

Ad Veritatem

Volume 9 Issue 3

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MARCH 2004

*Unchecked fear and
pride give rise to
delusions that displace
even knowledge we
recognize as true.*

Thomas More:
Portrait of Courage
By Gerard Wegemer

MARCH MEETING:

WEDNESDAY MARCH 17, 2004 NOON

CATHY GARCIA-PRATS

"GOOD FAMILIES DON'T JUST HAPPEN"

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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MARCH MEETING

CATHY GARCIA-PRATS "GOOD FAMILIES DON'T JUST HAPPEN"



WHEN:

NOON

Wed. Mar. 17th

WHERE:

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CALL (714) 800-3000

COST:

\$10 for lunch

Cathy and Joe Garcia-Prats have been married for 30 years and are the proud parents of 10 sons ranging in ages from 9 to 27. They are the authors of Good Families Don't Just Happen: What We Learned From Raising Our Ten Sons and How It Can Work for You; Good Marriages Don't Just Happen, and What To Do When Your Baby is Premature. Individually and as a couple, they lecture nationally on family, marriage and parenting. They have been guests on numerous television shows including *The Oprah Winfrey Show* and their stories and interviews have been published in numerous newspapers.

Cathy is a former first grade teacher and received her Bachelor of Science degree from Loyola University New Orleans. Joe is a Professor and practicing neonatologist at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Both serve on numerous boards and are involved in many community and parish activities including teaching marriage preparation for 19 years.

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

MAY 12, 2004

SEE PAGE 27 †

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HAS THE CHURCH EVER TAUGHT THAT THE JEWS SHOULD BE PERSECUTED AND SEGREGATED?

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



THE FEAST OF THE
PASSOVER

*Dieric Bouts the
Elder
(1464-67)*

QUESTION: *Is it true that some of the Fathers and Doctors of the Church taught that Jews should be persecuted and segregated? I have heard this about St. John Chrysostom and St. Thomas Aquinas. I was also told that the Nazi segregation of Jews and their requirement that Jews wear a badge were taken from Church laws set up in the Middle Ages.*

ANSWER: There's no doubt that there are many passages about the Jews from the Fathers and Doctors of the Church which would cause consternation if they were published today. Similarly, devout Jews would be embarrassed at some of the comments in the different versions of the Talmud about Jesus, Mary, Christians, and Gentiles. One thing is certain, the charge of "anti-Semitism" is thrown around far too easily.

St. John Chrysostom wrote a series of sermons preached "against the Jews," but patristics scholars have shown that he, like St. Paul in Galatians, was directing his preaching to Christians who clung to Jewish observances as an expression of a false doctrine of grace and salvation. Both St. John Chrysostom and St. Paul used biting sarcasm in their attacks on false doctrine, but they were not "anti-Semitic," in the modern sense of the term. As for St. Thomas, his norms for the treatment of Jews stemmed from the fact that Jews had a special status in the economic and social structure of the Middle Ages. They came directly under the sovereign and were under his protection. Segregating Jews was often as much a matter of protection as of discrimination. The ghetto was a practical reality mainly because Jews had to live in close proximity to the synagogue, since they had to walk, not ride on the Sabbath. This meant they couldn't live too far from the synagogue. This can be observed in all the major cities of the United States on any Friday evening, just as it could be observed in 13th-century France.

The requirement that Jews wear some distinguishing mark must be seen in the light of medieval culture in which a person's sex, social and religious status, his level of education, and his ethnic origin were immediately apparent by his manner of dress and even his beard and hairstyle. Our modern culture, in which the main difference indicated by clothing is one of individual taste, understandably can't appreciate the majority of other human civilizations in which outward appearances are not a matter of the preferences of the individual, but were imposed by law or custom on society.

St. Thomas was clear on the essential point that Jews may not be forced to accept Christianity, nor may their children be educated as Christians against their parents' will. Rather, the sovereign must allow their religious observances, as long as they do not seek to undermine the faith of Christians. There is no similarity whatsoever between the evil anti-Jewish laws imposed by Hitler and others and the norms of the Christian Middle Ages. The motivation is entirely different in each case. With the Nazis, the intention was to persecute and ultimately annihilate. In medieval Christian Europe, it was to protect, define, and contain a minority regarded as a foreign community within the larger, homogeneous majority. One can argue the merits of the medieval approach, even from a

Jewish Persecution (Continued on page 18)



THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST

I overheard two teenage waitresses talking about it at a nearby café at my lunch hour.

I heard two security guards at my office building talking about it.

I have repeatedly heard animated discussions about it among the lawyers and staff of my office.

My tennis friends, normally mum to such topics, have stopped at the net to talk about it.

I told my manicurist about it, and everyone in the salon stopped to listen.

A Muslim friend of mine saw it and grasped its message of sacrifice and forgiveness.

Many among my Jewish friends have asked me about it. I tell them that any Christian who sees it and concludes the culpability for the death of Christ lies with the Jews has missed the point: that Christ died for all of our sins and that I am just as responsible for His death as anyone else.

People of all ranks and ages the world over are talking about Mel Gibson's *Passion of the Christ*. More importantly, the entire world is talking-- as it has never done before -- about Christ and the meaning of the Cross.

Who would have anticipated that Hollywood would provide what has become one of the most effective evangelical events in modern memory? The power of this film cannot rightfully be ignored or detracted from. The visceral power of modern cinema has finally been applied to the salvation of souls, and many thousands who may not have been inclined to listen with their hearts before now understand how much Jesus must have loved them to freely suffer such a brutal death to save them from their sins. At great risk and no small cost, Mel Gibson has presented us an unprecedented and extraordinary opportunity to evangelize to our neighbors and friends and to spread the redemptive message of the Gospel.

With the Holy Spirit's help, spread the message: *watch the Passion of the Christ*. †

Anne Nelson Lanphar

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GIBSON'S PASSION*

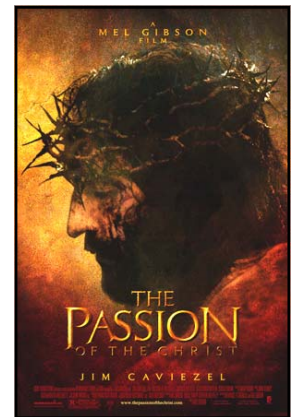
BY RUSSELL HITTINGER AND ELIZABETH LEV

From mosaics and music to paintings and plays, the arts have proven to be a mighty vehicle for retelling the Bible and bringing its stories vividly before our senses. A special intensity marks the art created for the Lenten period. Allegrì's *Miserere*, the moving rendition of Psalm 51 sung on Good Friday, Niccolò dell'Arca's *Lamentation of the Dead Christ* with its terra-cotta figures circling in wild grief over the dead Christ, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*, the poetic journey lasting from Good Friday to Easter Sunday, are but a few of the great Lenten works that can move the imagination to consider different aspects of the passion. In *The Passion of the Christ*, scheduled to open in theatres on Ash Wednesday, Mel Gibson adds a work of cinematic art worthy to be mentioned with these classics of Christian culture.

