****\$10 for lunch**

Professor James Gordley was born in New York City in 1946. In 1967, he earned a bachelor of arts degree in history and philosophy from the University of Chicago with Special Honors in History. In 1968, he received his MBA from UC making the Dean's List. He graduated magna cum laude in 1970 from Harvard Law School serving as note editor for the Law Review. Gordley has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Fulbright Fellow, a Senior NATO Fellow and a Fellow of the Deutschforschungsgemeinschaft and has been a visiting professor at numerous European universities. He is the author of several books, including *Gratian, The Treatise on Laws with the Ordinary Gloss* (with Augustine Thompson); *The Philosophical Origins of Modern Contract Doctrine*; and many more. Professor Gordley has served on numerous boards including the American Society of Comparative Law, the St. Thomas More and Jacques Maritain Institute as well being a consultant for the Louisiana Board of Regents. He and his wife Barbara have 2 children, Catherine (20) and James (17).

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!** †

CALLED TO FAITHFULNESS

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DANIEL'S INN CONFERENCE

FEB. 21 2004 *SEE PAGE 10* †

FIRST THURSDAY MASS

BUSCH LAW PRIVATE CHAPEL**FATHER JOHN HILTZ****FREE LUNCH PROVIDED.****2532 DUPONT AVE, IRVINE****TIME: NOON****RSVP NOT REQUIRED*****EVERYONE IS WELCOME!* †**

CALENDAR REMINDERS



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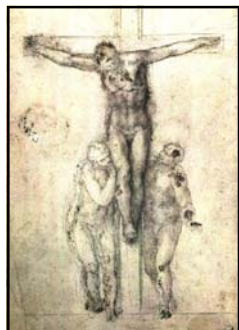
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From the Library
Life of Christ

DID CHRIST KNOW HOW HE WAS GOING TO DIE?

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



CRUCIFIXION
Michelangelo
(1556)

QUESTION: *Did Jesus know in advance what was going to happen to Him or could He only predict in the same way anyone else could: by making a good guess based on how things were going?*

ANSWER: When Our Lord said, “*I am the Truth*,” He meant it! It is the constant teaching of the Church that Our Lord, as both God and man, had the fullness of knowledge both of God and of created things.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC 471-478) teaches quite clearly that, even as Our Lord had the natural knowledge of a man, which comes from the experience of the senses (CCC 472) and is, by its nature, limited, He also had the special knowledge of everything that pertained to His mission as the Savior (CCC 474), and the immediate knowledge of His Father (CCC 473).

Since He is the Savior of all men individually as well as collectively, He knew each one of us individually, and since there is nothing in the life of a person which does not have a bearing on his or her salvation, it is hard to think of anything about human activity and history He did not know during His life and His sufferings (CCC 478).

Since the immediate knowledge of God means “*without any medium*,” Christ knew God as the blessed in heaven do, as He is in Himself, not by some image or created vehicle.

This is true of Christ from the first moment of His conception in the womb of the Blessed Mother through His abandonment on the Cross.

In the encyclical letter *Mystici Corporis*, Pope Pius XII taught this plainly. And Pope John Paul II used the text that seems the most difficult to reconcile with this teaching to boldly reaffirm it. When giving his catechesis at the Wednesday audience of November 30, 1988, our Holy Father explained that Our Lord's words on the Cross, “*My God, My God, why have you abandoned Me?*” meant that even though Our Lord's emotional life and lower reason were stripped of all consolation, still, “*at the height of His being, He had the clear vision of God.*”

Thus, it is grave error to teach that Christ was ignorant of His mission, or that He only understood it after His glorification. There are many different ways to explain and to prove this teaching in Catholic Tradition, but the teaching is clear. The argument that “*no modern theologians or Scripture scholars*” hold it, is a very untheological and worldly one. The answer is that no Fathers or Doctors of the Church, no saints, popes, or general councils teach anything else! Your teacher should actually learn Catholic theology before trying to make a living at “*teaching*” it, and in the process teaching error to young Christians, who need to know Who Christ really is. ✚

DEFENDING CHRIST'S DIVINITY: A REFUTATION OF *THE DA VINCI CODE*

BY MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

One of the most powerful scenes in the history of the Catholic Church is the convening of the great ecumenical council of Nicea on June 19, 325 AD. On that date, the Roman Emperor Constantine, the most powerful political leader the world had seen to date, opened a great meeting of bishops summoned from all corners of the known world to resolve a bitter conflict that threatened to tear the Church in two. On one side were the followers of a new, intellectually sophisticated, and increasingly popular movement begun by a Libyan-born priest named Arius. Arius said that, if Christ were “*begotten*” by the Father, He could not be equal to the Father, and therefore could not be God. On the other side of the conflict were those who held to the ancient doctrine handed forward from the Church’s inception: that Christ and the Father are one and that Christ, therefore, is divine.

