

# Ad Veritatem

Volume 10 Issue 2

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

FEBRUARY 2005

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

Thomas More:  
A Portrait of Courage

## FEBRUARY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 16, 2005 NOON

SPEAKER: FR. NORBERT WOOD, O. PRAEM

*“THE ‘DA VINCI CODE’ REVISITED”*

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](mailto:dbelz@kuhnbelz.com), or  
Anne Lanphar at (714) 800-3225 or email to [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com).  
VISIT OUR WEBSITE at [www.stthomasmore.net](http://www.stthomasmore.net)

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## **FEBRUARY** **MEETING**

# **FR. NORBERT WOOD, O. PRAEM** ***“THE ‘DA VINCI CODE’ REVISITED”***

Fr. Wood will again review and explain the illogical and false anti-Christian assertions in the currently popular “Da Vinci Code.”

### **WHEN:**

**NOON**

**Wed. Feb. 16**

### **WHERE:**

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

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

### **COST:**

**\$10 for lunch**

Jeffery Lee Wood was born in Oklahoma on October 12, 1956, one of 7 children. He grew up in Pennsylvania and Minnesota. He entered the Norbertine Order at St. Michael's Abbey in Orange County in 1975 and was ordained in 1981. He attended the Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome where he obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology followed by three years of liturgical studies at the Pontifical Liturgical Institute of St. Anselm in Rome.

Within the Norbertine Order, he has served as the Associate Master of novices and postulants and a teacher at St. Michael's Abbey. He was the Master of professed and novices at the Norbertine monastery of Tepl in Villingen, Germany. Fr. Norbert was the local superior of the Norbertine community in San Pedro, California and a teacher at Mater Dei and Mary Star of the Sea high schools. Fr. has also served on numerous religious and civic committees.

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

**EVERYONE IS WELCOME! ☩**

## **SPECIAL LENTEN SERVICES**

**DURING LENT,  
MASSES WILL BE HELD ON:  
ASH WEDNESDAY &  
EVERY THURSDAY  
EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

### **BUSCH LAW PRIVATE CHAPEL**

**FATHER JOHN HILTZ  
FREE LUNCH PROVIDED.  
2532 DUPONT AVE, IRVINE  
TIME: NOON  
RSVP NOT REQUIRED ☩**

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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](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com). The Editorial Staff reserves the right to select which question will be submitted to Fr Hugh.*

## DO SAINTS GO TO PURGATORY?

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

*Our Chaplain*

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN

**QUESTION:** *When a person is declared a ‘blessed’ (beatus) or ‘saint’ of the Church by the Holy Father, we know that person is in heaven. Does being a blessed or a saint mean that person went straight to heaven after death, or can even a saint spend some time in Purgatory?*

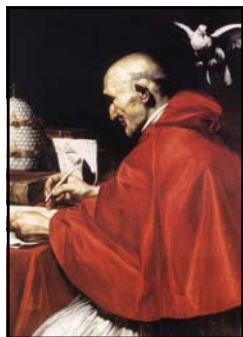
**ANSWER:** By canonizing someone as a saint (beatification being a major preliminary step), the Church determines that he or she practiced the virtues of Christian life to an heroic degree, is now in heaven, and may be formally honored in the Church's Liturgy. The saint is presented to the whole Church as a model Christian and invoked as an intercessor with God. But none of this means that the saint or blessed did not have to pass through purgatory before entering heaven.

Pope St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 540-604) pointed out that those in authority have greater merits because of the good they accomplish by teaching and ruling, and so merit a high degree of heavenly glory. Yet because their faults also are greater and more damaging to others, they owe a greater debt to divine justice in purgatory. So it's possible to have an immense heavenly reward, and yet still be necessary to expiate the temporal effects due to sin in purgatory.

St. Paul discusses this purification of suffering after death that some Christians must pass through, and which we call “purgatory,” in 1 Corinthians 3:10-17. He describes this purification as taking place after death (verse 13, cf. Heb. 9:27), before being “saved” (verse 15) - that is, entering into the beatific vision - and that it involves suffering that is described as “passing through fire” (verse 15).

Our Lord reminded us that, “To whom much has been given, much will be expected.” This is quite true of those who have been given the grace of great sanctity. St. Margaret Mary was apparently told by our Lord that her confessor, St. Claude La Colombiere, “passed through” purgatory after death. St. Peter Damian refers to seeing saints in purgatory. The only saints traditionally understood to go “straight to heaven” are the martyrs, but even this is only a devout, though well-founded, tradition.

The saints themselves, St. Monica, for example, asked for prayers after their death. We shouldn't imagine that this is just false humility on their part, for that would not match up with the heroic sanctity we know they had. The saints are sinners like us - repentant sinners, of course. One final point: We should not be quick to privately “canonize” every good person we know who dies, assuming they are already in heaven. They may be, but they may not be. Let's never neglect to pray for all those who have “gone before us marked with the sign of faith.” When they get to heaven, you can be sure they'll be praying for us! ☩



ST. GREGORY  
THE GREAT

*Carlo Saraceni*  
(1610)

## PURGATORY

BY MICHAEL SHONAFELT, ESQ.

*“And even in our sleep pain that cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart, and in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom to us by the awful grace of God.” — Aeschylus*

We live in a universe that is slowly winding down. Everything in it tends to fall into disarray, decomposition, and disorder. This slow cosmic death, known to physicists as the “second law of thermodynamics,” or the law of “entropy” takes place also at the local level. In fact, it is a hallmark of the human condition in this post-Eden world. Each human being is subject to the inertial weight of his or her own inherited imperfection: It is easier to give in than to resist; to rest than to work; to go with the crowd than to take the road less traveled.

Yet, even in this world of dying, to quote the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins, “there lives the dearest freshness deep down things.” There is a dynamism that tries everywhere to buck the trend of death. And so, life’s Springs invariably follow upon its Winters: forgiveness replaces sin, grace builds on nature, and the resurrection follows upon mortality.

But, in the economy of the fallen universe, this triumph of life over death always comes at a cost. Nothing worthwhile is gained but with sweat and, many times, with tears. That is particularly true with holiness. The process of burning away the dross of sin and slowly revealing the fire-tried gold of sanctity in each of our lives requires the Cross. Without the Cross, there can be no movement toward perfection. It is as if we are rough-hewn blocks of marble that must hold fast under the blasts of the sculpture’s chisel if we are to become the final, beautiful work of art that we are supposed to be.