Gibson's *Passion* is bound to change our estimation of how a film can portray the life of Christ. Until now, movies about Jesus generally have been of two kinds. The first—perhaps to avoid trespassing on sacred terrain—abandons any ties to a canonical text. Here we can think of the whimsical *Jesus in Montreal*, or the hootenanny “gospels” of *Godspell* or *Jesus Christ Superstar*. There are also those provocateurs who try to win an audience through the “unauthorized biography” approach, such as Martin Scorsese in his film version of Kazantzakis' *Last Temptation of Christ*. Films of this sort pay the price of making Jesus appear smaller and less compelling than the figure we can encounter in reading or, as the case may be, in questioning the canonical texts.

The film that most nearly succeeds in this “relevant Jesus” mode is Pier Paolo Pasolini's avowedly Marxist rendition of *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964). (Gibson surely learned from Pasolini, as he makes use of the little town of Sassi Matera, where Pasolini also filmed his gospel.) Pasolini's cinema-verité shots, nonprofessional actors, and monochrome photography make a visually riveting movie, one that disarms our liturgically and textually informed imagination with its strange and sometimes grotesque iconography, particularly the faces of its common people. If pure film makes what we know depend upon what we see, Pasolini's movie comes very close to being pure film. Yet because he is so determined to interpret the life of Jesus as a Gramscian allegory of popular liberation, Pasolini makes Jesus less interesting than the rest of the cast of truck drivers, waiters, and prostitutes he recruited for the film. The theme of class liberation also makes for unintended comedy. After the resurrection, for example, the camera follows peasants running gleefully through the fields with scythes and pitchforks only to encounter Christ waiting for an audience before ascending into heaven.

The second kind of gospel film makes a serious effort to tell the canonical story by means of a visual tableau. The best-known example is Franco Zeffirelli's *Jesus of Nazareth* (1977), which ploddingly covers the camels and magi,



**He was
pierced for our
transgressions,
He was
crushed for our
iniquities;
the punishment
that brought us
peace was upon
Him, and by
His wounds
we are healed.
Isaiah 53:5**

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Gibson's Passion (Continued on page 8)



Mary Magdalene



Judas Despairs



**Jesus Foretells
Peter's Betrayal**



**Jesus &
the Eucharist**

(Continued from page 7) **Gibson's Passion**

the teachings and parables, the miracles, plots, and subplots of Jesus' life. The beautiful faces and rich settings have a tapestry-like quality, but we never quite forget that we are watching a 371-minute-long visual ornamentation of a textual narrative. For religious people, and probably for most nonbelievers, it is perfectly safe viewing—better, no doubt, than a spaghetti-western gospel—but it is not a work of art that haunts the viewer. A stronger entry in this category is the *Gospel of John*, currently showing in theatres. Advertised as a “word-for-word adaptation” of the Fourth Gospel, narrated by Christopher Plummer, it is religiously serious precisely because it adheres to the canonical text, but it does not fully transcend the genre of documentary.

It is thus demonstrably difficult to satisfy the demands of cinematic art and canonical text. But Gibson's *Passion* is a new kind of film which does just that. In the tradition of Lenten art, he focuses intensely on the climatic moment of the Christ saga, intensifying the power of its sacramental aspects. From the agony in the garden, where Gibson begins, to the pietà at the foot of the cross, Jesus does what he teaches. In the sacred text itself, the last twelve hours of his life contain only the tersest dialogue. The parables have all been spoken. The disciples have slunk away. From here, the question of the Christ is telescoped by Gibson into what we see—or, more accurately, what we are able to watch.

Zefferelli's movie is comparable to a Ghirlandaio painting—exquisite, but the figures occupy only half the canvas. By contrast, Gibson's figures are in the style of Michelangelo, filling the screen, looming over us, threatening to enter our space. It is unnerving art. When the Roman soldiers call out “vertere crucem” the audience tenses. The soldiers lift the cross, prop it on its side for an agonizing moment, and then let it fall over towards us. As it crashes to the ground, an audible gasp sounds in the theater. The viewer is denied the detachment of looking through a window into a faraway world and is drawn into the scenes as a humble, perhaps helpless, participant.

The emphasis on the visual is accentuated by the sparse dialogue in Aramaic and Latin, making it all the more necessary to pay attention to what we see rather than what we hear. Gibson remarked in a recent interview that “Caravaggio's paintings don't have subtitles, but people get the message.” In the version we saw at a screening in Rome, subtitles were included, but not many, and they didn't provide any psychological refuge. Nor do the few flashbacks of Jesus instituting the Eucharist and washing the apostles' feet, of the young Jesus with his mother, or of Jesus protecting the adulteress from the mob's stones. These flashbacks give some context, but mostly they offer the viewer a brief moment to catch his breath before returning to the visual assault.

Gibson has taken an audacious gamble by filling the screen with images that are undeniably brutal; few will be able to watch the scourging of Jesus without turning away. Though the movie is fairly fast-paced, the scourging is long and drawn out, seeming never to end. It begins with a caning, but just when one thinks, “that was unpleasant but not as bad as I expected,” the soldiers pull out a spiked scourge and begin a new round of battering. Later, when the gates of the

Gibson's Passion (Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) *Gibson's Passion*

city are thrown open for the ascent to Calvary, we see Golgotha on the horizon and wonder whether we can traverse that distance with Jesus.

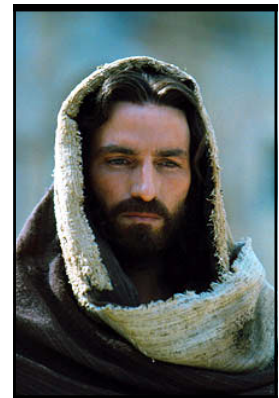
Ultimately, *The Passion of the Christ* is about witnessing and bearing witness. On one level, the film is calculated to make us want to turn away and go home. At the outset, Jesus tells his disciples in the garden that he doesn't want them to see him in such a condition. He worries about what they are soon to see: a suffering servant who looks like anything but a king, and whose tortured body will seem quite beyond repair.

Thankfully, as the scenes become harder and harder to watch, the viewer is offered an example, a guide as to how we are supposed to react to the increasingly disturbing images. This comes in the form of Jesus' mother, brilliantly played by the Romanian actress Maia Morgenstern. Though Mary is the person most affected by these shattering events, she also understands better than anyone the necessity of what her son must do, and she consents to his mission and her own role in it. She in turn shows the audience what they must do. During the scourging, we see Mary with her head lowered, barely able to support herself as she hears the incessant beating of her son. As we think to ourselves, "no mother should have to witness such a thing," she gathers her strength, lifts her head, and continues to look. If she can, we can. Then, in the harrowing pietà scene at the end of the film, Mary looks directly out at the viewer as she holds the body of Christ, reminding us with her glance that we, too, have been witnessing these events, and that it is now we who are called to bear witness to what we have seen. Like Caravaggio's *Deposition*, Gibson's film places the bulk of responsibility on the viewer.

This emphasis on the role of Mary far outstrips what Pasolini or Zeffirelli was able to imagine. Where Zeffirelli's Mary, played by the hauntingly lovely Olivia Hussey, elicits *compassion*, Gibson's Mary provides comfort. Like the Eve who accompanies Adam in every scene in the Sistine Chapel vault, Mary, it seems, is always present in Gibson's *Passion*. Her face is the most reliable clue to the meaning of the unfolding events.