Eyewitness accounts of the opening day of the Nicene Council paint a vivid picture of a Church in transition. They describe the 51-year-old emperor, clothed in purple and gold robes and topped with a silver crown crusted with diamonds, making his way down the Council hall. They tell of an astonishing assemblage of some 300 bishops summoned from all parts of the known world, many crippled, scared and maimed from the persecutions of Galerius and Diocletian. The Church was at crossroads. Gone, but not far from memory, were the days of the underground Church of the persecution. By 325, it was clear that a new epoch was underway, where the Church would enjoy the official sanction of Rome and assume the inevitable institutional structures necessary for its continued growth and viability.

After six weeks of sometimes rancorous debate, the Church leaders formalized the official position on Arianism. Only a fragment of the 300 assembled bishops sided with Arias. The remainder affirmed the doctrine handed down from the Apostles themselves: Christ is the Word of God, eternally begotten of, and equal to, the Father. To this day, the product of the Nicean Council echoes forth from the portals of every Catholic Church at every Sunday Mass – Jesus Christ is not mere man, he is “*God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father.*”

If the Nicene Creed provided the definitive response to the questions posed by Arianism, it did not end the controversy. Arianism continued to plague the Church well after the Council’s close, and persists, in various forms, to this day. Most recently, the controversy has been renewed by the author Dan Brown in his widely acclaimed fictional work *The Da Vinci Code*. Among a number of other controversial theories, Brown suggests that Arianism, not the Nicene Creed, more accurately represents the beliefs of early Christianity and that the divinity of Christ is a fourth century invention of men foisted on the Christian world by a power-hungry emperor.



TRANSFIGURATION
(DETAIL)

Sanzio Raffaello
(1518-20)

“Among a number of other controversial theories, Brown suggests that Arianism, not the Nicene Creed, more accurately represents the beliefs of early Christianity and that the divinity of Christ is a fourth century invention of men foisted on the Christian world by a power-hungry emperor.”

Defending Christ's Divinity (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) *Defending Christ's Divinity*

That Brown's account has not been dismissed out-of-hand as mere fodder for a fictional thriller is remarkable. The pre-Nicean understanding of Christ's divinity is an open record, not subject to serious debate. By 325, the Church's Christology had been repeatedly tried and solidified in a crucible of doctrinal controversy that had tested the resilience and resolve of the young faith over the course of some three hundred years.

Indeed, the earliest expressions of that pre-Nicean Christology come from the New Testament itself. In the Gospel accounts, Christ claimed to be God. He said, "*Before Abraham was, I Am*" -- in Greek, *ego eimi*, the same usage used in the Septuagint's account of Yahweh's self-disclosure to Moses, a name no Jew dared speak because it is God's private name. (Jn 8:58.) He also claimed to forgive sins; who, the scribes questioned, can forgive a wrong, but the one who is wronged -- God, the One offended in every sin? (Lk:7:48; Mt 9:2-8.)

The Gospel of John, written in the First Century, places Christ's divinity as its lynchpin. The theme is set up in the Gospel's preamble, where Christ is the defined as the "*Word*" of God, identical to God the Father: "*In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God and the Word was God ... Through him all things came into being, not one thing came into being except through him ... and the Word was made flesh, he lived among us ...*" (Jn 1:1, 14.) John's Gospel account makes clear that Christ's pronouncement of his own divinity was the very reason for his condemnation as a blasphemer: "*Hereupon the Jews sought the more to kill him, because He did not only break the Sabbath, but also said God was His Father, making himself equal to God.*" (Jn 5:18.)

In St. Paul's Epistles, all of which were written before John's Gospel, Christ's divinity is accepted as a first principle of Christianity. Paul expounds on the emptying of Christ "[w]ho, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped." (Ph. 2:6.) Elsewhere, Paul recites what is probably an even more ancient liturgical hymn:

*He is the image of the unseen God
The first born of all creation,
For in him were created all things
In heaven and on earth
Everything visible and everything invisible
All things were created through him and for him.
He exists before all things
And in him all things hold together.* (Col. 1:15-18.)

The entire book of the Hebrews, authored between 70 and 80 AD, is a treatise on the nature of Christ as a high priest, higher than the angels, ruler of all things, and able to reconcile God and Man by virtue of his "*bearing the impress of God's own being.*" (Heb. 1:1-14.) These references are only by way of example. This forum does not provide space enough for the copious scriptural references to Christ's divinity.

