

Ad Veritatem

Volume 9 Issue 7

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

JULY 2004

*"The devil is ready to
put out men's eyes
(who) are content
willingly to
become blind."*

Thomas More:
A Portrait of Courage

JULY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY JULY 21, 2004 NOON

PANEL: JUDGE FRANK FIRMAT, COMMISSIONER
TOM SCHULTE, LAWYER LAURA KNOX AND
LAYMAN BOB LANPHAR

"THE IGNATIAN EXERCISES—WHY ME?"

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"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

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

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JULY **MEETING**

PANEL DISCUSSION

“THE IGNATIAN EXERCISES—WHY ME?”

WHEN:

NOON
Wed. July 21st

WHERE:

First American
Title Ins. Co.
2 First American
Way, Santa Ana

FOR DIRECTIONS
CALL (714) 800-3000

COST:

\$10 for lunch

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola is a spiritual heritage offering seekers new ways to rekindle their spiritual selves and their relationship with God. During the last several years, a number of lawyers, judges and laymen in Orange County have undertaken this 9 month prayer pilgrimage.

At this month's meeting, Hon. Frank Firmat will lead a panel discussion on prayer and contemplation and the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises and the effect on their personal lives.

The panel members will include Commissioner Tom Schulte, Lawyer Laura Knox and Layman Bob Lanphar.

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! †

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EVERYONE IS WELCOME! †

RED MASS

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2004
HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL
6:30 PM MASS
RECEPTION FOLLOWING
RESERVE THE DATE!

CALENDAR **REMINDERS**



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Father Hugh Barbour invites your questions about faith and morals. Please submit your question to Anne Lanphar at 1 First American Way, Santa Ana, CA 92707 or email to alanphar@firstam.com. The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select which question will be submitted to Fr Hugh.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

CONSCIENCE: THE TWO THOMASES, AQUINAS AND MORE, SHOW US WHAT IT IS

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

Our Chaplain

Conscience: there is scarcely a word which is of greater weight and authority in settling moral and legal disputes. Conscience: there is surely no aspect of the moral life of individuals that is less clearly understood, and often by those who use the word most. The word itself is etymologically the same as "*consciousness*," coming from the Latin word for "*knowledge*" or "*awareness*." Although conscience has a more specific meaning in modern English, its more general origin sheds valuable light on its fundamental meaning. Let's see how Saint Thomas Aquinas explains the case. His doctrine is the authoritative Catholic teaching on moral conscience used by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical letter **Veritatis Splendor** on the moral life.

As the word itself indicates, conscience is not an instinct, or feeling, or drive, or hunch, still less a preference or personal inclination. Rather, conscience is a type of knowledge or awareness, precisely the act of judgment on the part of our reason about what is to be done or avoided as good or evil. Reason's concrete judgment about what is to be done and what is not to be done is the act of our mind we call conscience, more simply "*What I know I ought to do and ought not to do.*"

In current Western society (and by "*current*" we mean from the French Revolution until the present! The Catholic view is always a long one.) the idea is prevalent that conscience is essentially a matter of the freedom to choose. This has had consequences which are absurd when they are not tragic. Choosing is a matter of the will, but knowing is a matter for the mind. Conscience is a kind of knowing. Now it is all too true that just because I know what I ought to do does not mean that I will choose to do it. But it is all the more true that just because I freely choose to do something does not make it "*conscientious*." Since conscience is a rational thing, then I am bound to consider all evidence that could have a bearing on my last judgment about what is to be done. I can not use my power of choice to exclude facts, principles, or laws which I ought to consider in my moral reasonings and then claim that I am acting in good conscience when I choose to act on deliberately defective data. In the inner tribunal of moral awareness there can be no excluded evidence.

A sane society preserves the freedom of its citizens so that they are able to find out all they need to know in order to form good consciences, and so that they will not be pressured to choose contrary to what they know and judge to be right. Freedom, then is not an absolute value, rather it is necessary to preserve the rights of reason



THE TRIUMPH OF
ST THOMAS AQUINAS

Benozzo Gozzoli

(1471)

Conscience (Continued on page 16)

LET GO AND LET GOD: A TRUE STORY OF FORGIVING AND FINDING GOD

BY HONORABLE FRANK FIRMAT

December 20, 1999:

Dear Friends:

Last week I had a settlement conference on a civil case that I think you'll find encouraging and a powerful statement of God working among us.

Diane D'aiello had sued Kevin Green, her ex-husband, more than 15 years ago and won a \$4 million dollar judgment against him after she testified against her husband in a criminal case and their divorce.

In 1980 Kevin Green was convicted by a jury of second degree murder for the rape and battery of his pregnant wife Diane D'aiello so that she lost her unborn child who she was carrying and in her 9th month. She testified at the criminal trial that her husband Kevin had hit her on the head with a hard object and then raped her shortly after they'd had a disagreement. Kevin Green testified at his criminal trial that he had gone out the door of their apartment to get a hamburger and when he came back he found his wife bleeding and in convulsions. He promptly dialed 911, passed a polygraph test, and stayed by his wife's side during her recovery from her serious head injuries until a point 6 months after the attack when she told police that Kevin had attacked her. He was then arrested and convicted by a jury and sent first to San Quentin and later to Soledad State Prison. Almost 17 years later Kevin Green was released from state prison in 1996 when the real culprit confessed to the attack.

The civil case that came to me was Kevin's attempt to set aside the \$4 million dollar civil judgment against him based on evidence that a man by the name of Gerald Parker had committed the crime. This evidence had not been available at the time of the civil judgment. During the settlement conference in chambers, I asked Kevin Green "You know, I notice a peace about you that I would not expect in a person who had spent 16+ years in state prison. How do you explain that?"