She is paralleled on screen by Satan, played by Rosalinda Celentano as a black-cowled, androgynous bystander. After the scourging, Satan holds a grotesque child in mockery of the old Adam, and also of Mary's eventual pietà. Then there is the remarkable confrontation in the film between Satan and Mary. As Jesus climbs towards Calvary, Satan glides through the crowd, feeding on the tangible wickedness in the air; Mary is on the other side of the road, trying to reach her son. She locks eyes with Satan, as determined as Satan is smug. Gibson's disturbing technique of filling the screen with Jesus' body, almost allowing him to tumble into our laps, is contained visually only by the fact that Mary constantly touches, holds, and comforts the corpus. We find ourselves thinking, "thank God someone else will keep this mess from falling onto us." To be sure, Gibson employs a mélange of different iconographic traditions; but no other film we have seen has so powerfully depicted the ecclesial and corporate Mary. When she approaches the cross and kisses the feet of Jesus, the cam-

Gibson's Passion (Continued on page 10)



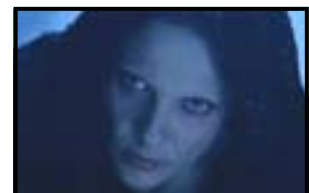
Jesus



*Jesus Carries
His Cross*



Jesus and Mary



Satan

(Continued from page 9) *Gibson's Passion*

era closes in to show her lips covered with the blood of Christ—the bride inebriated with matrimonial wine.

But all of this makes Gibson's *Passion* nearly the opposite of the arcane and politically fraught tradition of the passion play. Such performances were often staged to incite the audience to choose sides, to "save" the integrity and honor of Christ by constituting a kind of party against Judas, the Jews, and the mob in Pilate's courtyard. Had Gibson used the power of film to give this twisted but all-too-human political stereotype a new lease on life, concerns about the film stirring up anti-Judaism or hostility against nonbelievers would be justified. To his credit, however, Gibson denies the audience any shred of political or religious triumph, or, for that matter, defeat. Even a viewer who already knows and religiously believes in the final outcome of the story must struggle to keep watching, which is humiliating in its own right. There might be reason for scholars and religious authorities to raise questions about Gibson's synthesizing of distinct scriptural accounts of the passion, or about his use of extra-biblical iconography. But it is hard to imagine anyone coming out of Gibson's movie with an appetite for a religiously politicized passion. If anything, this is the definitive post-passion-play passion.

Last year, theological criticisms and concerns were expressed on the basis of an unofficial script apparently stolen from Gibson's production company. Whatever the provenance of the script, this criticism was bound to miss its target because the film depends almost entirely on what the camera shows rather than on dialogue. Though the film occasionally draws on extra-biblical sources, the theological outlook it presupposes is standard Christian fare. Gibson read the visions of the Venerable Sister Anne Catherine Emmerich, an eighteenth-century German stigmatist and mystic. The Romantic poet Klemens Brentano (author of *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*), put the visions into writing, beginning with the *Dolorous Passion* (1833). The book is a series of simple but graphically detailed compositions of time and place. One of Gibson's scenes is taken directly from Emmerich. After the scourging, Pilate's wife Claudia gives linen cloths to Mary and the Magdalene, which they use to mop up the sacred blood. Emmerich also "sees" Jesus on the Mount of Olives looking at the very grotto where Adam and Eve took refuge after being expelled from Paradise; Satan tempting Jesus, saying that the restoration of Adam is too great a burden for one man; and, at the cross, Jesus as the second Adam asleep, from whose side is brought forth the new Eve. Indeed, Gibson's movie begins with Jesus crushing the head of the serpent in the garden, and Adam-Christ/Eve-Mary typology is apparent throughout it. Still, the question of how much of this imagery was inspired by Emmerich's visions is inessential, for such imagery and ideas abound in traditional Christian liturgy, hymnody, and iconography.

Gibson says that he set out to "transcend language with the message through an image." Chances are that even the film industry, skeptical and skittish about the project, will have to recognize his artistic triumph. How its millions of viewers will reckon with the movie is another story. We think that it will induce humility rather than triumphalism. The film is so enthralling that perhaps some viewers will have to remind themselves that it is just a movie and not a substitute for the New Testament, much less for sacramental liturgies or the stations of the cross familiar to so many Christians during Lent. If, having seen and endured the film, Christians are able in a fresh way to wonder at the vault of the Sistine Chapel, if they can humbly return to their churches to participate in the spoken and sacramentally enacted Word, then Gibson's *Passion* will have proven to be something even better than what it certainly is—the best movie ever made about Jesus Christ. ✚

Russell Hittinger is the William K. Warren Professor of Catholic Studies at the University of Tulsa.
Elizabeth Lev teaches Christian art and architecture at Duquesne University's Rome campus.

PRIDE: *THE DEADLIEST OF THE DEADLY SINS*

BY ANNE NELSON LANHAR, ESQ.

Our society encourages us to have “pride” in ourselves. Pride is promoted as an important character trait euphemistically called “self-esteem.” On the other hand, “humility” is seen as a virtue that one should “appear” to have only so as to not seem to be egotistical. False humility is, of course, merely the flip side of pride. But is pride a virtue or a curse, an asset or a sin? Why has pride been universally condemned across the ages by the Bible, the Church, and the Saints?

“Pride” is defined in the Encyclopedia of Catholicism (p. 1048) as “...the disordered love of self or one’s own success to the exclusion of others and God. Pride is a capital sin because it is often the source of other sins.” Pride is the first of the seven deadly or capital sins (pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony and lust). These sins or vices are “...the wellsprings from which sinful thoughts, behavior, and omission arise...It is more precise to think of the capital sins as dispositions toward sinning rather than as sins properly speaking; that is, they are tendencies in our character that threaten moral goodness by predisposing us to sin.” (CCC p. 225) These designations were first used by Pope Gregory the Great, reinforced by St. Thomas Aquinas and even immortalized by Dante in his great work The Divine Comedy in which the prideful were assigned to the lowest level in purgatory, these sinners having committed the most grievous of sins now owed the greatest atonement to God.

The first sin in recorded history was the disobedience of Adam and Eve which was driven by pride: they were tempted to believe that they could become as great as God. The sin that led to the downfall of Lucifer and his followers was also pride—they refused to bow down and adore Christ as the God-Man.

Our society appears to believe that some pride is good but that it is merely a matter of “balance.” But if pride has had such a central part in the downfall of both man and the angels, can it really be good at any level? Is it possible to allow this sin in our hearts on a limited basis and to control it? The greatest Christian writers over 2,000 years say absolutely not.

Pride, being the disordered love of one’s self, causes a person to believe that he is in total control and, therefore, should receive full credit and recognition for all accomplishments. Admittedly the person may have worked hard and contributed to that success. A common response to the observation of being “lucky” is: “Well, that’s funny but the harder I work, the luckier I get.” Although we may have worked to develop a gift, logically we can not take credit for God’s gifts to us which include the very opportunity to develop those gifts. We have done nothing to “deserve” being born with intelligence and health in one of the richest countries of the world, to parents who were able to provide the educational opportunities. To do so is as absurd as a flea on a dog bragging that *he* is great because he was born on the largest dog!