These biblical themes were not lost after the death of the Apostles. They were handed on to a succeeding generation of teachers called the "*Apostolic Fa-*

Defending Christ's Divinity (Continued on page 7)



THE HOLY TRINITY

El Greco
(1577)

(Continued from page 6) ***Defending Christ's Divinity***

thers." The Apostolic Fathers were, indeed, an elite band. They included the first century bishops Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, and Polycarp of Smyrna. Each was famous in his day to the point of celebrity, for each personally knew -- and was taught directly by -- the Apostles themselves. They jealously guarded the "true" doctrine they received directly from the twelve chosen by Christ. The provenance of their teachings was undisputed. In a poem recorded by Ignatius in 110 AD, *over two hundred years* before the council of Nicea, Christ is:

*Very Flesh, yet Spirit too;
Uncreated, and yet born;
God and Man in One agreed;
Very-Life- in-Death indeed,
Fruit of God and Mary's seed."*

(Letter to the Ephesians, 7:2 [A.D. 110].) Elsewhere, he writes, "*For our God, Jesus Christ, was conceived by Mary in accord with God's plan: of the seed of David, it is true, but also of the Holy Spirit*" (id., 18:2), and "[T]o the Church beloved and enlightened after the love of Jesus Christ, *our God*, by the will of him that has willed everything which is" (Letter to the Romans 1 [A.D. 110]). Clement of Alexandria, for his part, describes Christ as "*the cause of our ancient beginning ... He alone is both God and man, and the source of all our good things.*" (Exhortation to the Greeks 1:7:1 [A.D. 190]).

These examples of pre-Nicene pronouncements of Christ's divinity are second only to the New Testament in their antiquity. The same strains are echoed in the latter half of the second century, in the writings of such early luminaries as Irenaeus, Origen, and Tertullian, among many others. By that period, the doctrine of the Apostles received repeated trial from new schools of thought, influenced largely by pagan philosophical movements, such as Platonism and Stoicism, which offered novel perspectives on Christ's nature -- some to the exclusion of his humanity, others to the denial of his divinity. With doctrinal winds blowing through the young Church from every direction, the preservation of the original teachings became imperative and consumed the careers of the early Church leaders. As St. Irenaeus wrote in the second century:

"For the Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received from the apostles and from their disciples the faith in ... the bodily ascension into heaven of the beloved Christ Jesus our Lord, and his coming from heaven in the glory of the Father to reestablish all things; and the raising up again of all flesh of all humanity, in order that to Jesus Christ our Lord and God and Savior and King, in accord with the approval of the invisible Father, every knee shall bend of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth..." (Against Heresies 1:10:1 [A.D. 189]).

And so, from one generation of teachers to the next, the deposit of teachings which first were uttered by Christ himself were received, taught, preached, and jealously guarded from error and adulteration, so that they could be passed on, like a burning torch, to the next generation of custodians for the benefit and sal-

Defending Christ's Divinity (Continued on page 8)



TRANSFIGURATION

Lorenzo Lotto
(1510-12)



ASCENSION OF CHRIST

Garofalo
(1510-12)

(Continued from page 7) **Defending Christ's Divinity**
vation of the faithful.

Far from a fourth century invention forced upon the Christian world by a worldly emperor, the doctrine of Christ's divinity, therefore, was the *sine qua non* of true Christianity throughout the three hundred years of the Church's ante-Nicene history. The Council of Nicea, therefore, added nothing new to the Church's carefully guarded trove of truths; Nicea's contribution was not an idea, but a unified and theologically precise articulation of Christ's nature. Equipped with such a formula, the faithful could now give words to what they had already believed for centuries, and defend the cornerstone of their faith from the theological challenges posed by Arianism and other heterodox movements that wound their way through the Church.

Like those early Christians, the faithful of the Nicene age, we must also be able to articulate a defense for the truths of our faith against the errors of our day. We must be as jealous of the treasures of our faith as those who defended it in ages past, sometimes, to their death: *"Proclaim the Lord and always have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you have."* (1 Peter 3:15.) ✚

www.thepassionofchrist.com

A SPECIAL INVITATION



SPECIAL PREVIEW SHOWING FOR ST THOMAS MORE SOCIETY

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24, 2004

FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC RADIO
(714) 744-0336

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County Presents

A JOURNEY TO ENGLAND

*In the Footsteps of
St. Thomas More*

9-Days: June 30 to July 8, 2004

Group Coordinators:

Hon. Michael Brenner & Hon. David McEachen

Accompanied by Dr. Gerry Wegemer

Scholar & Author of THOMAS MORE: A PORTRAIT IN COURAGE

Spiritual Director T.B.A.