That brings us to the doctrine of Purgatory. It is axiomatic that nothing imperfect can enter Heaven and that only the pure of heart will see God. (Rev. 12:27; Is. 35:8; Matt. 5:8.) The life-long process that works away the rough matter of sin encrusting our souls must run its course before we draw our final breath. But, what happens when death visits before that process is complete? *Purgatory*. As C.S. Lewis, a Protestant believer in Purgatory, noted:

*Our souls demand Purgatory, don't they? Would it not break the heart if God said to us, 'It is true, my son, that your breath smells and your rags drip with mud and slime, but we are charitable here and no one will upbraid you with these things, nor draw away from you. Enter into the joy'? Should we not reply, 'With submission, sir, and if there is no objection, I'd rather be cleaned first.' 'It may hurt, you know' - 'Even so, sir.'*

The doctrine is summed up in beautiful simplicity by the Catholic Church:

*All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to*

## TRUTH OR MYTH?



ST. GREGORY  
*Francisco de Goya*  
(1797)

*“Our  
souls  
demand  
Purgatory,  
don't they?”*

C. S. Lewis

(Continued from page 5) Purgatory

*enter the joy of heaven.* (Catechism of the Catholic Church at ¶1030).

The doctrine is ancient. We see in the Book of Maccabees that belief in a place of purgation after death was implicit in the belief system of ancient Judaism. Judas Maccabeus, leader of the Jews in the battle against Gorgias, discovered upon collecting his dead for burial, that many had kept under their tunics forbidden talismans dedicated to pagan gods. He ordered a collection to be taken from the remaining soldiers for a sacrifice for sin to take place in Jerusalem for the dead soldiers. It was, as the author of the Book of Maccabees notes:

*an action altogether fine and noble, prompted by his belief in the resurrection. For had he not expected the fallen to rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead, whereas if he had in view the splendid recompense reserved for those who make a pious end, the thought was holy and devout. Hence, he had this expiatory sacrifice offered for the dead, so that they might be released from their sin.* (2 Macc. 12:43-45.)

What kinds of suffering do the souls in Purgatory endure? It remains a mystery. But, it is certain, that the suffering of the souls in Purgatory is great, and, according to St. Thomas is a fire that purifies, but does not consume. St. Gregory the Great notes that the pain of Purgatory “*will be more intolerable than any one can suffer in this life.*” (Ps. 3 poenit., n. 1). The suffering likely arises from seeing the sins -- committed so blithely in life -- that now deprive one of the imminent vision of God. St. Catherine of Genoa notes:

*God inspires the soul in Purgatory with so ardent a movement of devoted love that it would be sufficient to annihilate her were she not immortal. Illumined and inflamed by this pure charity, the more she loves God, the more she detests the least stain that displeases him, the least hindrance that prevents her union with him.*

In spite of the suffering that purifies the soul, the souls in Purgatory also experience an ineffable joy. For they know that, despite their temporal pains, they have an absolute certainty of possessing God in the beatific vision.

The sufferings of the souls in Purgatory, should, like Judas Maccabeus, move us to offer prayers for their succor. Such prayers are works of mercy that carry a weight and value that cannot be fully understood now, but which will not be forgotten by the blessed soul upon its release into glory. In this day of misplaced priorities forced by the demands of a materialistic order, prayer for those souls is too often placed on the backburner.

Purgatory offers another important lesson. The sufferings of Purgatory add nothing to the perfection of the soul. They are purely passive, and are effective only to remove that which hinders the vision of God. In that respect, the sufferings we endure now, while in the body, work an eternal change on our souls, making them by degree more resplendent and glorious, and more like God.

For now, we can still earn merit, as well as purification. Each cross we endure works not only to purify, but to transform. Bear your cross with patience, therefore, and find the wisdom that comes “*by the awful grace of God.*” †



**ST GREGORY  
DELIVERS THE SOUL  
OF A MONK**  
*Giovanni Crespi*  
(1617)

## FAITH OF OUR FATHERS: PURGATORY

*THE CHURCH FATHERS EXPLAIN THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF  
THIS HISTORIC CHRISTIAN TEACHING.*

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

There's hardly a word in the theological vocabulary of Christianity that sounds more Catholic than "purgatory." And although these days Catholics may not hear much about this dogma of faith (solemnly defined by two ecumenical councils), purgatory is as real as ever.

In this issue, we'll focus specifically on the existence of purgatory and what the early Church Fathers taught on this subject. (The related issues of what the early Christians believed about prayer for the dead and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, will be saved for another time and not dealt with directly here.)

### TERTULLIAN

In the Sermon on the Mount, in a single context, (Matthew 5, 21-26) Our Lord speaks of both temporal and eternal punishment for sin, the Gehenna of fire, and a "prison" where one will not be released until he has paid the "last penny." Catholic tradition has always interpreted this passage as referring to the expiation of sins in the life to come. An early witness of this understanding is Tertullian, writing around A.D. 208:

"To sum up, since that 'prison' which the Gospel indicates we understand to mean the place of the departed (inferos, not the hell of damnation, but a place of expectation, as in the Apostles' Creed ed. note), and the 'last penny' we interpret to mean even a small fault which must be expiated there before the resurrection, no one shall doubt that the soul will pay something in the place of the departed spirits before the fullness of the resurrection in the flesh" (*On the Soul*, 58; A.D.208.)

### ST. CYPRIAN OF CARTHAGE

St. Cyprian, the martyr bishop of Carthage, is more explicit in teaching the expiation of the Christian's faults in the world to come. Those who are perfect by reason of virtue or the merit of martyrdom, are rewarded immediately, but those who as yet unready must be purified:

"It is one thing to await pardon, another to arrive at glory, one thing to be sent to prison so as not to come out until after the last penny is paid, another to receive immediately the recompense of faith and virtue, one thing to be unburdened and purified of one's sins by a long suffering in fire, and another thing still to have wiped out all one's faults by martyrdom, one thing to be in expectation until the day of judgment by sentence of the Lord, another to be immediately crowned by Him" (*Letter 55*; A.D. 251).