Kevin responded "Sometime after the appeals failed I turned my back on God. I became bitter, angry, and developed that hard look that inmates have. One day in 1984 I was typing a letter and my hands started shaking uncontrollably. I was at the end of my rope. I decided that I couldn't live like this in prison for the rest of my life so I decided to kill myself. My plan was to go to the third floor of the prison and jump off and hit the cement floor with my head. I started walking up the stairs to kill myself and as I got to the second floor and looked down I realized that I couldn't do it. I couldn't kill myself and I couldn't stand to live in state prison for the rest of my life. At that point I prayed the first prayer I had prayed in years. I said, 'God, I can't do this anymore, I need help.' Suddenly, I felt washed clean from my head to my feet. I felt a peace about me and a sense that now I could handle it, a sense that what came next needed to happen. It was like lights going on inside. From then on, my main prayer was 'God, please give me my life back.' God took care of me in prison and

*"From the Bench"
will include true
stories by judges or
commissioners
which will inspire,
educate or amuse*

FROM THE BENCH



**THE CONVERSION
OF SAUL**
Michelangelo
(1542-45)

From the Bench (Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5) *From the Bench*
changed me into a better man.”

“Over the years that followed I got an A.A. degree at Soledad, and I was elected President of the Men’s Advisory Council at Soledad. In that position I averted at least one race related riot, and saved a few lives. I gave V.I.P. tours at the prison.”

There were a series of "Godincidences" that combined to get Kevin Green out of prison after 16+ years:

1. Kevin had several parole hearings. Even though he was a model prisoner, he was passed over for parole because he was not remorseful. He kept insisting at his parole hearings that he was innocent. His statements made enough of an impact on a deputy D.A. by the name of Jensen so that Jensen, in a conversation with a Tustin police Sergeant by the name of Tom Tarpley, told him to keep a close look on the Green case because he had a suspicion about the case.

2. When a man by the name of Gerald Parker was arrested in about 1996, he was questioned without success by the Irvine police in their efforts to solve other crimes similar violent crimes. When Tarpley started questioning Parker, he was not getting any answers until Tarpley asked him, “What about Kevin Green. Were you involved in that one?” Parker surprised Tarpley when he said, “Is that a case with a pregnant woman?” When Tarpley said yes, Parker confessed to that crime and to other crimes. What Parker said was that he saw Kevin Green leave his apartment at about 1 a.m. and that Parker went up to the apartment as soon as Green was away. He found a pregnant woman in bed, hit her on the forehead with a 2 by 4 stick repeatedly and then raped her. When he left, she was bleeding from the head and in convulsions. Parker’s only regret was that Kevin Green, a Marine, was convicted for the crime. You see, Parker was an ex-Marine, and compassion for a fellow Marine was what convinced him to tell the truth.

3. The last "Godincidence" was that Sergeant Tarpley couldn’t get Green released just on the statement of a killer. Perhaps this was just a felon trying to help another felon. Tarpley looked at the Tustin police department evidence locker and to his surprise found the 17 year old rape evidence kit from the crime scene investigation. When that evidence was tested using DNA tests, Gerald Parker’s DNA was found in the rape kit evidence!! With this evidence, Tarpley contacted the district attorney’s office and Kevin Green was released shortly thereafter.

Now Kevin is a very eloquent speaker who speaks to universities, police groups, and has even talked to Pentagon generals on topics of criminal justice. He currently works at Walmart in Missouri, at \$8.15 an hour. He’s the paint man in the store. Disney is considering a movie of his story.

But most importantly, he continues having a close and deep and grateful personal relationship with that God who connected with him in state prison in a strong and physical way that has stayed with him since 1984.

At the settlement conference, Kevin and Diane were able to say things to each other that made room for further healing and forgiveness in their broken lives and they have had closure with that awful chapter in their lives.

May the peace that God gave Kevin, that “Peace that surpasses understanding,” be with you for all times and beyond. ☪



**CREATION
(DETAIL)**

Michelangelo
(1510)

MORE ON THE FOUR LAST THINGS

More states in the introduction to his own version of *The Four Last Things* that the consideration of this topic “contains more fruitful advice and counsel to the forming and framing of man’s manners in virtue and avoiding of sin than many whole and great volumes of the best of old philosophers or any other that ever wrote in secular literature.” These four “herbs” (death, judgment, heaven & hell) make up a medicine of such strength that they could keep the soul from sickness throughout life.

The same themes that were contained in his first spiritual handbook are developed in this second one. However, *The Four Last Things* has greater rhetorical power and uses an imagery that is far more vivid—so vivid, in fact, that it seems explicitly designed to help one recall and focus on the most fundamental ideas.

.....

To acquire a healthy soul, one relies on the great doctor, Christ. By following both the example and the instructions of this physician, any soul can achieve a “mastering of outward, flesh” pain with inward, spiritual pleasure.”

The whole point is to “keep our minds occupied with good thoughts,” for a “wandering mind” is never associated with “wisdom and good manners.” In this context, one can better understand More’s claim that “the active study of the four last things, and the deep consideration of them, is the thing that will keep you from sin.” This “diligent remembrance” is well worth the effort it takes, for it is sure to flower in “not a false imagination, but a very true contemplation” of God and the world as they exist.

THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



Thomas More Portrait of Courage Gerard B. Wegemer (Pg. 92-94) ✚

EAGLE PROJECT AT ST. JOSEPH RADIO

My name is **Mark Lanphar**, son of Anne Lanphar who is an editor of this publication. My Boy Scout Eagle project will help revitalize the chapel at **St. Joseph Radio in Orange**. The project involves some altar improvements, installing a second high-backed chair, painting the chapel walls, and performing a general cleanup. Altar improvements will include installing decorative wood materials to the altar legs and adding a insert for the altar stone (which contains the saint relic).

I am seeking private as well as corporate donations to help defray the costs of this project. All funds received in excess of project expenses will be donated to St. Joseph Radio. All donors will be recognized in my Eagle project write-up. If you would like more information, I can provide an overview of the project via email or I can give a personal presentation.

If you are willing to help, please contact me or send a check payable to St. Joseph Radio to the address below. Thank you and God bless.