Trip Highlights:

LONDON: Thomas More sites—Milk Street, St. Lawrence Jewry, the Guildhall, Charterhouse, Lincoln's Inn, Blackfriars, Lambeth Palace, Chelsea Old Church, Crosby Hall, Chapel of St. Peter ad Vincula, plus St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Westminster Hall, Houses of Parliament, Tower of London, National Portrait Gallery and more.

EXCURSIONS: Windsor Castle & Hampton Court, Oxford, plus Canterbury.



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ORANGE COUNTY LAWYERS BATTLE FOR THE HOMELESS

GREGORY WEILER, ESQ.

In an unprecedented show of solidarity and legal power, 14 law firms and 29 individual lawyers have joined together in a lawsuit against the City of Santa Ana seeking to prevent the closure of "Isaiah House," a homeless shelter operated by Orange County Catholic Worker. The City of Santa Ana recently commenced abatement proceedings against the owner of the real estate based on alleged violations of the City's zoning ordinance, known as the "Anti-Mission" ordinance which provides that operations seeking to shelter and feed the homeless can only be lawfully operated in the "heavy industrial" zone and only pursuant to a conditional use permit.

This lawsuit was filed in the United States District Court, Central District of California, alleging violations of the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S Constitution as well as the Federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (42 U.S.C.S. § 2000cc et seq.) ("Lawsuit").

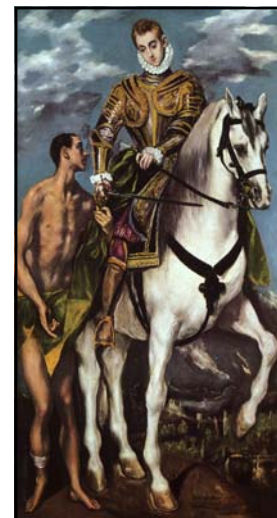
Ed Connor, a well-known and respected Orange County trial lawyer, helped to organize the coalition of attorneys representing the plaintiffs, stated: "The City of Santa Ana's attempt to liken the feeding and housing of the homeless, in accordance with the clear teaching of the Gospel, to the operation of a hazardous waste dump or cement plant, is an obvious abuse of the City's zoning power which must be challenged to protect the religious freedoms we all hold dear."

The most amazing aspects of this Lawsuit distinguishing it from other pro bono work by the Orange County legal community, is both the number of lawyers involved as well as the prestige and number of the law firms: many of the largest international law firms as well as many small prestigious Orange County firms. While most of the lawyers are Catholic, many Jewish and Protestant lawyers are also actively involved. This Lawsuit also crosses political affiliations: among the plaintiff's counsel is Thomas Malcolm, a well-known Republican, as well as Wylie Aitken and Fred Sayre, both prominent Orange County Democrats. Three past Presidents of the Orange County Bar Association are also found among the lawyers representing the homeless. Among the law firms involved are some of the largest international law firms in the United States, as well as many smaller traditional Orange County firms.

"It says a lot about the gross injustice of this case that O'Melveny and Myers, Morrison and Foerster, Sheppard, Mullin, Richter & Hampton, Snell & Wilmer, Jones Day and Irell & Manella as well as a number of smaller prestigious Orange County firms have joined together to fight for the weakest of our community," said Dave Belz, President of the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County, an organization dedicated to helping lawyers live their faith in their daily lives. "I am sure that St. Thomas More is smiling down from heaven as well as praying for success of this group of high-powered lawyers working to



SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER



ST. MARTIN & THE
BEGGAR
El Greco
(1597)

OC Lawyers Battle for the Homeless (Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11) ***OC Lawyers Battle for the Homeless***

protect the homeless,” said Belz when asked about the Lawsuit. “There is no higher use of the law than to defend the weakest and most defenseless of our society.”

Randall Erickson of Crowell & Morning put it succinctly when he said, “The Bible encourages acts of good citizenship and advocates the timeless admonition to ‘love thy neighbor as thyself’ (*Luke 10:27*). Finally, it just seemed the right thing to do.”

Sheppard Mullin Richter & Hampton partner Andrew Guilford, a Past President of both the OC Bar Association and the California State Bar and recent recipient of the prestigious Franklin G. West Award, observed: “For me, an Episcopalian, it is indeed my Anglo-Catholic faith that motivates me on this, as is true with most uplifting things I do. Christ’s Gospel tells us that spiritual fulfillment only comes as we turn away from our material yearnings. During my paid job as a trial lawyer, I’m sometimes brought low as I see folks fighting over limited resources, but this pro bono case lifts me up as I see folks sharing God’s limitless love. Concerning lawyers doing pro bono work, ***I can’t always say it’s the thing we do best, but it’s the best thing that we do.***”

The Lawsuit is a beautiful example of the members of the legal profession living their Faith and serving society through their profession. Besides involvement in the Lawsuit, it should be noted that Isaiah House is owned by Orange County attorney Steve Dzida and many attorneys not only financially support the operation of Isaiah House, but can often be found cooking, serving and washing the dishes for those in need, those whom society judges as the “least of our brethren.”