### LACTANTIUS

In the first decade of the next century, the rhetorician and apologist Lactantius, known as the "Christian Cicero," because of the perfection of his Latin style, wrote about purgatory while he was teaching Latin rhetoric to the Greeks of Asia Minor. He points out that although some of the just will come to God's judgment already fully purified, others will have to undergo some purification according to the number and gravity of their sins:

"When God judges the just, he will also try them with fire. Then those who surpass

*Faith of our Fathers* (Continued on page 8)



ST. JEROME &  
ST AUGUSTINE

*Carlo Crivelli*  
(1490)

(Continued from page 7) ***Faith of our Fathers***

the others in the weight or number of their sins will be detained by fire . . . those however whom the fullness of justice and the maturity of virtue have already 'baked' will not feel that fire" (*The Divine Institutes*, 7,21; A.D. 305).

This is perfectly in accord with what St. Paul says in 1 Corinthians 3: 11-15: "For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any one builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble-each man's work will become manifest; for the day will disclose it, because it will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire."

### ST. AUGUSTINE

St. Augustine explains that St. Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 3 is plainly referring to the Catholic doctrine of purgatory:

"Let me not be among those to whom thou wilt say: 'Depart into everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels' nor 'chastise me in thy wrath.' Do thou cleanse me in this life and make me such that I shall have no need to pass through the purifying flames prepared for those who will be saved 'yet so as by fire.' Why? Is it not because in this world they are building upon a foundation of wood, hay, stubble? If they constructed with gold, silver, precious stones, they would be safe from both kinds of fire, not only from the everlasting fire which will torment the wicked forever and ever, but also from that which will purify those who are to be saved by fire. For we are told: 'He himself will be saved, yet so as by fire.' And because of the phrase 'shall be saved,' that fire is not taken seriously enough. Clearly, although they will be saved by fire, yet that fire will be more grievous than anything a man is capable of bearing in this life . . . The evils of this life, then, are far easier to bear; and yet see how eagerly men will do anything you command rather than suffer them. How much better it would be for them, to do what God commands, to avoid suffering those heavier penalties!" (*Discourse on Psalm 37,3*; A.D. 395)

"But if this passage (of 1 Corinthians) is to interpret that fire of which the Lord shall say to those on His left hand, 'Depart from me ye cursed, into everlasting fire,' so that among these we are to believe that there are those who build on the foundation of wood, hay, stubble, and that they, in virtue of the good foundation, shall after a time be liberated from the fire that is the award of their evil deserts, what then shall we think of those on the right hand, to whom it shall be said, 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you,' unless that they are those who have built on the foundation gold, silver, precious stones. But if the fire of which Our Lord speaks is the same as that of which the apostle says 'Yet so as by fire,' then both, that is to say, both those on the right as well as those on the left - are to be cast into it. For that fire is to try both, since it is said, 'For the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.' If therefore, the fire shall try both, in order that (i.e., if the superstructure be not consumed by the fire), he may receive a reward, and that if his work is burned he may suffer loss, certainly that fire is not the eternal fire itself. For into this latter fire only those on the left hand shall be cast, and that with final and everlasting doom; but that former fire proves those on the right hand. But some of them it so proves that it does not burn and consume the structure which is found to have been built by them on Christ as the foundation; while others of them it proves in another fashion so as to burn



**ALTARPIECE OF THE  
CHURCH FATHERS  
ST. AUGUSTINE &  
ST. GREGORY**

*Michael Pacher*  
(1483)

***Faith of our Fathers*** (Continued on page 9)

(Continued from page 8) ***Faith of our Fathers***

what they have built up, and thus cause them to suffer loss, while they themselves are saved because they have retained Christ, who was laid as their sure foundation, and have loved Him above all" (*The City of God*, XXI; A.D. 426).

### **ST. CAESARIUS OF ARLES**

Born in Southern France in A.D. 470, just as the Western Roman Empire was disappearing from existence, St. Caesarius of Arles was a tireless bishop and theologian. He took his duty of preaching to the faithful very seriously. The 238 sermons attributed to him which still exist, give a clear picture of the status quo of Latin Christianity at the end of the classical era, and the remote beginning of the Middle Ages. He's clear about the biblical nature of purgatorial suffering:

"However, those sins which are slight, although they are known to everyone, and it would be too time consuming to repeat them all, it would still be helpful to name a few of them. As often as someone takes more food or drink than would be necessary, he should know that this is counted among lesser sins. As also, for example, when someone speaks more than he should or keeps silence too much . . . Even though we do not believe that the soul is killed by such sins, still they make it ugly with pustules and revolting blemishes, so that they scarcely allow the soul to enter into the embrace of the heavenly spouse without great embarrassment...If furthermore we have neglected to give praise to God in our troubles, or have not redeemed our sins with good works, then we will have as long a time of waiting in that purgatorial fire as it takes for the aforementioned smaller sins to be consumed, as wood, straw, and stubble. Perhaps someone will say 'It doesn't matter to me how long I have to wait, as long as I reach eternal life.' Let no one say this dearest brothers, because that purgatorial fire will be harsher than any kind of pain which can be thought, seen, or felt in the present world" (*Sermon 104*, 2; A.D. 535).

### **POPE ST. GREGORY THE GREAT**

St. Gregory the Great, the Pope who sent the first missionaries to bring the faith to England, gave in the sixth century the fullest treatment of the doctrine of purgatory among the Fathers. He adds to Augustine's theological reflections on 1 Corinthians 3:12-15 with his own exegesis of another famous purgatory text, Matthew 12:32. Unlike many patristic texts which link the fire of purgatory to the fire of the last judgment (as in the passage we just saw from St. Augustine's *City of God*), St. Gregory relates purgatorial suffering with the penance accomplished in this life before death:

"Peter: 'I should like to know if we have to believe in a cleansing fire after death.'