Mark Lanphar
Troop 707
1102 N. Niguel Canyon Way
Brea, California 92821
714-990-8775
litbob@pacbell.net ✚

A SPECIAL REQUEST FOR SUPPORT



JOHN 20: 21-23



SCRIPTURAL CORNER

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

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

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

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

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

The Popes have consistently recommended Christians to have regular recourse to this sacrament: *"For a constant and speedy advancement in the path of virtue we highly recommend the pious practice of frequent confession, introduced by the Church under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; for by this means we grow in a true knowledge of ourselves and in Christian humility, bad habits are uprooted, spiritual negligence and apathy are prevented, the conscience is purified and the will strengthened, salutary spiritual direction is obtained, and grace is increased by the efficacy of the sacrament itself"* (Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*). Page 244 ☩



THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT

BY MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

When I was a child in the 1970s, there was a popular quip made famous by TV comedian Flip Wilson: “*the devil made me do it.*” The line clearly struck a chord with the time. The Seventies was a decade of unprecedented moral libertinism. By then, the taboos of the Fifties had long been shattered and the experiments of the Sixties had rapidly incorporated themselves into mainstream American culture. The dissolution and excess of the times had only one frontier to vanquish: the stifled, but still somehow persistent, twangs of human conscience.

Oh for the innocent Seventies! Today, Flip Wilson’s comical, yet rueful, refrain seems out-of-place, out-of-step, and hopelessly naïve. No doubt, humanity is still struggling to find someone else or something else to blame for its conduct. But, as a society, we have strayed so far beyond the moral and ontological construct of blaming the devil for our sin, that we have relegated even the notion of moral action to the dustbin, let alone the belief in malevolent spirits capable of influencing our behavior.

If the values of a culture are reflective of a society’s collective self-image, then mankind today is a storm-tossed ship with no rudder or compass. We have convinced ourselves that we are pointless product of the blind and random processes of natural selection -- a cosmic mistake with no purpose, goal, end, or meaning. Such a creature (if that noun can be used at all, since it presupposes “creation”) cannot make moral choices because it is not free to do so. Such a creature is determined by its biology and by the whimsical forces that produced it. Such a creature cannot sin, and, therefore, should not feel guilt at all. In fact, guilt and the idea of angelic forces that can influence one to sin are themselves the invention of man -- the constructs of social and cultural forces that have sought throughout time to impose collective order by instilling a sense of individual accountability.

This bleak and wretched picture we have painted of ourselves is the Devil’s greatest trick on humanity. Looking back over history, one can roughly sketch out the Evil One’s masterfully executed stratagem. First, the Devil tried to get us to blame him for our evil acts, thus “absolving” ourselves of individual responsibility (“the devil made me do it”). Once that platform was laid, he then erased himself out of the picture entirely, leading us to deny evil spirits altogether as a medieval (and, therefore, stupid) fairy tale. Eventually, the devil led us to deny even our guilt. What the mind once clearly perceived as evil inclinations, such as gluttony, alcoholism, and promiscuity, have either become “diseases” with as little moral content as bout with pneumonia, or they have transmogrified into cultural virtues.

All one need do is read the morning newspaper to see the fine mess the Devil has wrought. But he has had an eager pupil in humanity. The old tempters never lived at ease with the wagging finger of conscience. With insufficient moral fortitude to eradicate the source of our guilt -- namely, our sin -- we instead have endeavored to cherish our sins and eradicate our guilt. But guilt is the necessary component of conscience; conscience is the necessary characteristic of a free will; and free will is a necessary feature of a spiritual being -- hence, man’s and the devil’s

TRUTH OR MYTH?



ST. MICHAEL SLAYING
THE DEVIL
(Bronze)

Hubert Gerhard
(1588)

*If there is no sin
and no guilt,
then why is
there a need for
the incarnation
and redemption?
That is Satan’s
ultimate cudgel.*

(Continued from page 9) **The Devil Made Me Do It**

collective -- and hitherto successful -- campaign to convince humanity that it has no spiritual nature, and is possessed of no essential distinction from brute animals. As society settles into this grim worldview, the story of the Cross carries less and less meaning. If there is no sin and no guilt, then why is there a need for the incarnation and redemption? That is Satan's ultimate cudgel.

The more humanity stuffs its guilt and stifles its conscience, the more the world will suffer. Because freedom is the hallmark of all humanity and there is "a law written on our hearts," as St. Paul notes (Rom 2:15). Unacknowledged, unrepented sin, even for the atheist and agnostic, therefore cannot just go away. Like an infected sore, it festers, abscesses, and, eventually, metastasizes. It manifests itself in psychoses and neuroses. As Bishop Sheen observed:

When night gives inner vision scope, the guilty conscience lies awake fearful of being known in its ugliness. There is nothing that so much arouses an unhealthy fear as a hidden guilt. As the cock crowed when Peter denied Our Lord, so our nature rises in revolt against us when we have denied the Lord of conscience. Sins have a way of finding us out. Just as a refusal to study in childhood begets an ignorance in mature life, so too, sins which we rationalize away are thrust down into unconsciousness, but somehow they make themselves felt in our health, our mental attitudes and our general outlook on life.

The end result is disorder, not just on a personal -- but on a global -- scale. Bishop Sheen continues:

A sinner feels in his inmost being like a battlefield where a civil war rages. He no longer is a unit but a duality in which two forces within him struggle for mastery. Serious sin estranges the sinner from his fellow man, because a man who is not at peace with himself will not be at peace with his neighbor. World wars are nothing but the projection, into great areas of the earth's surface, of the psychic wars waging inside of muddled souls. If there were no battles going on inside of hearts, there would be no battlefields in the world. It was after Cain's murder of Abel that he asked the anti-social question, "Am I my brother's keeper?"