Those interested in supporting the Catholic Worker movement in Orange County should contact Dwight Smith at (714) 558-7478. ✚

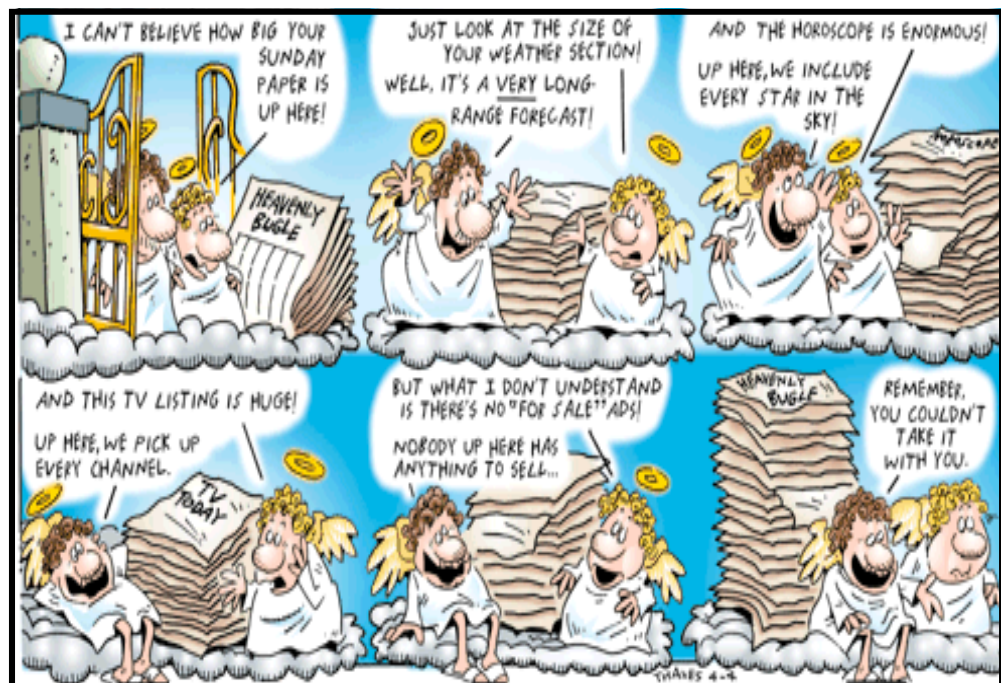


**THE SEVEN ACTS
OF MERCY**

Caravaggio

(1607)

FRANK & ERNEST



THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

POPE JOHN PAUL II

GENERAL AUDIENCE ON APRIL 26, 2000

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. In this Octave of Easter, which is considered one great day, the liturgy tirelessly repeats the message of the Resurrection: "Jesus is truly risen!" This proclamation opens a new horizon to all humanity. All that was mysteriously foreshadowed in the Transfiguration on Tabor becomes a reality in the Resurrection. At that time the Savior revealed to Peter, James and John the miracle of glory and light sealed by the voice of the Father: "This is my beloved Son!" (*Mk 9: 7*).

On the feast of Easter these words appear to us in the fullness of their truth. The Father's beloved Son, Christ who was crucified and died, is raised for our sake. In his brightness we believers see the light and, "raised by the Spirit," as the liturgy of the Eastern Church says, "we praise the consubstantial Trinity for ever and ever" (*Great Vespers of the Transfiguration of Christ*). Our hearts filled with the joy of Easter, today we spiritually climb the holy mountain that dominates the plain of Galilee to contemplate the event that took place on its summit, in anticipation of the Easter events.

2. Christ is the centre of the Transfiguration. Two witnesses of the Old Covenant appear with him: Moses, mediator of the law, and Elijah, a prophet of the living God. The divinity of Christ, proclaimed by the Father's voice, is also revealed by the symbols which Mark describes with picturesque touches. Indeed, there is light and whiteness, which represent eternity and transcendence: "His garments became glistening, intensely white, as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (*Mk 9: 3*). Then there is the cloud, a sign of God's presence during Israel's Exodus and over the tent of the Covenant" (cf. *Ex 13: 21-22; 14: 19, 24; 40: 34, 38*).

At Matins for the Transfiguration the Eastern liturgy again sings: "Immutable brightness of the Father's light, O Word, in your shining light on Tabor we have seen today the light that is the Father and the light that is the Spirit, a light that illumines all creation."