"Gregory: 'In the Gospel Our Lord says, "Finish your journey while you still have the light." And in the words of the Prophet He declares, "In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in the day of salvation I have helped thee." St. Paul's comment on this is: "And here is the time of pardon; the day of salvation has come already." Solomon, too, says, "Anything you can turn your hand to, do with what power you have; for there will be no work, nor reason, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the nether world where you are going." And David adds, "For his mercy endures forever." From these quotations it is clear that each one will be presented to the Judge exactly as he was when he departed this life. Yet there must be some cleansing fire before judgment, because of some minor faults that may remain to be purged away. Does not Christ, the Truth, say that if anyone blasphemes against the Holy Spirit he shall not be forgiven "either in this world or in the world to come?" From this statement we learn that some sins can be forgiven in this



**ST. GREGORY**  
*Matthias Stom*  
(Date Unknown)



**ALTAR OF  
ST. GREGORY  
THE GREAT**  
*Sebastiano Ricci*  
(Date Unknown)

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

(Continued from page 9) ***Faith of our Fathers***

world and some in the world to come. For, if forgiveness is refused for a particular sin, we conclude logically that it is granted for others. This must apply, as I said, to slight transgressions, such as persistent idle talking, immoderate laughter, or blame in the care of property, which can scarcely be administered without fault even by those who know the faults to be avoided, or errors due to ignorance in matters of no great importance. All these faults are troublesome for the soul after death if they are not forgiven while one is still alive. For when St. Paul says that Christ is the foundation, he adds: "But on this foundation different men will build in gold, silver, precious stones, wood grass, or straw...and fire will test the quality of each man's workmanship. He will receive a reward, if the building he had added on stands firm, if it is burnt up, he will be the loser, and yet he himself will be saved, though only as men are saved as passing by fire." Although this may be taken to signify the fire of suffering we experience in this life, it may also refer to the cleansing fire of the world to come, and, if one accepts it in this sense, one must weigh St. Paul's words carefully. When he says that men are saved by passing through fire, he is not referring to men who build on this foundation in iron, bronze, or lead, that is, in mortal sins which are indestructible by fire. He specifies those who build on this foundation in wood grass, and straw, that is, in venial or trivial sins which fire consumes easily" (*Dialogues* IV, 41; A.D.593).



**MASS OF  
ST. BASIL**

*Pierre Subleyras*  
(1743)

There's copious evidence in the Eastern Church showing that the doctrine of purgatory was universally held from the very earliest days of the Church. The only caution is that one has to be careful not to be misled by one thing. Many Greek writers, as well as some Latin ones under Greek influence, have been influenced in their thought and expression by the doctrines of Origen. Origen taught that hell would have an end, and that ultimately all would return to God. He made of hell a kind of temporary purgatory, which would include even those who died as God's enemies. This teaching was condemned as a heresy in the implementation of the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in the sixth century. Related to this was the philosophical doctrine of the Stoics about the great conflagration which would end each age, after which the whole process would start over again in an eternal return and repetition. In quoting the Eastern Fathers as authorities for purgatory, one has to be careful not to use texts influenced by these ideas in the years before they were officially condemned by the Church. This Origenist heresy has, even to this day, made the Eastern Orthodox very wary of speaking of any purification of souls by fire, even to the point of accusing the Latin Fathers of error. But if we stick to the plain and traditional interpretation of Sacred Scripture we've been seeing in the Latin Fathers from North Africa, we won't go wrong. Here are some solid Eastern examples:

### **ST. BASIL THE GREAT**

"I think that the strenuous athletes of God, who fought so much their whole lives with invisible enemies, after they have escaped all their attacks, are examined at the end of their lives by the Lord so that if they be found to retain in themselves any wounds from their battles, or any remnants of sin, they are imprisoned, but if they are found unwounded and spotless, then they rest with Christ, unconcerned and free" (*On Psalm 7,2*; A.D. 365).

"When God delivers the spirit from earthly attachments by his avenging fire, it is a benefit for the soul . . . (unlike the damned) God does not threaten it with utter ruin, but he indicates the soul's purification, according to the words of the Apostle: 'If any man's work is burnt up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as

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

(Continued from page 10) ***Faith of our Fathers***  
through fire” (Commentary on Isaiah 10,20; A.D. 375).

### ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN

With charitable irony, Nazianzen expresses his hope that the purgatorial fire will in the end purge their pride, just as it purges the sins of those sinners whom these purists disdain:

“Let none of you, even though he has much confidence in himself, dare to say, ‘Touch me not for I am pure, for who is so pure as I?’ Give us, too, a share in your brightness. But perhaps we are not convincing you? Then we will weep for you. Let these men then if they will, follow our way, which is Christ’s way; but if they will not, let them go their own. Perhaps they will be baptized with fire, in that last baptism which is more painful and longer, which devours wood like grass, and consumes the stubble of every evil” (*Oration on the Holy Lights 19*; A.D. 381).

### ST. MAXIMOS THE CONFESSOR

Saint Maximos the Confessor is regarded by Eastern Christians as one of the most perfect exponents of their spirituality. His teaching on the necessity of expiation for sin after death is unambiguous. He explains the meaning of the statement “In the world to come certain ones will be judged and purified by fire.”

“This purification does not concern those who have arrived at a perfect love of God, but those who have not reached complete perfection, and whose virtues are mixed in with sins. These latter will appear before the tribunal of judgment, and, following an examination of their good and evil actions, they will be tried as by fire; their bad works will be expiated by a just fear and pain” (*Questions and Doubts on The Church, the Liturgy, and the Soul of Man*, question 10; A.D. 649).

### THE BYZANTINE GREEK DIVINE LITURGY

“The most compassionate Lord and Lover of souls once showed to one of the Holy Fathers who had a disciple who had lived carelessly and had died in that state of carelessness, the same very disciple up to his neck in fire, burning like the rich man in the parable of Lazarus and Dives. Then when the elder afflicted himself with many penitential labors, imploring God with constant tears, he saw the disciple again, this time immersed in the flames up to his belt. After this the elder added penance to penance, and God showed the man to the elder free and completely delivered from the fire” (*On Those Who Have Fallen Asleep in the Faith 11*; A.D. 745).