Standing in stark contrast against this billowing smoke cloud of doubt, guilt and psychic struggle stands the confessional box, the tribunal of mercy. The Sacrament of Penance calls forth a different picture of humanity. It reminds us that we are children of God, on a temporary sojourn through a strange, and sometimes, perilous land. It demands an account for our actions. It reminds us of our freedom and of the responsibility that freedom entails. It calls to us -- like a parent summoning a wayward child to come back home -- to be reconciled with the love that created us. In so doing, it calls us back to a place of order, harmony, and communion. As the Catechism states:

The forgiven penitent is reconciled with himself in his inmost being, where he regains his innermost truth. He is reconciled with his brethren whom he has in some way offended and wounded. He is reconciled with the Church. He is reconciled with all creation. ... Every confessional is

The Devil Made Me Do It (Continued on page 19)



**THE FALL OF THE
REBEL ANGELS**

Luca Giordano

(1666)

MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS PAUL JOHN II

**Apostolic Exhortation of Pope John Paul II
to the Bishops of California, Nevada and Hawaii
May 14, 2004**

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. "God who is rich in mercy, out of great love ..., made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:4-5). With these words of Saint Paul I warmly welcome you, the Bishops of the Church in California, Nevada and Hawaii, on the occasion of your visit "ad limina Apostolorum." Continuing my reflection on the "munus sanctificandi" of Bishops, I wish to reflect on the call to a profound conversion of heart and mind, essential to the new impetus in Christian living to which I have invited the whole Church. I am confident that a commitment to ongoing purification and deep renewal will bring about a greater appreciation of the Church's sanctifying mission and embolden her prophetic witness to American society and the world.

2. Every member of the Church is a pilgrim along the path of personal sanctification. Through baptism the believer enters into the holiness of God himself, being incorporated into Christ and made a dwelling place of his Spirit. But holiness is not only a gift. It is also a task, intrinsic and essential to discipleship, which shapes the whole of Christian life (cf. "Novo Millennio Ineunte," 30). Impelled by the Lord's explicit teaching -- "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thessalonians 4:3) -- the community of believers rightly grows in the awareness that it is holiness which best expresses the mystery of the Church (cf. "Novo Millennio Ineunte," 7) and which stirs the desire to give "striking witness" ("Lumen Gentium," 39).

As Bishops you must be at the forefront of this spiritual journey of sanctification. Your episcopal ministry of ecclesial service, marked by your personal quest for holiness and your vocation to sanctify others, is a participation in Jesus' own ministry and directed towards the building up of his Church. It demands a pattern of life that unequivocally rejects any temptation to ostentation, careerism or the recourse to secular models of leadership and instead requires you to bear witness to the kenosis of Christ, in pastoral charity, humility and simplicity of life (cf. Code of Canon Law, Canon 387; "Ecclesia in America," 28). Walking in the presence of the Lord, you will grow in a holiness lived with and for your priests and people, inspiring in them the desire to embrace the high standards of Christian life and guiding them along the footsteps of Christ.

3. The credibility of the Church's proclamation of the Good News is intimately linked to the commitment of her members to personal sanctification. The Church is always in need of purification and so she must constantly follow the path of penance and renewal (cf. "Lumen Gentium," 8). The Father's will that all believers be sanctified is amplified by the Son's fundamental exhortation: "Repent, and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15). Just as Peter boldly echoed this imperative at Pentecost (cf. Acts 2:38), you are charged with heralding a kerygmatic call to conversion and pen-

Pope's Message (Continued on page 12)



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



(Continued from page 11) Pope's Message

ance, proclaiming the boundless mercy of God, and inviting everyone to experience the call to reconciliation and hope at the heart of the Gospel (cf. "Pastores Gregis," 39).

The courage to face the crisis of the loss of the sense of sin, to which I alerted the whole Church early in my Pontificate (cf. "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia" 18), must be addressed today with particular urgency. While the effects of sin abound -- greed, dishonesty and corruption, broken relationships and exploitation of persons, pornography and violence -- the recognition of individual sinfulness has waned. In its place a disturbing culture of blame and litigiousness has arisen which speaks more of revenge than justice and fails to acknowledge that in every man and woman there is a wound which, in the light of faith, we call original sin (cf. *ibid.*, 2).

Saint John tells us: "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8). Sin is an integral part of the truth about the human person. To recognize oneself as a sinner is the first and essential step in returning to the healing love of God. Given this reality, the Bishop's duty to indicate the sad and destructive presence of sin, both in individuals and in communities, is in fact a service of hope. Far from being something negative, it strengthens believers to abandon evil and embrace the perfection of love and the fullness of Christian life. Let us boldly announce that indeed we are not the sum total of our weaknesses and failures! We are the sum of the Father's love for us, and capable of becoming the image of his Son!

4. The lasting peace and harmony so longed for by individuals, families and society can only be won through that conversion which is a fruit of mercy and constituent of genuine reconciliation. As Bishops you have the difficult yet satisfying duty of promoting the true Christian understanding of reconciliation. Perhaps no story better illustrates the profound drama of metanoia than the parable of the Prodigal Son, upon which I have elsewhere commented at length (cf. "Dives in Misericordia," 5-6). The prodigal son is in a certain sense all men and women. We all can be lured by the temptation to separate ourselves from the Father and thus suffer loss of dignity, humiliation and shame, but equally so we all can have the courage to turn back to the Father who embraces us with a love which, transcending even justice, manifests itself as mercy.

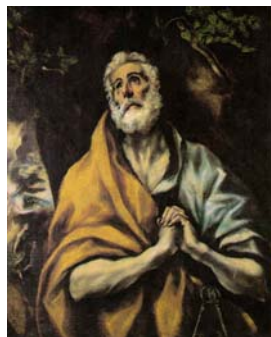
Christ, who reveals the abounding mercy of God, demands the same of us, even when confronted with grievous sin. Indeed mercy "constitutes the fundamental content of the messianic message of Christ and the constitutive power of his mission" (*ibid.*, 6) and thus can never be set aside in the name of pragmatism. It is precisely the father's fidelity to the merciful love proper to him as a father that sees him restore the filial relationship of his son who "was lost and is found" (Luke 15:32). As pastors of your flock it is with this merciful love -- never a mere sense of favor -- that you too must "reach down to every prodigal son, to every human misery, and above all to every form of moral misery, to sin" ("Dives in Misericordia," 6). In this way you will draw good from evil, restore life from death, revealing anew the authentic face of the Father's mercy so necessary in our times.