3. This liturgical text emphasizes the Trinitarian dimension of Christ's Transfiguration on the mountain. In fact, the Father's presence with his revealing voice is explicit. Christian tradition catches an implicit glimpse of the Holy Spirit's presence based on the parallel event of the Baptism in the Jordan, when the Spirit descended upon Christ like a dove (cf. *Mk 1: 10*). Indeed, the Father's command: "Listen to him" (*Mk 9: 7*) presupposes that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit so that his words would be "spirit and life" (*Jn 6: 63; cf. 3: 34-35*).

It is possible, then, to climb the mountain in order to pause, to contemplate and to be immersed in the mystery of God's light. Tabor represents all the mountains that lead us to God, according to an image dear to mystics. Another text of the Eastern Church invites us to make this ascent to the summit and the light: "Come, peoples, follow me! Let us climb the holy and heavenly mountain; let us spiritually pause in the city of the living God and contemplate in spirit the divinity of the Father and the Holy Spirit which is resplendent in the Only-begotten Son" (troparion at the conclusion of the *Canon of St John Damascene*).

4. In the Transfiguration we not only contemplate the mystery of God, passing from light to light (cf. *Ps 36: 10*), but we are also invited to listen to the divine word that is addressed to us. Above the word of the Law in Moses and of the prophecy in

The Divinity of Christ (Continued on page 14)



FROM
PETER'S
SUCCESSOR,
POPE
JOHN
PAUL
II



(Continued from page 13) **The Divinity of Christ**

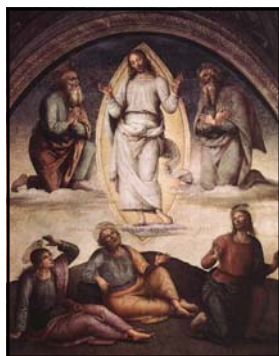
Elijah, the voice of the Father can be heard referring to the voice of the Son, as I have just mentioned. In presenting his “beloved Son,” the Father adds the invitation to listen to him (cf. *Mk* 9: 7).

In commenting on the Transfiguration scene, the Second Letter of Peter emphasizes the divine voice. Jesus Christ “received honor and glory from God the Father and the voice was borne to him by the majestic glory: ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased;’ we heard this voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word made more sure. You will do well to pay attention to this as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts” (2 Pt 1: 17-19).

5. Seeing and hearing, contemplating and obeying are therefore the ways that lead us to the holy mountain on which the Trinity is revealed in the glory of the Son. “The Transfiguration gives us a foretaste of Christ's glorious coming, when he “will change our lowly body to be like his glorious body” (*Phil* 3: 21). But it also recalls that “it is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God (*Acts* 14: 22)” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 556).

The liturgy of the Transfiguration, as the spirituality of the Eastern Church suggests, presents a human “triad” in the three Apostles Peter, James and John, who contemplate the divine Trinity. Like the three young men in the fiery furnace of the Book of Daniel (3: 51: 90), the liturgy “blesses God, the Father and Creator, praises the Word who comes down to help them and changes the fire into dew, and exalts the Holy Spirit who gives life to all for ever” (*Matins of the Feast of the Transfiguration*).

Let us now pray to Christ transfigured in the words of the *Canon of St John Damascene*: “You have allured me with desire for you, O Christ, and have transformed me with your divine love. Burn away my sins with your spiritual fire and deign to fill me with your sweetness, so that leaping with joy I may exalt all your manifestations.” ✠



TRANSFIGURATION

Pietro Perugino

(1498)

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem* *Latin for “To turn truth into laughter”



HEAVEN BOUND

A priest dies and goes to heaven. As he’s approaching the gates, he hears a band of singing and dancing angels approach, and begins to get excited. The lead angel approaches the priest and asks if he would mind stepping aside for a moment.

Surprised, the priest does so. The angels march out of the gates and encircle a man who has also approached the gates. The man was a tour bus driver in New York city. The joyous parade of angels carries the bus driver in ahead of the priest.

When the parade is gone, an angel returns to the priest and says, “You can come in now.” The angel begins to lead the priest inside alone.

The priest, somewhat confused, says, “I’m not one to make waves or anything, but I need to know something. I think I’ve been a good priest. I’ve worked hard all my life for the Lord. Why is it that the tour bus driver gets led in by a band of angels ahead of me?”

The angel says, “Well, frankly, Father, whenever you preached, people slept; but whenever he drove, people prayed.” ✠





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Conference
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MARCUS GRODI... Marcus is the Founder/President of the Coming Home Network International, a non-profit Catholic lay apostolate aimed at helping Protestant clergy as well as laity come home to the Catholic Church. He also hosts a weekly live television program on EWTN called The Journey Home, and he is the author/editor of the book *Journeys Home*.