Christ often condemned the Pharisees, the leaders and most successful persons of their age and society, for their deafness to His Word pointing out that this

Pride (Continued on page 12)



LAST JUDGMENT
(DETAIL)

Michelangelo
(1537-41)

But if pride has had such a central part in the downfall of both man and the angels, can it really be good at any level? Is it possible to allow this sin in our hearts on a limited basis and to control it? The greatest Christian writers over 2,000 years say absolutely not.

(Continued from page 11) **Pride**

“deafness” was caused by their pride. Christ repeatedly warned all men against pride and the fatal error of getting caught up with the riches of this world. How many times did He say it and how many times have we heard His words and how many times have we justified continuing our conduct with the argument that He didn’t *really* mean it or that it did not *really* apply to us? Christ not only repeatedly told us that we must be humble and serve others in this life but He also emphasized His words through His example of washing the feet of His Apostles at the Last Supper, which was the act of a lowly slave.

Pride is so devious and can be so blinding that Saint Thomas More literally feared it knowing he was not immune. He noted that pride can form a “blindness almost incurable” because it “covereth the eyes of their soul.” He wrote about pride extensively and, more importantly, personally fought against it taking root in his own life.

More knew that pride distorted one’s judgment. He knew that the greatest danger to self-possession and clarity of conscience was pride and he refused to appeal to it under any circumstance. Admittedly appealing to one’s pride is the easiest way to motivate a person since our fallen condition and original sin makes us susceptible to it. More motivated his children in their educational pursuits through his personal friendship with each one of them—they sought to please him out of love and respect for him.

More studied and wrote about pride trying to focus on its dangers and to identify its characteristics. He tried to develop analogies to help others focus on its dangers to the soul. More noted that pride was the “...perversion of the rational creature’s highest and most distinctive power of free will.” Pride was the most pervasive theme in all of More’s writings calling it “the chief of all plagues,” “the root of all sin,” “the head and root of all other sins and of them all, most pestilent,” “the most dangerous habit there is,” and “the mischievous mother of all manner of vices.” “Pride, therefore, arises from the soul’s intrinsic power to imagine what it wants and then to freely delight in that image regardless of its truth or goodness. With this spiritual freedom, rational creatures can will to devise ‘worldly fantasies’ of their own creation that are actually opposed to what exists.” More pointed out that a lack of rational consistency is not the greatest obstacle to clear thinking but rather it is hardened pride which gives delusions that can displace knowledge one knows to be true. “More noted that heresy is such a difficult social disorder in that hardened pride is inevitably involved. Since ‘pride is the very mother of all heresies,’ heretics can come to a point where only the frantic pleasure of their own will can satisfy and content them. These proud fantasies arise among the learned ‘because they want to be singular among the people’; they arise among the not-so-learned because they ‘long to seem far better learned than they are.’ In either case, the reward for their labor is the ‘delight of beholding what pleasure the people have in their preaching.’”

More noted that God provided man with three major safeguards against pride:

- ♦ God made the body of man from the slime of the earth while creating his soul in the image and likeness of God.
- ♦ God gave man precepts and commandments so he should remember and

Pride (Continued on page 13)



**THE LAST
JUDGMENT**

Rogier van der Wey-
den

(1446– 52)

(Continued from page 12) **Pride**

consider himself as a servant.

- ◆ God “graciously fenced and hedged in their hearts” with fear of punishment if they disobeyed.

More took very specific actions in his own life to ward off this insidious evil.

First and foremost, he prayed daily which included attending morning Mass. More knew that only through the Eucharist can we actually start to subordinate our will to God’s and to acknowledge God as the Supreme Being and the source of all our blessings. Through prayer More acknowledged God’s greatness in all things and his subservience to Him.

Second, More also believed that development of virtues was a critical guard against pride—in fact, he emphasized that development of virtues should be first, and learning second. More’s favorite metaphor focused on cultivating the garden of the soul. “In this garden must be planted good affections, virtues and principles, while ‘the nettles, briars, and other...barren weeds’ of pride and deceptive pleasures are carefully and consistently rooted out.” In pursuit of virtues, More practiced humility as Christ directed by personally serving the poor and needy including feeding them from his own home. More did not just give money and allow others to do the work—he did give generously but he also personally served the poor in Christ’s name. Although a powerful and famous lawyer and author, More sang in his parish choir, served as a parish clerk and performed other lowly services. “Besides serving Mass, he took part in long and tiring parish processions like anyone else—on foot. Even as Lord Chancellor, he refused to ride his horse in the processions. ‘I will not,’ he explained, ‘follow my Lord on horseback, Who goes on foot.’”

Thirdly, More not only studied extensively the truths of the Faith but also contemplated Christ’s humble life in silence. Through study, prayer and contemplation, he sought to come to know God’s will in his life. More also believed that developing a good wit was important to maintaining balance in life and not taking the things of this world too seriously.

Finally, More urged the contemplation of the “four last things” being death, judgment, heaven and hell in order to remain properly focused in this life. It is all too easy to assume that death is far away and that there will be plenty of time to do “good” after we make it financially! Pride leads us to think that we are independent of God which in turn leads us not to trust in Him but to try to “be wise in the ways of this world” and to take care of ourselves, ensuring our savings are large and our future secure. Justification is often based on the old adage “God helps those who help themselves.”

To really trust God, to trust Him today in our lives, to trust Him financially, to trust Him in all things, is not easy to do. But if we quietly contemplate the inevitability of death, that it will come for all of us “like a thief in the night,” and that we will then face God’s judgment followed by eternity in either heaven or hell, we will naturally focus on the proper order of importance of all matters in our life.

*St. Thomas More,
please pray to our Lord to grant us the grace to avoid pride in our lives
and to trust God in all things, to open our hearts to His word
and open our hands to His service. †*



**LAST JUDGMENT
(DETAIL)**

Michelangelo
(1537-41)

CATHOLIC CHARITIES OF ORANGE COUNTY



SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER



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MILESTONES

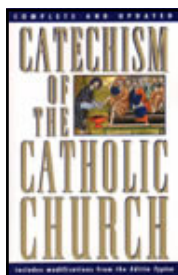
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CATECHISM CORNER



Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods. It wounds the nature of man and injures human solidarity. It has been defined as “an utterance, a deed, or a desire contrary to the eternal law.” (¶1849)

Sin is an offense against God: “Against you, you alone, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in your sight.” Sin sets itself against God’s love for us and turns our hearts away from it. (¶1850)

Vices can be classified according to the virtues they oppose, or also be linked to the capital sins which Christian experience has distinguished, following St. John Cassian and St. Gregory the Great. They are called “capital” because they engender other sins, other vices. They are pride, greed, envy, wrath, lust, gluttony and sloth. (¶1866) ☩



THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS

Hieronymus Bosch

(1480)

THE END OF HELL?