5. Dear Brothers, I particularly wish to encourage you in your promotion of the Sacrament of Penance. As a divinely instituted means by which the Church offers the pastoral activity of reconciliation, it is "the only ordinary way for the faithful to



**CHRIST HANDING
THE KEYS TO
ST. PETER**

Pietro Perugino
(1481-82)



**THE REPENANT
PETER**

El Greco
(1600)

Pope's Message (Continued on page 16)

THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH
PART TWO: THE CHRISTIAN MYSTERY,
SECTION TWO: "I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT"
CHAPTER TWO: THE SACRAMENTS OF HEALING
ARTICLE 4: THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE & RECONCILIATION
IN BRIEF

1485 “On the evening of that day, the first day of the week,” Jesus showed himself to his apostles. “He breathed on them, and said to them: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.’” (Jn 20:19, 22-23).

1486 The forgiveness of sins committed after Baptism is conferred by a particular sacrament called the sacrament of conversion, confession, penance, or reconciliation.

1487 The sinner wounds God’s honor and love, his own human dignity as a man called to be a son of God, and the spiritual well-being of the Church, of which each Christian ought to be a living stone.

1488 To the eyes of faith no evil is graver than sin and nothing has worse consequences for sinners themselves, for the Church, and for the whole world.

1489 To return to communion with God after having lost it through sin is a process born of the grace of God who is rich in mercy and solicitous for the salvation of men. One must ask for this precious gift for oneself and for others.

1490 The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future. Conversion touches the past and the future and is nourished by hope in God's mercy.

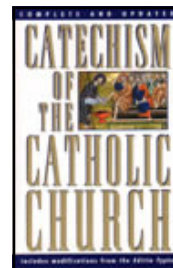
1491 The sacrament of Penance is a whole consisting in three actions of the penitent and the priest's absolution. The penitent's acts are repentance, confession or disclosure of sins to the priest, and the intention to make reparation and do works of reparation.

1492 Repentance (also called contrition) must be inspired by motives that arise from faith. If repentance arises from love of charity for God, it is called “perfect” contrition; if it is founded on other motives, it is called “imperfect.”

1493 One who desires to obtain reconciliation with God and with the Church, must confess to a priest all the unconfessed grave sins he remembers after having carefully examined his conscience. The confession of venial faults, without being necessary in itself, is nevertheless strongly recommended by the Church.

1494 The confessor proposes the performance of certain acts of “satisfaction” or “penance” to be performed by the penitent in order to repair the harm caused by sin and to re-establish habits befitting a disciple of Christ.

1495 Only priests who have received the faculty of absolving from the authority of the Church can forgive sins in the name of Christ.



CATECHISM CORNER



THE CONFESSION

Pietro Longhi

(Date Unknown)

(Continued from page 13) **Catholic Catechism**



CONFESSIONALS

*Guilielmus
Kerricks*

(1713)

1496 The spiritual effects of the sacrament of Penance are:

- reconciliation with God by which the penitent recovers grace;
- reconciliation with the Church;
- remission of the eternal punishment incurred by mortal sins;
- remission, at least in part, of temporal punishments resulting from sin;
- peace and serenity of conscience, and spiritual consolation;
- an increase of spiritual strength for the Christian battle.

1497 Individual and integral confession of grave sins followed by absolution remains the only ordinary means of reconciliation with God and with the Church.

1498 Through indulgences the faithful can obtain the remission of temporal punishment resulting from sin for themselves and also for the souls in Purgatory. ✚

CYBER HEAVEN



A Voice in the Desert



[Audio](#)



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"The voice of one crying in the desert, 'Make ready the way of the Lord.'"

This website is a wealth of resources and information including the sermons of Fr. Robert Altier of the Church of St. Agnes in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has so inspired his parishioners that they memorialize his sermons and created this website to share them. The site also contains wonderful information written by Fr. Altier as well as links to other Catholic websites.

www.desertvoice.org ✚

GOD'S MERCY AND THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

BY FR. ROBERT ALTIER

CHURCH OF ST. AGNES, ST PAUL, MINNESOTA

In the first reading today, we hear the tragic story of David's adultery and then his murder of Uriah, the Hittite. When we consider what it is that David did and just how heinous this crime is that he committed against this woman and her husband, then we look at God's response. Tomorrow, I suspect, we will see more clearly the response of the Lord; but the fact is that God forgives David. When Nathan the prophet comes and confronts him, he says to David, "God on His part has forgiven you."

Now, of course, there are going to be consequences to his sin; we have to be very clear about that. The forgiveness of sin does not imply that the effects of the sin are taken away or that there are no consequences for our actions. It would be as if we were to say, "Well, if I take enough drugs, let me see what will happen to my brain and I'll just repent of it afterwards." You are still going to have brain damage. The fact that you have destroyed some cells in your brain is not going to go away because you went to confession. This sin itself will be forgiven, assuming that you are truly repentant for what it is that you have done, but the physical effects that it has upon you and the spiritual effect – that is, how far backwards in the spiritual life you have placed yourself because of putting yourself into serious sin – those effects are not taken away by the fact that your sin is forgiven.

Also, we need to be very clear that when we talk about sin being forgiven and the effects remaining, the weaknesses that follow from it remain as well. For instance, if we give in to some point along the same line as David, some point of impurity of whatever variety it might be, and then we realize that what we did was a foolish thing and we get to confession, the memories of what we have done would still be there, certain fantasies or images might still plague us because of what it is that we were willfully giving into. The sin itself is gone, but, once again, the effects remain. We need to be very clear about that distinction between the sin and its effects. Some people assume that because they still struggle with the weaknesses that are remaining due to their sinfulness that their sin has not been forgiven. That is simply not true. If you have been to confession and you are truly sorry for your sin, it is gone; it is no longer on your soul. Now what needs to happen is that through prayer and hard work you need to overcome the effects of the sin. You need to be able to overcome whatever weaknesses are there.