MICHAEL CUMBIE... Is an evangelical convert to Catholicism. Before entering the Catholic Church in 2001, he had been ordained to the priesthood in the Charismatic Episcopal Church in 1993. Michael now shares with others his incredible spiritual journey into the fullness of the Faith and teaches about the importance of authentic liturgical worship.

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- 8:30am Opening Mass
- 10:00am To Love Christ is to Love the Church... **Fr. Bill Casey**
- 11:00am The Beauty of Catholic Liturgical Worship...**Michael Cumbie**
- 1200pm -1:30pm **Lunch**
- 1:30pm Coming Home to Rome...
Marcus Grodi
- 2:30pm "The Passion of The Christ"
Film Clip & Surprise Guest Appearance
- 3:30pm Evangelization in a Post-Christian World... **Fr. Bill Casey**
- 4:30pm Closing of Conference

Registration Form

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LET GOD SHINE THROUGH YOU!

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate.
 Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
 It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.
 We ask ourselves,
 Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, and fabulous?
 Actually, who are you not to be?
 You are a child of God.
 Your playing small doesn't serve the world.
 There is nothing enlightened about shrinking
 So that other people will not feel insecure around you.
 We were born to make manifest
 The glory of God that is within us.
 It is not in just some of us;
 It is in everyone.
 And as we let our own light shine,
 We unconsciously give people permission to do the same.
 As we are liberated from our own fear,
 Our presence automatically liberates others.

Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural address ✝



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"The denial of Truth is just as fatal to the mind as the denial of light is to vision. Truth in its fullness is not easy to attain, even if one does admit its existence.

There are certain psychological and spiritual conditions which are essential for its discovery, and the most important of these is the virtue of humility."

JOHN 1:1



SCRIPTURAL CORNER



**APOSTLE ST. JOHN
THE EVANGELIST**

El Greco
(1606)

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

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

These verses form the prologue or introduction to the Fourth Gospel; they are a poem prefacing the account of Jesus Christ's life on earth, pro-claiming and praising his divinity and eternity. Jesus is the uncreated Word, God the Only-begotten, who takes on our human condition and offers us the opportunity to become sons and daughters of God, that is, to share in God's own life in a real and supernatural way.

Right through his Gospel St John the Apostle lays special emphasis on our Lord's divinity; his existence did not begin when he became man in Mary's virginal womb: before that he existed in divine eternity as Word, one in substance with the Father and the Holy Spirit. This luminous truth helps us understand everything that Jesus says and does as reported in the Fourth Gospel.

St John's personal experience of Jesus' public ministry and his appearances after the Resurrection were the material on which he drew to contemplate God's divinity and express it as "the Word of God." By placing this poem as a prologue to his Gospel, the Apostle is giving us a key to understand the whole account which follows, in the same sort of way as the first chapters of the Gospels of St Matthew and St Luke initiate us into the contemplation of the life of Christ by telling us about the virgin birth and other episodes to do with his infancy; in structure and content, however, they are more akin to the opening passages of other NT books, such as Col 1:15-20, Eph 1:13-14 and Jn 1-4.

The prologue is a magnificent hymn in praise of Christ. We do not know whether St John composed it when writing his Gospel, or whether he based it on some existing liturgical hymn; but there is no trace of any such text in other early Christian documents.

The prologue is very reminiscent of the first chapter of Genesis, on a number of scores: 1) the opening words are the same: "In the beginning..."; in the Gospel they refer to absolute beginning, that is, eternity, whereas in Genesis they mean the beginning of Creation and time; 2) there is a parallelism in the role of the Word: in Genesis, God creates things by his word ("And God said..."); in the Gospel we are told that they were made through the Word of God; 3) in Genesis, God's work of creation reaches its peak when he creates man in his own image and likeness; in the Gospel, the work of the Incarnate Word culminates when man is raised—by a new creation, as it were—to the dignity of being a son of God.

The main teachings in the prologue are: 1) the divinity and eternity of the Word; 2) the Incarnation of the Word and his manifestation as man; 3) the part played by the Word in creation and in the salvation of mankind; 4) the different ways in which people react to the coming of the Lord—some accepting him with faith, other rejecting him; 5) finally, John the Baptist bears witness to the presence of the Word in the world.

.....