### REFERENCES

Additional texts from the Church Fathers on purgatory and prayer for the dead:

**St. Clement of Alexandria:** *Stromata* 7:113 (A.D. 210); **Eusebius:** *The Life Constantine* 4:71 (A.D. 335); **St. Cyril of Jerusalem:** *Mystagogical Catechesis* 5:9 (A.D. 350); **St. Epiphanius of Salamis:** *Panarion* 75:8 (A.D. 374); **St. John Chrysostom:** *Homilies on 1 Corinthians* 41:4 (A.D. 390); *Homilies on Acts* 21:4 (A.D. 400); **St. Ambrose of Milan:** *On the Death of His Brother Styrius* 1:80 (A.D. 378); *On the Death of Theodosius* 36:37 (A.D. 395); *Homily on Psalm 118* 3:14-16 (A.D. 390); **St. Jerome:** *Letter 66* 5 (A.D. 397); **St. Augustine:** *On the Care of the Dead* 1:3 (A.D. 424); *Sermon 182* 2 (A.D. 417); *Enchiridion on Faith, Hope, and Charity* 110 (A.D. 421); *Confessions* 9:13 (A.D. 400); **St. Paulinas of Nola:** *Letter 28* 2 (A.D. 415); **St. Gregory the Great:** *Moralia on Job* 15, 19 (A.D. 596); **St. Isidore of Seville:** *On the Order of Created Things* 14:13 (A.D. 623). (*Catholic teaching on the doctrine of purgatory is explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church in paragraphs 1030-1032, 1054-1055*). ☩



ALTARPIECE OF  
CHURCH FATHERS:  
ST. JEROME

Michael Pacher  
(1483)



## SCRIPTURAL CORNER

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

### 1 CORINTHIANS 3: 14-15

*If the work which any man has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved but only as through fire.*

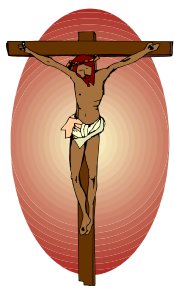
#### Comment from the Navarre Bible:\*

In describing the reward given to those who work at the building of the Church, St Paul writes in the same figurative style as in the rest of the passage. One thing comes across very clearly: everyone will be paid according to his works; if good materials have been used, that is, if he was upright and held on to the correct teaching, the reward is assured. But if he used defective materials, that is, if he did not have the right intention or if he did not hold on to the faith of the Church, he will not earn a reward.

We cannot be sure that St Paul is here referring to purgatory; but it is quite in order to interpret "he will be saved, but only as through fire" in that sense. Catholic teaching on purgatory is based on many passages of the Bible (2 Mac 12:39; Mt 12:31-32; 5:25-26; 1 Cor 15:29; etc.) and on the uninterrupted tradition of prayer for the dead. "The Catholic Church, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in accordance with Sacred Scripture and the ancient tradition of the Fathers (teaches) that there is a purgatory and that the souls detained there are helped by the prayers of the faithful and especially by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar" (Council of Trent, *De Purgatorio*).

Many Fathers, particularly from St Augustine on, have connected this verse with purgatory: "Some will be saved through a purifying fire; for a long or short period depending on the extent to which they were attached to things which do not endure" (Enchiridion, 1 chap. 68). ☩

## PRAYER PETITIONS



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

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

- ♦ David McEachon (illness)
- ♦ Eric & Marie Bessem
- ♦ Charles Godwin (serious illness).
- ♦ Kevin Guice (serious illness)
- ♦ Julia Nelson (serious illness).
- ♦ Sean Nelson (illness).
- ♦ Jose Alvarez (illness).
- ♦ 3 yr old Kallie Townsend (serious illness).
- ♦ Mary Keelan (illness).
- ♦ Frank J. Dumbauskas (serving in Iraq).
- ♦ Karl Hansen (serious illness).
- ♦ Lauri Becker Kalinowski (serious illness).
- ♦ John Thompson (employment).
- ♦ 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)
- ♦ 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).
- ♦ Cindie Burnes (serious illness).
- ♦ Michael Shonafelt (special intention).
- ♦ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
- ♦ Ron Gable (special intention).
- ♦ Mary Erickson (special intention)
- ♦ Earle Nelson (epiphany) ☩

## ASH WEDNESDAY: OUR SHIFTING UNDERSTANDING OF LENT\*

BY FR. LAWRENCE MICK  
ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Those who work with liturgy in parishes know that some of the largest crowds in the year will show up to receive ashes on Ash Wednesday. Though this is not a holy day of obligation in our tradition, many people would not think of letting Ash Wednesday go by without a trip to church to be marked with an ashen cross on their foreheads. Even people who seldom come to Church for the rest of the year may make a concerted effort to come for ashes.

How did this practice become such an important part of the lives of so many believers? Who came up with the idea for this rather odd ritual? How do we explain the popularity of smudging our foreheads with ashes and then walking around all day with dirty faces? Those who do not share our customs often make a point of telling us that we have something on our foreheads, assuming we would want to wash it off, but many Catholics wear that smudge faithfully all day.

### ASHES IN THE BIBLE

The origin of the custom of using ashes in religious ritual is lost in the mists of pre-history, but we find references to the practice in our own religious tradition in the Old Testament. The prophet Jeremiah, for example, calls for repentance this way: "O daughter of my people, gird on sackcloth, roll in the ashes" (Jer 6:26).

The prophet Isaiah, on the other hand, critiques the use of sackcloth and ashes as inadequate to please God, but in the process he indicates that this practice was well-known in Israel: "Is this the manner of fasting I wish, of keeping a day of penance: that a man bow his head like a reed, and lie in sackcloth and ashes? Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the Lord?" (Is 58:5).

The prophet Daniel pleaded for God to rescue Israel with sackcloth and ashes as a sign of Israel's repentance: "I turned to the Lord God, pleading in earnest prayer, with fasting, sackcloth and ashes" (Dn 9:3).

Perhaps the best known example of repentance in the Old Testament also involves sackcloth and ashes. When the prophet Jonah finally obeyed God's command and preached in the great city of Nineveh, his preaching was amazingly effective. Word of his message was carried to the king of Nineveh. "When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in the ashes" (Jon 3:6).

In the book of Judith, we find acts of repentance that specify that the ashes were put on people's heads: "And all the Israelite men, women and children who lived in Jerusalem prostrated themselves in front of the temple building, with ashes strewn on their heads, displaying their sackcloth covering before the Lord" (Jdt 4:11; see also 4:15 and 9:1).

Just prior to the New Testament period, the rebels fighting for Jewish independence, the Maccabees, prepared for battle using ashes: "That day they fasted and wore sackcloth; they sprinkled ashes on their heads and tore their clothes" (1 Mc 3:47; see also 4:39).

In the New Testament, Jesus refers to the use of sackcloth and ashes as signs of repentance: "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty deeds done in your midst had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would long ago have re-

*Ash Wednesday* (Continued on page 14)



**DANIEL  
THE PROPHET**  
*Michelangelo*  
(1511)

\* Reprinted from  
American Catholic  
February 2004

(Continued from page 13) **Ash Wednesday**

pented in sackcloth and ashes” (Mt 11:21, Lk 10:13).