And some effects will never go away. If we go back to the drug idea, your brain cells (unless God works some kind of miracle) are simply not going to reproduce. If you have done something to harm your body, it is not necessarily going to get better if it is a permanent kind of thing. Those effects will be there. God actually allows those things to happen in order to remind us that we can really mess ourselves up badly. It reminds us of our own foolishness, our own weaknesses. So it is not necessarily a bad thing that those effects remain; they can actually become the means to our salvation. For instance, if you think of somebody who is hot-rodding around and gets themselves into an accident and winds up being paralyzed, it is precisely the paralysis which is keeping them from committing a whole lot of other mortal sins. And if they had their ability to walk returned to them, it may well be that they would lose their salvation because of the foolish things

God's Mercy (Continued on page 20)



**THE MERCIFUL
CHRIST
(DETAIL)**

*Juan Martinez
Montanes*

(1603)

***No matter what it
is that we have
done – no matter
how big it is or
how bad it is, it
does not matter –
if you have
repented of your
sin and you have
confessed it in
the confessional,
it is gone forever.
That is the
promise of
Jesus Christ...***



ST. THOMAS MORE

*Hans Holbein
the Younger
(1527)*

(Continued from page 4) Conscience

and truth. Such a sane society would be ours if the principles which are common both to our Constitution and to sound and perennial Catholic philosophy were understood and accepted. Lamentably, by the sheer misuse of words we have a society in which the "*freedom to choose*" is a higher principle than the obligation to consider reality in all its aspects and to make moral judgments that are truly conscientious. Freedom of conscience means now simply the right to do as one wills.

Our great patron Saint Thomas More was a true martyr for conscience's sake. He would not professionally countenance what he knew to be wrong. Henry VIII insisted that his divorce was a moral imperative for him, and tried to get Thomas to go along with his "*reasoning*." The whole sordid thing was even called in polite and politically correct company "*the matter of the King's conscience*." Henry's delicate "*conscience*" led to several severed heads. Then as now, passion, sensuality, and self interest will masquerade as "*conscience*." Thomas More did not adopt the "*I'm personally opposed, but if that's what you believe...*" approach. He knew that the king ought to know better. Contemporary parallels abound. Anyone for martyrdom? †

(Continued from page 12) Pope's Message

reconcile themselves with God and the Church" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1484). Though it cannot be denied that the profound power of this Sacrament is often considered today with indifference it is also the case that young people in particular readily give testimony to the graces and transforming benefits it bestows. Strengthened by this encouraging message I again appeal directly to you and to your priests: arm yourselves with more confidence, creativity and perseverance in presenting it and leading people to appreciate it (cf. "Novo Millennio Ineunte," 37). Time spent in the confessional is time spent in service of the spiritual patrimony of the Church and the salvation of souls (cf. "Reconciliatio et Paenitentia," 29).

As Bishops, it is of special importance for you to have frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in order to obtain the gift of that mercy of which you yourselves have been made ministers (cf. "Pastores Gregis," 13). Since you are called to show forth the face of the Good Shepherd, and therefore to have the heart of Christ himself, you more than others must make your own the Psalmist's ardent cry: "A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:12). Sanctified by the graces received in your regular reception of the sacrament, I am confident that you will encourage your brother priests and indeed all the faithful to discover anew the full beauty of this sacrament.

6. With fraternal affection I share these reflections with you and assure you of my prayers as you seek to make the sanctifying and reconciling mission of the Church ever more appreciated and recognizable in your ecclesial and civic communities. The message of hope which you proclaim to a world often fraught with sinfulness and division will not fail to evoke fresh fervor and a renewed zeal for Christian life! With these sentiments I commend you to Mary, the Mother of Jesus, in whom is effected the reconciliation of God with humanity. I gladly impart to you and to the priests, deacons, religious, and lay faithful of your Dioceses my Apostolic Blessing. †

ST. MICHAEL AND
THE SATAN

*Raffaello
(1518)*

PENANCE: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?*

FATHER C. JOHN MCCLOSKEY III, STD

Surely one of the most riveting images of this century was the encounter between Pope John Paul II and Mehmet Ali Agca in Agca's jail cell, between a Catholic and a Muslim, between an assassin and his target. We do not know what transpired in their brief conversation, but we can be sure that the Pope offered his personal forgiveness and that of the Lord who is "Rich in Mercy" to the assassin who we hope both asked for and accepted it. The meeting underscores the Holy Father's commitment on the deepest personal level to a pastoral ministry of reconciliation.

It calls up another photographic image of the Pope sitting patiently in one of the confessionals in the Basilica of St. Peter's as he does each year on Good Friday. There he listens to the sins in many languages of the several dozen who are able to confess to the Vicar of Christ. His example is much more powerful than simple words. He is telling us that God's mercy is unconditional and super-abundant and that it is most available to us as Catholics through the sincere confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance.

In this final year of preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000, the Holy Father in his Apostolic Letter, "As the Third Millennium Draws Near" asks us to "make a journey of authentic conversion," beginning with "a renewed appreciation and more intense celebration of the Sacrament of Penance." His call is particularly important in contemporary society, "where the very foundations of an ethically correct vision of human existence often seem to have been lost." The Pope's words strike a deep chord within us Americans. There are many signs of the need for conversion and an almost desperate search for forgiveness. One is the tens of thousands of "forgiveness practitioners" who charge hundreds of dollars an hour to offer to those seeking forgiveness what can be received for free from Christ through His Church. The decay in both public and private morality, which have intersected at the highest levels of our government, reflects a society that has lost its ethical bearings and has serious difficulty in recognizing and acknowledging its sins. The decay is most evident in issues concerning the foundations of any healthy society—marriage, family, and education. Restoration and renewal for our society in the next century ultimately can only come from a decision to convert and do penance. Through the frequent practice of the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist Americans Catholic will be enabled to build "the civilization of love and truth" that the Holy Father foresees.