BY MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

When I was a small boy, my father kept a very large, dusty old book among the treasures in his den. That book was the source of many a nightmare in our home. To open its cover and peer into its steel-engraved prints was to embark on a frightening journey into unimaginable horrors. The book has made it among the heirlooms in my family's home today. It is a nineteenth century edition of *Dante's Inferno* with graphic illustrations by Gustave Dore. I recently brought out the venerable old work and turned through its aging, brittle pages once more in preparation for the writing of this feature. There are scenes of Dante, and his guide, the poet Virgil, touring the multi-tiered rings of hell. They enter through a large cave in the middle of a remote and gloomy wood. Over the cave's "lofty arch" is inscribed:

THROUGH ME YOU PASS INTO THE CITY OF WOE
THROUGH ME YOU PASS INTO ETERNAL PAIN
THROUGH ME AMONG THE PEOPLE LOST FOR AYE.
JUSTICE THE FOUNDER OF MY FABRIC MOVED
TO REAR ME WAS THE TASK OF POWER DIVINE
SUPREMEST WISDOM, AND PRIMEVAL LOVE.
BEFORE ME THINGS CREATED WERE NONE, SAVE THINGS
ETERNAL, AND ETERNAL I ENDURE.
ALL HOPE ABANDON, YE WHO ENTER HERE.

Dante and his tour guide then move on, deeper and deeper into the depths, speaking to various lost souls who relate the deeds that led to their perdition. As they descend, the punishments grow more and more terrible, in correspondence to the gravity of the sins that led to their condemnation. They pass the souls lost to forbidden loves, those who worshipped money, fame and wealth, the souls of those whose lives were dominated by anger, and the souls of the hypocrites. Those guilty of simony are condemned to lie head down in smoking stone cauldrons in the ground. The last place, the very bowels of hell, is cold and frozen over. There sits Satan himself in lonely, desolate solitude.

If Dante were alive and writing today, I think that his work would meet with much less enthusiasm than that given by the literati of early fourteenth century Europe. In these latter days, the doctrine of eternal damnation has all but fallen into the ash heap of discarded Christian devotions and teachings. Hell, along with the Church's teachings on mortal sin, abortion and birth control, has been blacklisted at parish pulpits. In the interest of placating the greatest number of Sunday parishioners, the more unpleasant aspects of Christ's teachings have been dropped, and the doctrine of the faith has been watered down to an insipid assortment of platitudes which provoke no more inspiration than the greeting card section of a grocery store.

The removal of eternal damnation from the salvation equation renders meaningless the entire story of Christ's incarnation, death and resurrection. If there is no sin and no hell, from what are we being saved? The sacraments, the Mass, the crucifix – all become unintelligible. The Church becomes nothing more than an ancient social club thickly encrusted with ancient, but empty, rituals.

The avoidance of hell as a topic of writing and preaching is understandable. That

TRUTH OR MYTH?



DANTE AND THE
THREE KINGDOMS
(DETAIL)

*Domenico
di Michelino*

(1465)

*The removal
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equation renders
meaningless the
entire story of
Christ's
incarnation,
death and
resurrection.
If there is no sin
and no hell,
from what are
we being saved?*

The End of Hell (Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15) **The End of Hell**

anyone would find pleasure flipping through the pages of Dante's work, or reading the disturbingly graphic portrayals of hell penned by such spiritual visionaries as Saint Alphonsus Ligouri, would be a legitimate cause for concern. One of the Church's earliest and greatest theologians, Origen (185 - 253 A.D.), could not come to grips with the idea of eternal ruin. In the doctrine he called the *apokatastasis*, or "*recapitulation*," he theorized that the souls of the damned themselves, and even Satan, would eventually be worked back into the fold of the blessed. As beautiful as Origen's supremely optimistic theory may seem, it is not reality, and due in part to this foundational error, Origen is not numbered among the Church's canonized saints.

A poll of Catholics taken today may reveal many "origenists" among the faithful, those who cannot reconcile God's mercy with eternal punishment. In earlier days, on the other hand, the Church may have been given to other extremes, placing more emphasis on fire and brimstone than on the weightier doctrines of divine love and mercy. But the current de-emphasis on hell has perilous ramifications.

Those dangers were brought out in analogical fashion for me in a recent skiing excursion. After hopping off a long chair lift to the summit of the mountain, I turned to ski the western-most slopes. I pushed off to a grouping of pine trees and skidded over a length of orange tape, lying in the snow. I had no idea what the tape meant, but after a moment's thought, I dragged to a stop, and herring-boned my way back up to find out what I had run over. "DANGER!," the tape said, "NO SKI AREA, ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK." I pondered the possible risks that tape could have warned against. I imagined what fate I could have encountered had I proceeded without going back to read the warning, perhaps a cliff face or a wall of snow hanging tenuously for the slightest trigger to unload its weight upon an unwitting victim.

What may happen to the faithful if the doctrine of hell is neglected in our churches? Everyday, we skirt along the edge of a sheer precipice, most of us completely unaware of the peril that is a very real possibility for us. Those in a position to warn us, those who know the abyss is there, are silent. They have let the warning ribbon drop, they have not replaced it, and it is half covered with snow. Are they doing the faithful any favors?

Christ Himself did not neglect to warn us of possibility of eternal perdition. He used the phrase "eternal fire" no less than eleven times. The same phrase is used 30 times throughout the New Testament. Our Lord's words, if we stop to contemplate their full import, cannot but inspire a holy dread hell. "Fear not him who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul," He warns, "fear him rather who can destroy both body and soul in hell." (Mt. 10:26.) Elsewhere, Christ describes Himself gathering the fruit of the good seed as well as the weeds; "just the weed is gathered up and burnt in the fire, so will be at the end of time" (Mt 13:40, et seq.) The parables of hell are laced throughout the Gospels. It is a place of unquenchable fire (Mt. 81:8), undying worms (Mk. 9:48), gnashing of teeth (Mt. 13:42), and the "devil and his angels" (Mt. 25:34, 41). If hell were so important to our Lord, why is much overlooked by the Church everywhere today?

Yet, hell was never part of God's plan. It is part and parcel of God's deference to mankind's freedom either to choose God or rebel against Him for eternity; the "intolerable complement," as C.S. Lewis calls placing a creature on earth capable of

The End of Hell (Continued on page 17)



LAST JUDGMENT

Hans Memling

(1467-71)

(Continued from page 16) **The End of Hell**

wholesale rejection of the divine plan. It is the consequence unrepented mortal sin -- a sin held on to until the very end. This is nothing more than the exercise the power of human freedom to turn away from God, self-imposed eternal exclusion from God's love.

As the Catholic Catechism states, "Mortal sin is a radical possibility of human freedom, as is love itself. It results in the loss of charity and the privation of sanctifying grace, that is, the state of grace. If it is not redeemed by repentance and God's forgiveness, it causes exclusion from Christ's kingdom and the eternal death of hell, our freedom has the power to make choices for ever, with no turning back." (CCC 1861.) In fact, Christ, the Author of Life and the Font of our salvation cannot be the creator of hell. "How could Christ," writes the Jesuit Gustave Martelet "who has thrown himself against death and sin, impose such a loss, even consent to it, given that he has, after all, done everything avoid it?" Elsewhere, Martelet has said, "Certainly there is talk of fire, worm and the second death that excludes one from the kingdom. . . . But hell, as refusal of divine love, always exists on one side only: on the side of him who persists in creating it for himself."