### **ASHES IN THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH**

Despite all these references in Scripture, the use of ashes in the Church left only a few records in the first millennium of Church history. Thomas Talley, an expert on the history of the liturgical year, says that the first clearly datable liturgy for Ash Wednesday that provides for sprinkling ashes is in the Romano-Germanic pontifical of 960. Before that time, ashes had been used as a sign of admission to the Order of Penitents. As early as the sixth century, the Spanish Mozarabic rite calls for signing the forehead with ashes when admitting a gravely ill person to the Order of Penitents. At the beginning of the 11th century, Abbot Aelfric notes that it was customary for all the faithful to take part in a ceremony on the Wednesday before Lent that included the imposition of ashes. Near the end of that century, Pope Urban II called for the general use of ashes on that day. Only later did this day come to be called Ash Wednesday.

At first, clerics and men had ashes sprinkled on their heads, while women had the sign of the cross made with ashes on their foreheads. Eventually, of course, the ritual used with women came to be used for men as well.

In the 12th century the rule developed that the ashes were to be created by burning palm branches from the previous Palm Sunday. Many parishes today invite parishioners to bring such palms to church before Lent begins and have a ritual burning of the palms after Mass.

### **THE ORDER OF PENITENTS**

It seems, then, that our use of ashes at the beginning of Lent is an extension of the use of ashes with those entering the Order of Penitents. This discipline was the way the Sacrament of Penance was celebrated through most of the first millennium of Church history. Those who had committed serious sins confessed their sins to the bishop or his representative and were assigned a penance that was to be carried out over a period of time. After completing their penance, they were reconciled by the bishop with a prayer of absolution offered in the midst of the community.

During the time they worked out their penances, the penitents often had special places in church and wore special garments to indicate their status. Like the catechumens who were preparing for Baptism, they were often dismissed from the Sunday assembly after the Liturgy of the Word.

This whole process was modeled on the conversion journey of the catechumens, because the Church saw falling into serious sin after Baptism as an indication that a person had not really been converted. Penance was a second attempt to foster that conversion. Early Church fathers even called Penance a “second Baptism.”

Lent developed in the Church as the whole community prayed and fasted for the catechumens who were preparing for Baptism. At the same time, those members of the community who were already baptized prepared to renew their baptismal promises at Easter, thus joining the catechumens in seeking to deepen their own conversion. It was natural, then, that the Order of Penitents also focused on Lent, with reconciliation often being celebrated on Holy Thursday so that the newly reconciled could share in the liturgies of the Triduum. With Lent clearly a season focused on Baptism, Penance found a home there as well.

### **SHIFTING UNDERSTANDING OF LENT**

With the disappearance of the catechumenate from the Church's life, people's understanding of the season of Lent changed. By the Middle Ages, the emphasis was no longer clearly baptismal. Instead, the main emphasis shifted to the passion and



**THE PENITENT  
MAGDALEN**

*Philippe  
De Champaigne*  
(Date Unknown)

(Continued from page 14) **Ash Wednesday**

death of Christ. Medieval art reflected this increased focus on the suffering Savior; so did popular piety. Lent came to be seen as a time to acknowledge our guilt for the sins that led to Christ's passion and death. Repentance was then seen as a way to avoid punishment for sin more than as a way to renew our baptismal commitment.

With the gradual disappearance of the Order of Penitents, the use of ashes became detached from its original context. The focus on personal penance and the Sacrament of Penance continued in Lent, but the connection to Baptism was no longer obvious to most people. This is reflected in the formula that came to be associated with the distribution of ashes: "Remember that you are dust and to dust you will return." This text focuses on our mortality, as an incentive to take seriously the call to repentance, but there is little hint here of any baptismal meaning. This emphasis on mortality fit well with the medieval experience of life, when the threat of death was always at hand. Many people died very young, and the societal devastation of the plague made death even more prevalent.

### **ASH WEDNESDAY AFTER VATICAN II**

The Second Vatican Council (1962-65) called for the renewal of Lent, recovering its ancient baptismal character. This recovery was significantly advanced by the restoration of the catechumenate mandated by the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (1972). As Catholics have increasingly interacted with catechumens in the final stage of their preparation for Baptism, they have begun to understand Lent as a season of baptismal preparation and baptismal renewal.

Since Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, it naturally is also beginning to recover a baptismal focus. One hint of this is the second formula that is offered for the imposition of ashes: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel." Though it doesn't explicitly mention Baptism, it recalls our baptismal promises to reject sin and profess our faith. It is a clear call to conversion, to that movement away from sin and toward Christ that we have to embrace over and over again through our lives.

As the beginning of Lent, Ash Wednesday calls us to the conversion journey that marks the season. As the catechumens enter the final stage of their preparation for the Easter sacraments, we are all called to walk with them so that we will be prepared to renew our baptismal promises when Easter arrives.

### **THE READINGS FOR ASH WEDNESDAY**

The readings assigned to Ash Wednesday highlight this call to conversion. The first reading from the prophet Joel is a clarion call to return to the Lord "with fasting, and weeping and mourning." Joel reminds us that our God is "gracious and merciful...slow to anger, rich in kindness and relenting in punishment," thus inviting us to trust in God's love as we seek to renew our life with God. It is important to note that Joel does not call only for individual conversion. His appeal is to the whole people, so he commands: "Blow the trumpet in Zion, proclaim a fast, call an assembly; gather the people, notify the congregation; assemble the elders, gather the children and the infants at the breast." As we enter this season of renewal, we are united with all of God's people, for we all share the need for continued conversion and we are called to support one another on the journey. Imitating those who joined the Order of Penitents in ages past, we all become a community of penitents seeking to grow closer to God through repentance and renewal.

With a different tone but no less urgency, St. Paul implores us in the second reading to "be reconciled to God." "Now," he insists, "is a very acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. 'The time to return to the Lord is now, this holy season,



**ST. JEROME  
THE PENITENT**

*El Greco*  
(1610-14)

(Continued from page 15) **Ash Wednesday**  
this very day.”