Some question the need for a Sacrament of penance today. With all the 'advances' in psychology and psychiatry does sin still exist? Is being sorry for our sins simply enough, or is more required of us? The answer to all the questions is an emphatic Yes. From the first cry of John the Baptist -- "Repent and be baptized!" -- the Church has always primarily been about conversion, and penance leading to forgiveness of sin and union with God.

The Catechism tells us that "sin is before all else an offense against God, a rupture of communion with him which damages communion with the Church." Our



**THE PENANCE OF
ST. JEROME**

*Piero della
Francesca*

(1450)

*First published in the
Columbia Magazine
of the Knights of
Columbus in the
April 1999 issue.*

Penance (Continued on page 18)

(Continued from page 17) **Penance**

serious or mortal sins normally can be forgiven in the Church's Sacrament of Penance, the sacrament Christ instituted precisely for this purpose.

As the Catechism explains, "Only God forgives sin. Since he is the Son of God, Jesus says of himself, 'The Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins.' Further, by virtue of his divine authority he gives this power to men to exercise in his name: "'As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained.'" It is significant that this act is one of the very first that our Lord performs after His Resurrection. It is as if to say he knew that his children in the Church, while called to be saints, would remain sinners always in need of his mercy and the assurance that they were truly forgiven. He has made sure ever since during two thousand years that through his Church priests will always be available for this life-restoring Sacrament.

John Paul II's most often repeated and presumably favorite stories in the Gospel are those with the rich young man and the prodigal son. The rich young man shows a sincere capability and interest in living the moral law as expressed in the Commandments, but not in converting fully to Christ when he receives the instruction to sell all his possessions, give them to the poor, and follow Him.

The prodigal son, a fictional character in the parable, sinks to the depths of degradation through serious habitual sin, but nonetheless is forgiven when he approaches his father, confesses his sin, and asks for forgiveness. It is important to note that the father, who represents God the Father comes out to meet him and rejoices wonderfully, showering his son with gifts and affection. This is how we as Catholics should view the Sacrament of Penance, a joyful opportunity to convert through confessing our sins, expressing sincere contrition, doing penance, and preparing to unite ourselves more closely to Christ through the sacraments, primarily, the Eucharist, and prayer.

From the very beginning of the history of the Church it was recognized that a serious sin could only be forgiven by going to the Bishop or priest, confessing one's sin, and receiving a penance to perform. In the early centuries the penance was public and often required years before the penitent received reconciliation, in some places only once in a lifetime.

During the seventh century Irish missionaries, inspired by the Eastern monastic tradition, took to continental Europe the "private" practice of penance. From that time on, the sacrament has been performed in secret between penitent and priest. The penitent confesses his serious sins by name and number, anonymously if he so desires. The priest, who maintains secrecy under pain of excommunication, listens as judge and doctor, offers advice, imposes a penance to be performed, and gives sacramental absolution. Thus it has been to this day. Today the Church highly encourages frequent confession as means not only of achieving forgiveness, but also of facilitating spiritual direction and growth in the virtues of humility, and self-knowledge. Confession is perhaps the most effective way for a Catholic to recover the lost sheep all around him, the millions of erring Catholics. Your relatives, and friends are normally only one good confession away from reconciliation with Christ and the Church. You can be the instrument of God to bring them back; they will be eternally grateful. Start accepting for yourself, this great gift from God that is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The priest at your local parish is waiting for you as patiently as the patron saint of secular priests, the Holy Cure of Ars did in the last century. ✚



LAST JUDGMENT

Giotto di Bondone

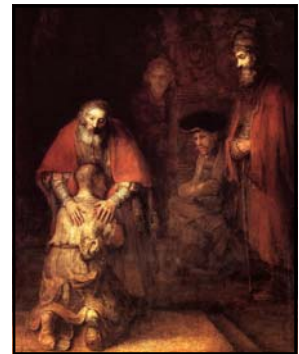
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(Continued from page 10) ***The Devil Made Me Do It***

a special and blessed place from which, with divisions wiped away, there is born new and uncontaminated a reconciled individual--a reconciled world! (Catechism of the Catholic Church, § 1455, p. 365 (Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1992), quoting John Paul II, *Reconciliation and Penance*.)

We, as Catholics, do not heed the call as we should. Because we are a pilgrim people, we, much like the errant Hebrews who threw themselves before the golden calf, sometimes cannot help being influenced by the poisonous culture in which we temporarily find ourselves immersed. We too frequently emphasize our inherent human goodness to the neglect of a reckoning of our own evil (the “I’m OK; You’re OK” syndrome). We find it more compelling to hold hands than to beat our breast in repentance. We too easily find ourselves in the communion queue, and too rarely in the confessional box. The unhappy reality of the Church of these latter days is that Penance has become known as the neglected sacrament.

Yet, it is Penance, the Sacrament of Mercy, in which we uniquely find ourselves before the unending ocean of God’s merciful forgiveness. It is not a priest behind the confessional screen, but Christ Himself, lifting a hand of absolution over our bowed heads, just as He did to the woman taken in adultery or the Samaritan at the well. It is in this Sacrament, and no other, that the scarlet of our sinful acts, thoughts, and omissions -- things that would not otherwise find the light of day -- are instantly made white as snow. It is in the confessional box that the once uninhabitable corridors of our souls yield to the purifying light of God’s unconditional love. It is in the Sacrament of Penance that our baptismal garments are once again rendered free of stain and our humanity is restored. The Sacrament of Penance is the antidote to our toxic culture. ✚



**THE RETURN OF THE
PRODIGAL SON**

Rembrandt

(1669)



A DESERT IN BLOOM

A desert in bloom speaks a language of praise,
Its beauty in stillness grows rich beyond sight.
Adorned for a banquet her splendid array,
Whose barrenness blooms for the King, His delight.
Creation her beauty inspired it sings,
In likeness to once a poor maiden avowed;
Resounding her elegance mystical brings,
Humility speaks exaltation aloud.
My heart gives in silence to love a great voice,
I cross my true passion, desires refine;
Ultior motives suspended by choice;
To suffer rejoicing for love is divine.
In everything immanent Spirit reside;
Indwelling the darkness enlightened abide.