The Church has made no pronouncements on the number of the condemned, nor even if there *are* any condemned souls. While we may be quick to place a few seemingly obvious candidates there ourselves (like Hitler or Judas Iscariot), the Church has not and cannot make such a declaration itself. We may be sure, however, that the damned are forever separated from the beatific vision. We may also be sure that, just as the blessed, the condemned souls will also be resurrected with their bodies. Accordingly, it is not outside the realm of possibility that the damned also experience some kind of physical pain in their bodies, in addition to the obvious spiritual suffering that comes with the definitive hopelessness of the eternal loss of God.

These elemental truths contain the fodder for unlimited meditations on the terrors of the "second death." Such meditations have a salutary effect. They provide a constant reminder that sanctifying grace can be lost, and that we must not grow overconfident to the point of recklessness, or neglect prayer and the sacraments. Most importantly, however, they should impress indelibly upon our hearts an undying resolve never to offend the loving Creator of our souls. Our hearts, as Augustine reminds were made by Him and for Him and they are restless until they rest in Him. On the day that is destined our home-coming, may each of us finally find ourselves at home, at last -- not shut out by a stubborn unrepented refusal of God's love and forgiveness. May we find ourselves locked in that loving embrace with Our Lord, there waiting to welcome us with a loving embrace. ☩



HELL

Dieric Bouts the Elder
(1450)



FRANK ERNEST



SCRIPTURAL CORNER

**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.*

LUKE 12: 13-21

One of the multitude said to him, "Teacher, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." But he said to him, "Man, who made me a judge or divider over you?" And he said to them, "Take heed, and beware of all covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possession." And he told them a parable, saying, "The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, 'What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?' And he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, "Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God."

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

"This man's stupidity consisted in making material possession his only aim in life and his only insurance policy. It is lawful for a person to want to own what he needs for living, but if possession of material resources becomes an absolute, it spells the ultimate destruction of the individual and of society. "Increased possessions is not the ultimate goal of nations nor of individuals. All growth is ambivalent. It is essential if man is to develop as a man, but in a way it imprisons man if he considers it the supreme good, and it restricts his vision. Then we see hearts harden and minds close, and men no longer gather together in friendship but out of self-interest, which soon leads to strife and disunity. The exclusive pursuit of possessions thus becomes an obstacle to individual fulfillment and to man's true greatness. Both for nations and for individuals, avarice is the most evident form of moral underdevelopment." (Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 19).
✠

(Continued from page 4) **Jewish Persecution**

Christian standpoint, but it's obvious that attempting to equate the two is intellectually and historically dishonest and offensive.

Here's a point of significant historical importance. The territories of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire of the Catholic Hapsburgs were where the majority of the concentration camps for Jews were located. The Hapsburg rule ceased after the First World War, on the insistence of the United States and other nations. In a world "made safe for democracy" a benign, free, centuries-old Catholic monarchy was not allowed to exist. Hitler hated the Catholic aristocracy and social order in Vienna, Prague, Budapest, and Krakow, which he regarded as pro-Jewish.

In recent years, upon the death of the last Hapsburg Empress, who lived in exile, her body was returned to Austria and buried with a full state funeral. The Chief Rabbi of Vienna went to the Catholic monastery of Klosterneuberg to pay his respects to the Catholic Empress.

There, before the assembled international press, he publicly thanked the Hapsburgs for their centuries of kind treatment and friendship with the persecuted Jewish. (This writer was an eyewitness of the event.) It was the removal of the Hapsburg's Catholic leadership that led in large measure to the wholesale persecution of the Jews in modern Europe under Hitler.

Accusations about modern "Catholic" anti-Semitism usually only prove the historical ignorance and unreasoning anti-Catholicism of the accuser. ✠



**OLD RABBI
(DETAIL)
Rembrandt
(1642)**

READ ANY GOOD BOOKS?*

A PLAN FOR A LIFETIME OF SPIRITUAL READING

BY FATHER JOHN MCCLOSKEY

The purpose of our lives as Catholics is to become saints. By God's grace, we can collaborate with Him on that lifelong task. You know many of the ways already, and an indispensable one is spiritual reading, which is accessible to all who are literate. As Blessed Josemaria Escriva put it: "May your behavior and your conversation be such that each person who sees or hears you may say, 'This man reads the life of Jesus Christ.'"

Let's look at the present situation of the majority of Catholics in North America and Europe. I think it I am accurate, unfortunately, in saying that the great majority of the several hundreds of millions' only exposure to the Bible is for approximately 10 minutes at Sunday Mass. In addition, most of them have a rudimentary Catholic catechetical education that usually finished at an early age. Therefore, they don't know Sacred Scripture, and they barely remember at best the Catechism. In addition, a paltry few are familiar with any of the great Catholic spiritual classics.

On the other hand, their sight and hearing are assaulted by a daily barrage of stimulation that appears to be designed by the devil, or at least by his many friends here on earth, to keep us immersed in the world of the ephemeral and our minds off the supernatural life. Most people read only books and magazines that are consistently and increasingly trashy. The movies they watch are full of violence and sexual stimulation, as is much of the popular music. The television is on an average seven hours a day in the typical American home, turning many people into zombies fit for manipulation. Its only competition is not the healthy enjoyment of each other's company in the family, but rather computer games or the Internet, where serious temptation is only a click away.

I think this is an accurate portrayal of everyday life for hundreds of millions of Catholics. Happily, this is not yet the case all parts of the world, but given the current hegemony of the secular West, it may be soon. What is a remedy for this soul-stultifying if not soul-destroying assault by the culture of death? One answer is Catholic spiritual reading, which is available for all who have eyes to see or ears to hear (Let's not forget books on tape!) and money to buy books or libraries to borrow from.

* * * * *

"Reading indeed has made many saints." I believe it would be difficult to think of any saint who was not deeply influenced not only by spiritual reading before he dedicated himself to God's work on this earth, but also who did not continue spiritual reading as an integral part of their daily routine until death.

St. Thomas Aquinas says: "Nothing is in the intellect that did not first come to us through the senses." The wonderful part of it is that we are at a distinct advantage, as the years and centuries go by, as we certainly could never begin to cover even a small portion of the hundreds of the thousands of great spiritual clas-



**SCHOLAR WITH
HIS BOOKS**

*Gerbrand van den
Eeckhout
(1671)*

***Reprinted from
New Covenant
November 2001.**

Read Any Good Books? (Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19) **Read Any Good Books?**

sics and of the poetry and prose inspired by a Catholic worldview.

Look at the example of St. Augustine, who heard “*Tolle et lege*” (“*Pick up and read!*”) and opened the Gospel to a section that changed his life, and the course of Christian civilization as a result. St. Anthony, the founder of monasticism, was so moved by reading the story of the rich young man that he followed the injunction, “Sell everything you have, give it to the poor, and come follow Me.” Without his obedience to the Word, who knows if Christianity could have survived the onslaught of the barbarian invasion. St. Ignatius, recuperating in his bed from grave battle wounds, threw away the equivalent of today’s pulp fiction, started spiritual reading that inspired him to change his life radically, embrace Christ, and founded the Jesuits, the great champions of the Catholic Reformation. World history again changed.

Or in more modern times, think of the young Anglican divine, John Henry Newman, who reading over and over again the Fathers of the Church came to realize that, as an Anglican, his position was analogous to a Semi-Pelagian. He read the arguments of St. Athanasius, who said that only the Catholic Church “surely rules the world,” and the Church was graced by one of its greatest converts whose thought still affects us today.