The Gospel for Ash Wednesday gives us good advice on how we are to act during Lent. Jesus speaks of the three main disciplines of the season: giving alms, praying and fasting. All of these spiritual activities, Jesus teaches us, are to be done without any desire for recognition by others. The point is not that we should only pray alone and not in community, for example, but that we should not pray in order to be seen as holy. The same is true of fasting and works of charity; they do not need to be hidden but they are to be done out of love of God and neighbor, not in order to be seen by others.

There is a certain irony that we use this Gospel, which tells us to wash our faces so that we do not appear to be doing penance on the day that we go around with “dirt” on our foreheads. This is just another way Jesus is telling us not to perform religious acts for public recognition. We don’t wear the ashes to proclaim our holiness but to acknowledge that we are a community of sinners in need of repentance and renewal.

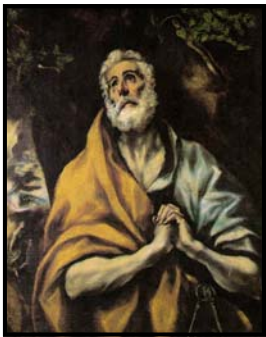
#### FROM ASHES TO THE FONT

The call to continuing conversion reflected in these readings is also the message of the ashes. We move through Lent from ashes to the baptismal font. We dirty our faces on Ash Wednesday and are cleansed in the waters of the font. More profoundly, we embrace the need to die to sin and selfishness at the beginning of Lent so that we can come to fuller life in the Risen One at Easter.

When we receive ashes on our foreheads, we remember who we are. We remember that we are creatures of the earth (“Remember that you are dust”). We remember that we are mortal beings (“and to dust you will return”). We remember that we are baptized. We remember that we are people on a journey of conversion (“Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel”). We remember that we are members of the body of Christ (and that smudge on our foreheads will proclaim that identity to others, too).

Renewing our sense of who we really are before God is the core of the Lenten experience. It is so easy to forget, and thus we fall into habits of sin, ways of thinking and living that are contrary to God’s will. In this we are like the Ninevites in the story of Jonah. It was “their wickedness” that caused God to send Jonah to preach to them. Jonah resisted that mission and found himself in deep water. Rescued by a large fish, Jonah finally did God’s bidding and began to preach in Nineveh. His preaching obviously fell on open ears and hearts, for in one day he prompted the conversion of the whole city.

From the very beginning of Lent, God’s word calls us to conversion. If we open our ears and hearts to that word, we will be like the Ninevites not only in their sinfulness but also in their conversion to the Lord. That, simply put, is the point of Ash Wednesday! †



**THE REPENTANT  
PETER**  
*El Greco*  
(1600)

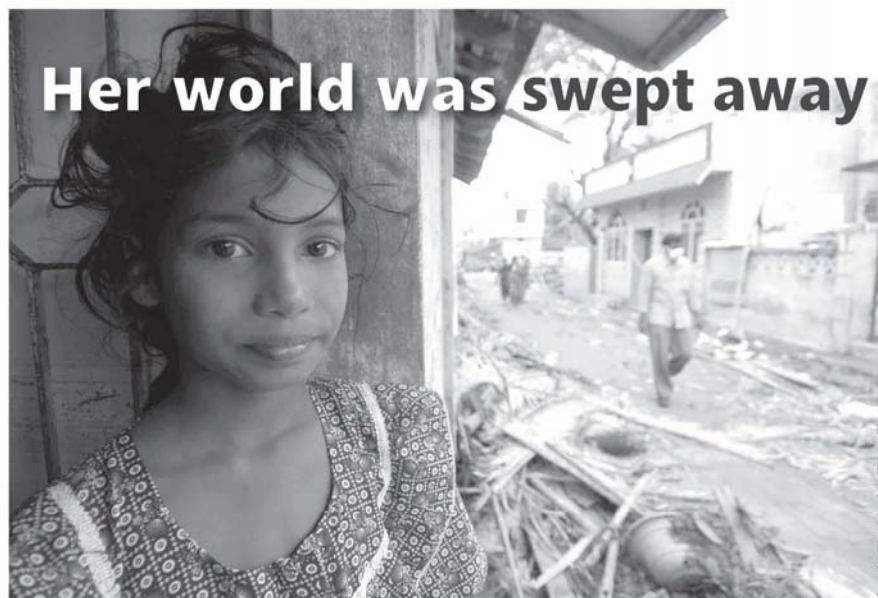
## SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

**One day a woman said to Father John Vianney, the Cure of Ars in France, “My husband has not been to the sacraments or to Mass for years. He has been unfaithful, wicked, and unjust. He has just fallen from a bridge and was drowned—a double death of body and soul.”**

**The Cure answered: “Madam, there is a short distance between the bridge and the water, and it is that distance which forbids you to judge.” †**



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## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

### A CARROT, AN EGG OR A COFFEE BEAN?

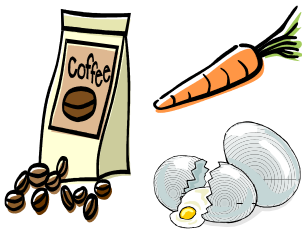
A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed whenever one problem was solved, a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water and placed each on a high fire. Soon the pots came to boil. In the first she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs, and in the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil, without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?" "Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. Her mother brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they were soft. The mother then asked the daughter to take an egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard boiled egg. Finally, the mother asked the daughter to sip the coffee. The daughter smiled as she tasted its rich aroma. Then she asked, "What does it mean, mother?"

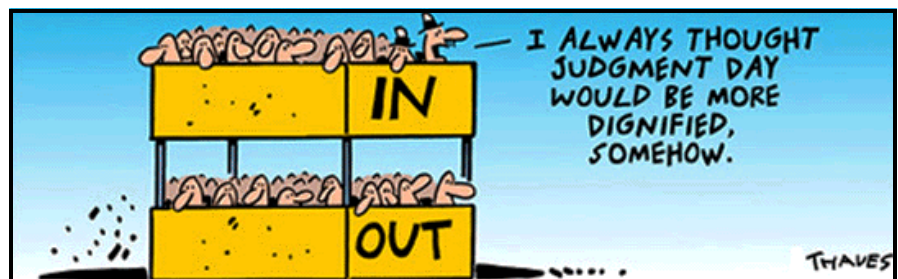
Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity ... boiling water. Each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard, and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had protected its liquid interior, but after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water, they had changed the water.

"Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When adversity knocks on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean? Think of this: Which am I? Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a malleable heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a breakup, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and hardened heart? Or am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you get better and change the situation around you."