Father Robert Altier

(Continued from page 15) God's Mercy

that they would be out committing. So, in God's mercy, He spared them that. He keeps them in a very difficult position, but it is precisely by accepting that and working with it that they become saints. That is how they will save their souls.

We need to be very careful when it comes to these areas of sin to keep the proper distinctions and always to have that complete reliance on God, that no matter how awful the sin might have been – think of the worst thing that you can possibly imagine; it probably is not going to relate quite to what David did, but perhaps some of us have done even worse – you can trust in the mercy of God. When David wrote Psalm 51 and he begged God for mercy, he received it. God on His part had forgiven David his sin; and God, in His mercy, will do the same for us.

The means to the forgiveness of sin is so simple. God did not want us to have to go through anything too extraordinarily difficult, and He wanted it to be very clear for us that indeed our sins are gone. All He is asking is that we would repent, which is to be truly sorry for what we have done with the intention that we will never do it again, and to come before His priest like all of those of old who had to go before the priest with whatever affliction they may have had (their leprosy, physically) and the priest is the one who had to declare them to be clean. So now we come with our spiritual leprosy before the priest, and it is a priest and a priest alone who is able to declare that we have been made clean. We confess our sin to the priest. Just as the people of old had to show their spots on their bodies to the priest, so now we show the spots on our soul to the priest. He is the one and the only one who can remove it; he alone then declares that we are clean. It is the Lord Who speaks at that moment. And when we leave the confessional, we must never ever doubt that indeed our sins have been forgiven, that God in His mercy has removed those sins from our soul. True, the effects remain and we have to work through those, but the sin itself is gone.

It is in that that we must have complete and absolute trust in God. No matter what it is that we have done – no matter how big it is or how bad it is, it does not matter – if you have repented of your sin and you have confessed it in the confessional, it is gone forever. That is the promise of Jesus Christ, and it is a promise that is firm. For our part, even in our weakness, we must trust completely in the promise of God that our sins will be forgiven. †



THE PRODIGAL SON

Salvator Rosa

(1640s)

Comments or Suggestions?

If you have any suggestions or comments, please feel free to submit your letter or email to any editor:

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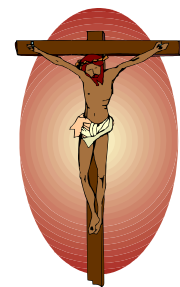
The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select which letters or parts thereof are printed. †

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

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

PRAYER PETITIONS

- ♦ Frank J. Dumbauskas (serving in Iraq).
 - ♦ Emily (born premature).
 - ♦ Martha (Emily's mom).
 - ♦ Karl Hansen (serious illness).
- ♦ Lauri Becker Kalinowski (young mother with serious illness).
 - ♦ Erving Law (died).
- ♦ 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).
- ♦ Milos & Edith Myrik (serious illness).
- ♦ Scott Smith (illness).
- ♦ Ryan Ronk (serious injury).
- ♦ Massimo (child with serious illness).
 - ♦ Pope John Paul II.
- ♦ John Flynn IV (life changes).
- ♦ All members of the US Armed Forces.
 - ♦ 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). †



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"God is more merciful to the men who mock Him than men are merciful to the gods they make. When David sinned, God gave him the choice of being punished either by Him or by man. David chose God - His Mercy is greater." †



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



**ST. ANTHONY THE
HERMIT TORTURED
BY DEVILS**

Sassetta

(1423)

IF I WERE THE DEVIL

Paul Harvey

I would gain control of the most powerful nation in the world.

I would delude their minds into thinking that they had come from man's effort, instead of God's blessings.

I would promote an attitude of loving things and using people, instead of the other way around.

I would dupe entire states into relying on gambling for their state revenue.

I would convince people that character is not an issue when it comes to leadership.

I would make it legal to take the life of unborn babies.

I would make it socially acceptable to take one's own life, and invent machines to make it convenient.

I would cheapen human life as much as possible, so that the lives of animals are valued more than human beings.

I would take God out of the schools, where even the mention of His name was grounds for a lawsuit.

I would come up with drugs that sedate the mind and target the young, and I would get sports heroes to advertise them.

I would get control of the media, so that every night I could pollute the mind of every family member for my agenda.

I would attack the family, the backbone of any nation.

I would make divorce acceptable and easy, even fashionable, because if the family crumbles, so does the nation.

I would compel people to express their most depraved fantasies on canvas and movie screens, and I would call it art.

I would convince the world that people are born homosexuals, and that their lifestyles should be accepted and marveled.

I would convince the people that right and wrong are determined by a few who call themselves authorities, and refer to their agenda as politically correct.

I would persuade people that the church is irrelevant and out of date, and the Bible is for the naïve.

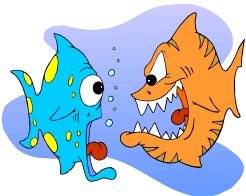
I would dull the minds of Christians, and make them believe that prayer is not important, and that faithfulness and obedience are optional.

I guess I would leave things pretty much the way they are. ✚

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



SIBLINGS & THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



A Sunday school teacher: was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year old students.

After explaining the commandment to "honor" thy Father and thy Mother, she asked, "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?"

Without missing a beat one little boy: (the oldest of a family) answered, "Thou shall not kill." ✚

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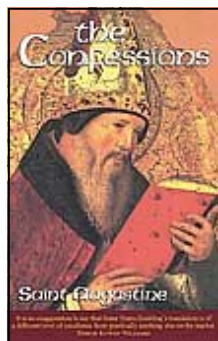
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