Take a look at the modern spiritual writer Thomas Merton who, out of idle curiosity, picked up a book by Etienne Gilson, the great French Thomist on The Elements of Christian Philosophy and was drawn to study more closely the claims of Catholicism. His study led to conversion and eventually a vocation as a Trappist monk. Flannery O’Connor, the great Southern Catholic author, made a point, she told us, of reading at least 20 minutes of the Summa each day, and her writings are suffused with the common sense and even irony of the Angelic doctor. These are just a few of the many examples that can be cited. In fact, I am sure virtually every reader of this article could tell us his own story in that regard or will be able to tell it soon!

In the apostolic blueprint for our century, “At the beginning of the New Millennium,” the Holy Father urges us to “Contemplate the face of Christ.” One of the primary means he points to is Sacred Scripture: “Scripture has its rightful place of honor in the public prayer of the Church. It is especially important that listening to the word of God should become a life-giving encounter, in the ancient and ever new tradition of *lectio divina*, which draws from the biblical text the living word which questions, directs, and shapes our lives.”

Sacred Scripture -- according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Second Vatican Council -- is the speech of God as it is put down in writing through the breath of the Holy Spirit. The Bible is composed of books in the New and Old Testaments, 72 books confirmed as canonical (or divinely inspired) by the Church at the provincial Council of Hippo in 393. It is not only our guide to salvation, from which flows virtually all Catholic theology and practice, but also forms the basis for Christian culture. Without the Bible, we surely would all be nature worshipers or worse. To paraphrase the Catechism: “The truth that God revealed, for the sake of our salvation, He confided to the Sacred Scripture.” But since the

Read Any Good Books? (Continued on page 21)



**ST IGNATIUS
LOYOLA
(DETAIL)**

**Juan Martinez
Montanes
(1610)**

(Continued from page 20) **Read Any Good Books?**

Holy Spirit worked through human authors, who used many literary forms to communicate His message, it is understandable that we look above all to the Church to guide us to the proper interpretation. After all, even St. Peter found some of St. Paul's writings puzzling! This all time best-seller, by far most quoted book in history, must be our favorite book, to be read and mediated upon for at least a few minutes each day in an orderly fashion.

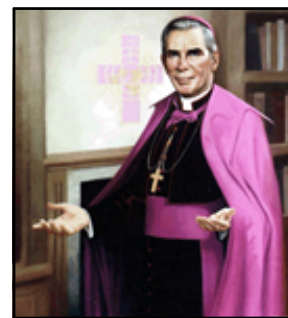
We could call the Bible the never-ending book since once we finish it, we simply begin it again, over and over, until God calls us to himself. It is most important that we learn how to live from it and make daily resolutions to that effect. Over time we will find the stories of the Bible, especially from the New Testament, as familiar as the story of our own life and we will begin to live in Christ, being soaked in His words and example.

The Bible will be a frequent inspiration for our meditation and a primary text for our work of evangelization. Having a large Bible for home and a pocket-sized version of the New Testament will assure that our book is never far from us. The home version should have if at all possible a commentary concentrating more on the practical, spiritual or ascetical sense of Scripture rather than the hermeneutical or exegetical. The commentary should be faithful to the teaching of the Church. The Bible above all is a book where by you learn how to live the Christian life, rather than settle arguments on interpretation. Happily, in more recent times, there are several that fit that bill nicely. Some good books on Christ and his life, such as Frank Sheed's To Know Christ Jesus or Fulton Sheen's Life of Christ, also can help you to "contemplate His face."

A good complement to the daily reading of Sacred Scripture is the reading of a spiritual book, normally recommended by your spiritual director. As a whole universe of books could not tell all that Jesus did and taught in His life, it will be impossible ever to run out of classic Catholic spiritual books. These books can include works from the Magisterium of the Church, lives of and books by the saints, works of theology, and a plethora of Catholic spiritual classics.

The reader should be working on just one book at a time, which he should read from beginning to end, perhaps taking notes or otherwise highlighting those points that particularly strike him, so that way they may be brought to his silent prayer, or to conversation in spiritual direction. As the Catechism says (2654): "Seek in reading and you will find in meditating; knock in mental prayer and it will be opened to you by contemplation." Good spiritual reading will lead to prayer, self-denial and an ever-growing desire to evangelize family, friends, and the culture.

Just a few words of practical advice in ending: when you do your spiritual reading, put yourself in God's presence and invoke the Holy Spirit. Make sure you are fully alert and located in a well-lit space, far from distractions. That's right -- not late at night and in bed. Don't you think God's Word and great spiritual classics deserve better than that? The reading need not last more than 15 minutes, but never less. John Paul II urges us to follow the Lord's command and "Go out into the deep for a catch." Our commitment to spiritual reading on a daily basis will help to make us "fishers of men." ✚



**BISHOP FULTON
SHEEN**

Author of
Life of Christ
(1895—1979)

PRAYER PETITIONS



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

*We all need prayers—at some times
more than others. If you have a spe-
cial need for prayer, please let us
know so we can join in prayer for
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- ♦ Mel Gibson & *Passion* Movie Staff.
 - ♦ Erving Law (serious illness).
 - ♦ Fr. Benedict Groeschel, CFR (serious injury).
 - ♦ John Thompson (employment).
- ♦ Mary Erickson (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.
 - ♦ 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).
 - ♦ 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).
- ♦ Anne Lanphar (special intention). †

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MASS AND EUCHARISTIC PROCESSION FOR THE SOLEMNITY OF THE BODY AND BLOOD OF CHRIST

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II
BASILICA OF ST JOHN LATERAN
THURSDAY, 19 JUNE 2003

1. “*Ecclesia de Eucharistia vivit*” - “The Church draws her life from the Eucharist.” The Encyclical Letter on the Eucharist, which I signed last Holy Thursday during the Mass of the Lord’s Supper, begins with these words. Today’s Solemnity of “Corpus Christi” recalls that evocative celebration and at the same time makes us relive the intense atmosphere of the Last Supper.

“Take; this is my body... This is my blood” (Mk 14: 22-24). Let us listen again to Jesus’ words while he offers his disciples the bread that has become his Body and the wine that has become his Blood. In this way he inaugurates the new paschal rite: the Eucharist is the sacrament of the new and eternal Covenant.

With those acts and words, Christ brings to fulfillment the long ordinances of the ancient rites, mentioned just now in the First Reading (cf. Ex 24: 3-8).

2. The Church returns constantly to the Upper Room as to the place of her birth. She returns to it because the Eucharistic gift establishes a mysterious “oneness in time” between the Passover of the Lord and the perennial making present of the paschal mystery in the world and in every generation (cf. *Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, n. 5).

This evening too, with deep gratitude to God, let us reflect in silence before the mystery of faith - *mysterium fidei*. Let us contemplate it with that profound feeling which, in the Encyclical, I called “Eucharistic amazement” (ibid., n. 6): immense and grateful wonder at the Sacrament in which Christ wanted “to concentrate” forever his entire mystery of love (cf. ibid., n. 5).