The sacred text calls the Son of God "the Word." The following com-parison may help us understand the notion of "Word": just as a person becoming conscious of himself forms an image of himself in his mind, in the same way God the Father on knowing himself begets the eternal Word. This Word of God is singular, unique; no other can

John (Continued on page 19)

MORE ON HUMILITY AND HELPING THE POOR

More quickly made himself at home in the village of Chelsea and its surrounding area. Never one to put on airs, he “very often...invited his poorer neighbors to his table.” Before becoming Lord Chancellor, he often personally visited the poor, “helping them not with small gifts, but...as their need required.” When his position made this impossible to continue, he sent “some of his household who would dispense his gifts faithfully to needy families, and especially to the sick and aged.” Eventually, as we have seen, he rented a building to care for these villages, “providing for them at his own expense” and entrusting their care to his own children.

More also sang in the parish choir. We know this from Roper, who tells us that the Duke of Norfolk visited one Sunday and was astonished that the Lord Chancellor would stoop to act like a mere parish clerk. Little did he realize that More participated in other lowly activities as well. Besides serving Mass, he took part in the long and tiring parish processions like anyone else—on foot. Even as Lord Chancellor, he refused to ride his horse in these processions. “I will not,” he explained, “follow my Lord on horseback, Who goes on foot.”

.....

The harvest that year (1529) was the first good one in quite some time. In fact, such a famine had developed that More had fed one hundred people a day, at his home, during the winter of 1528. Food had become so scarce and, therefore, theft so prevalent that the government had resorted to punishment by hanging.

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

Gerard Wegemer

Pg 114-6 †

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



(Continued from page 18) **John**

exist because in him is expressed the entire essence of God. Therefore, the Gospel does not call him simply “Word”, but “the Word.” Three truths are affirmed regarding the Word—that he is eternal, that he is distinct from the Father, and that he is God. “Affirming that he existed in the beginning is equivalent to saying that he existed before all things” (St Augustine, *De Trinitate*, 6,2). Also, the text says that he was with God, that is, with the Father, which means that the person of the Word is distinct from that of the Father and yet the Word is so intimately related to the Father that he even shares his divine nature: he is one in substance with the Father (cf. *Nicean Creed*).

To mark the Year of Faith (1967-1968) Pope Paul VI summed up this truth concerning the most Holy Trinity in what is called the *Creed of the People of God* (n. 11) in these words: “We believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God. He is the eternal Word, born of the Father before time began, and one in substance with the Father, *homoousios* to *Patri*, and through him all things were made. He was incarnate of the Virgin Mary by the power of the Holy Spirit, and was made man: equal therefore to the Father according to his divinity, and inferior to the Father according to his humanity and himself one, not by some impossible confusion of his natures, but by the unity of his person.”

“In the beginning”: “what this means is that he always was, and that he is eternal. [...] For if he is God, as indeed he is, there is nothing prior to him; if he is creator of all things, then he is the First; if he is Lord of all, then everything comes after him—created things and time” (St John Chrysostom, *Horn. on St John*, 2, 4). †



TRANSFIGURATION
Giovanni Bellini
(1455)

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*



- ♦ Erving Law (serious illness)
- ♦ Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR (serious injury)
- ♦ Jim Moore (special intention)
 - ♦ St Thomas More Society of Jackson Mississippi
- ♦ Duain Cruzat (serious disease).
- ♦ Baby Fiona Flagsted (brain tumor).
- ♦ Keith Wilson (serious illness).
- ♦ Evelyn Munoz (deceased).
- ♦ Julia Nelson (thanksgiving).
- ♦ Milos & Edith Myrik (serious illness).
 - ♦ Scott Smith (illness).
 - ♦ Ryan Ronk (serious injury).
- ♦ Massimo (child with serious illness).
 - ♦ Pope Paul John II.

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

- ♦ John Flynn IV (life changes).
- ♦ Lieutenant Seth Wolcott & his family.
 - ♦ US Air Force Pilot John Flynn.
- ♦ All members of the US Armed Forces.
- ♦ Baby Thomas Council (serious illness).
 - ♦ Kristin Burkett (serious illness).
 - ♦ Darren M (questioning the Faith).
 - ♦ Fr. Matt Munoz (special intention).
 - ♦ Ryan McEachon (special intention).
 - ♦ John Thompson (employment).
 - ♦ Selma Mann's family (2 medical problems).
 - ♦ Cindie Burnes (serious illness).
- ♦ Michael Shonafelt (special intention).
- ♦ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
- ♦ Ron Gable (special intention). †

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

St. Augustine

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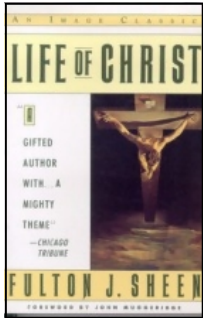
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SPEAKER: PROFESSOR JAMES GORDLEY,
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