Let us contemplate the Eucharistic face of Christ, as did the Apostles and later, the saints of all the centuries. Let us contemplate him above all by learning at the school of Mary, “woman” of the Eucharist in her whole life” (ibid., n. 53), the One who was “the first ‘tabernacle’ in history” (ibid., n. 55).

3. This is the meaning of the beautiful tradition of Corpus Christi which is renewed this evening. With it, the Church that is in Rome also shows her constitutive link with the Eucharist, and professes joyfully that she “draws her life from the Eucharist.”

Her Bishop, the Successor of Peter, and his Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood also draw their life from the Eucharist; men and women Religious, consecrated lay people and the baptized all draw their life from the Eucharist.

Christian families in particular, to whom a few days ago the Diocesan Ecclesial Convention was dedicated, draw their life from the Eucharist. Dear families of Rome! May the living presence of Christ in the Eucharist foster the grace of marriage in you and allow you to progress on the path of conjugal and family holiness. Draw from this wellspring the secret of your unity and love, imitating the example of the Blessed husband and wife, Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi,



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





**THE INSTITUTION
OF THE EUCHARIST
(DETAIL)**

*Joos van
Wassenhove*
(1473-75)

(Continued from page 23) ***The Eucharist***

who began their days by partaking in the Eucharistic Banquet.

4. After Holy Mass, we will set out praying and singing for the Basilica of St Mary Major. With this procession we want to express symbolically our existence as pilgrims, “viatores,” bound for the heavenly homeland.

We are not alone on our pilgrimage: Christ, the Bread of life, walks with us: “panis angelorum, factus cibus viatorum” - “Lo the angel’s food is given to the pilgrim...” (Sequence).

May Jesus, the spiritual food that nourishes the hope of believers, sustain us on this journey towards Heaven and strengthen our communion with the heavenly Church.

The Most Holy Eucharist, a glimpse of Heaven appearing on earth, pierces the clouds of our history. A glorious ray of the heavenly Jerusalem, it lights up our journey (cf. Ecclesia de Eucharistia, n. 19).

5. “Ave verum corpus natum de Maria Virgine”: Hail, true Body of Christ, born of the Virgin Mary!

The soul melts into wonder and adoration before so sublime a Mystery.

- ♦ “Vere passum, immolatum in cruce pro homine.” From your death on the Cross, O Lord, flows life for us which never dies.
- ♦ “Esto nobis praegustatum mortis in examine.” O Lord, obtain that each one of us, nourished by you, may face all of life’s trials with confident hope, until the day when you will be our viaticum for the last journey to the Father’s house.
- ♦ “O Iesu dulcis! O Iesu pie! O Iesu, fili Mariae! - O sweet Jesus, O pious Jesus! O Jesus, Son of Mary!” ✠

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



DYING FOR A COOKIE

An elderly man lay dying in his bed. In death’s agony, he suddenly smelled the aroma of his favorite chocolate chip cookies wafting up the stairs.

He gathered his remaining strength, and lifted himself from the bed. Leaning against the wall, he slowly made his way out of the bedroom, and with even greater effort forced himself down the stairs, gripping the railing with both hands.

With labored breath, he leaned against the door frame, gazing into the kitchen. Were it not for death’s agony, he would have thought himself already in heaven. There, spread out upon newspapers on the kitchen table were literally hundreds of his favorite chocolate chip cookies.

Was it heaven? Or was it one final act of heroic love from his devoted wife, seeing to it that he left this world a happy man?

Mustering one great final effort, he threw himself toward the table, landing on his knees in a rumpled posture. His parched lips parted. The wondrous taste of those cookies were already in his mouth -- seemingly bringing him back to life.

The aged and withered hand, shakily made its way to a cookie at the edge of the table, when it was suddenly smacked with a spatula by his wife.

“Stay out of those!” she said. “They’re for the funeral.” ✠



THE CRACKED POT

A Water Bearer in China had two large pots; each hung on the ends of a pole, which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water. At the end of the long walk from the stream to the house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

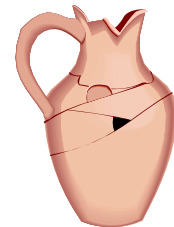
For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments; perfect for which it was made. But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that it was able to accomplish only half of what it had been made to do.

After 2 years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the Water Bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your house." The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate the table. Without you being just the way you are, there would not be this beauty to grace the house."

Moral: Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. But it's the cracks and flaws we each have that make our lives together so very interesting and rewarding. You've have to take each person for what they are, and look for the good in them. †



**THOUGHT
FOR
THE
DAY**



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"It is the trials imposed upon us by others, such as their injustices, their harsh words, their knife-in-the-back attitudes, and their peevishness, that gall us; yet these are counted as the daily crosses of the man who would be truly religious. Much of the weariness of the spiritual life is due to the constant necessity of bearing the shortcomings of others, along with the never-ending strife against our own base inclinations." †

**THE
WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS
MORE**



MORE ON PRIDE

Pride is the great perversion because rational beings were created as “partners of the creator’s goodness” not gods in the idolatrous fantasies of their own minds. In every case, the proud person “boldly frame[s] himself a conscience, with a gloss of his own making after his own fantasy.” Just as Lucifer and Adam and Eve willfully interpreted God’s commands according to their own desires rather than diligently attending to their reason, so every person has the freedom of will to do the same.

Pride, therefore, arises from the soul’s intrinsic power to imagine what it wants and then to will freely to delight in that image regardless of its truth or goodness. With this spiritual freedom, rational creatures can will to devise “worldly fantasies” of their own creation that are actually opposed to what, thus leading them to neglect the good and true in order to attend to their own passion or pleasure. Hence, the power of free will is such that what one perceives can be willfully distorted according to one’s own wishes, desires, and expectations. Given this fundamental freedom, all people are capable of rebelling against the indications of the intellect.

Augustine (a character created by More) explains this same phenomenon at some length in The City of God. The proud person chooses “to live according to himself,” rather than “abide in the truth” (14.3). By “falling away from the work of God to [his] own works,” such a person comes to prefer “to rule with a kind of pomp of empire rather than to be another’s subject” (14.11). This “self-pleaser” therefore “abandons Him to whom [he] ought to cleave as [his] end, and becomes a kind of end to [him]self” (14.13); he thus chooses “not to live as he was made to live,” but “according to a lie” of his own making (14.4). By so “refusing subjection and revolting from Him who is supreme,” the proud person actually “falls to a low condition” by debasing his true nature (14.13). It is the humble person who fulfills and actually exalts his nature by recognizing and accepting his status as a creature. As Augustine puts it, “humility enables us to submit to what is above us; and nothing is more exalted above us than God; and therefore humility, by making us subject to God; and therefore humility, by making us subject to God, exalts us.” (14.13).

Thomas More On Statesmanship

Gerald B. Wegemer

(Pg. 31) †

**For every good man is bounden
between truth and falsehood,
the Catholic Church and heretics,
between God and the devil,
to be partial, and plainly to declare himself
to be full and whole upon the one side
and clear against the other.**

Thomas More, *Apology*

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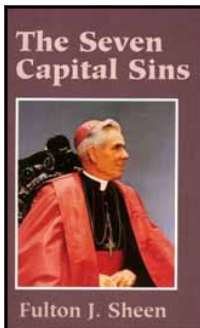
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BY: BISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

FROM THE LIBRARY



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