When the hour is the darkest and trials are their greatest, do you elevate yourself to another level? How do you handle adversity? Are you a carrot, an egg or a coffee bean? ☩



**FRANK ERNEST**



## MESSAGE FROM HIS HOLINESS PAUL JOHN II\*

### *New Plenary Indulgence to Mark Year of the Eucharist Established to Help Faithful Grow in “Mystery of Faith”*

John Paul II has approved a special plenary indulgence to mark the Year of the Eucharist.

According to a decree of the Apostolic Penitentiary, during the Year of the Eucharist a plenary indulgence may be gained by participating in acts of worship and veneration of the Most Holy Sacrament, as well as by praying vespers and compline of the Divine Office before the tabernacle.

The decree, dated Dec. 25 and published today by the Vatican press office, is signed by Cardinal James Francis Stafford and Father John Francis Girotti, respectively major penitentiary and regent of the Apostolic Penitentiary.

The objective of the papal disposition, the document indicates, is to “exhort the faithful in the course of this year, to a more profound knowledge and more intense love of the ineffable ‘mystery of faith,’ so that they will reap ever more abundant spiritual fruits.”

The decree reminds the faithful that to obtain a plenary indulgence it is necessary to observe the “usual conditions:” “sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion, and prayer in keeping with the intentions of the Supreme Pontiff, with the soul completely removed from attachment to any form of sin.”

In the Year of the Eucharist -- which began October 2004 and will end October 2005, when the world Synod of Bishops will be held on the Eucharist -- the plenary indulgence may be obtained in two ways.

In the first place, according to the decree, “each time the faithful participate attentively and piously in a sacred function or a devotional exercise undertaken in honor of the Blessed Sacrament, solemnly exposed or conserved in the tabernacle.”

In the second place, it is granted “to the clergy, to members of institutes of consecrated life and societies of apostolic life, and to other faithful who are by law obliged to recite the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as to those who customarily recite the Divine Office out of pure devotion, each and every time they recite -- at the end of the day, in company or private -- vespers and night prayers before the Lord present in the tabernacle.”

The decree also provides the granting of the plenary indulgence to those persons who, due to illness or other just cause, cannot participate in an act of worship of the sacrament of the Eucharist in a church or oratory.

These persons will obtain the plenary indulgence “if they make the visit spiritually and with the heart’s desire, with a spirit of faith in the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Sacrament of the Altar, and pray the Our Father and Creed, adding a pious invocation to Jesus in the Sacrament” (for example, “May the Most Holy Sacrament be blessed and praised forever”).

*Papal Message* (Continued on page 21)



**Ioannes Paulus PP. II**  
**Karol Wojtyła**  
**16.X.1978**

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



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**January 14, 2005**

## THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



In the face of a wholesale denial of Purgatory by the reformers, More devoted much of his apologetical energies to the defense of this doctrine, most especially in the “Second Book” of his treatise, *The Supplication of Souls*, in which he responds to the dissenter Simon Fish’s assertion in his *Supplication for the Beggars* that “many men of great literature and judgment” have concluded that “there is no purgatory; but that it is a thing invented by the covetousness of the spirituality, only to translate all kingdoms from other princes unto them, and that there is not one word spoken of it in all holy Scripture.” As the title of More’s work suggest, the arguments supporting the doctrine at stake are put by More into the mouths of the poor souls of Purgatory themselves, who so much on their own account as out of fear for the salvation of their brothers and sisters on earth: “*Nor of all the heavy tidings that ever we heard here, was there never none so sore smote us to the heart as to hear the world was so faint in the faith of Christ that any man should need not to prove purgatory to Christian men, or that any man could be found which would in so great a thing so fully and fastly believed for an undoubted article this fifteen hundred years begin now to stagger and stand in doubt...*”

More explains that when we consider, on the one hand, God’s justice in requiring the punishment of our sins and, on the other, His goodness in not punishing us forever once we have repented, one can only conclude that the punishment of contrite sinners must have a temporal limit. But since many die before there is time enough for them to undergo all the temporal punishment necessary to satisfy the justice of God, it must needs follow that this punishment be completed after death. In answer to the objection that the merits of Christ’s Passion totally cancel these debts, More points out that while God can and does in special cases forgive the entire debt of the sinner who repents with extraordinary fervor and love, His justice demands that under normal circumstances the sinner undergo at least some tangible consequences for his actions. If there were no punishment of vice, men would feel they could sin with impunity, no matter how numerous, how serious, or how prolonged their sins were...

**The King’s Good Servant But God’s First**

**James Monti**

**(p. 259-60) †**

## Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\*

\*Latin for “To turn truth into laughter”



## PLEASE DON'T SHOVE!



A little girl, dressed in her Sunday best, was running to church as fast as she could, trying not to be late for Mass.

As she ran she prayed, “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late! Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late!”

While she was running and praying, she tripped on a curb and fell, getting her clothes dirty and tearing her dress. She got up, brushed herself off, and started running again.

As she ran she once again began to pray, “Dear Lord, please don’t let me be late! And please don’t shove me anymore either!” †

(Continued from page 19) **Papal Message**

Obviously, in all cases, the conditions established to receive a plenary indulgence must be respected.

“If they are unable to do even this, they will receive a plenary indulgence if they unite themselves with interior desire to those who practice the normal conditions laid down for Indulgences, and offer the merciful God the illnesses and discomforts of their lives, with the intention of observing the three usual conditions as soon as possible,” the decree states.

The decree calls on priests, especially pastors, to inform the faithful on these dispositions, to prepare “with generous and ready spirit” to hear confessions and, in days that are determined according to the convenience of the faithful, to lead them “in solemn public recitation of prayers to Jesus in the Sacrament.”

Finally, the decree exhorts the faithful “to give open witness of faith and veneration for the Blessed Sacrament.”

The dispositions were approved by the Holy Father during the audience granted on December 17 to Cardinal Stafford and Fr. Girotti.

The decree will be in force during the Eucharistic Year, starting Saturday, January 15, the day of its publication in the Italian edition of L'Osservatore Romano.

In number 1471, the Catechism of the Catholic Church explains that “[a]n indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints.”

Number 1479 adds: “Since the faithful departed now being purified are also members of the same communion of saints, one way we can help them is to obtain indulgences for them, so that the temporal punishment due for their sins may be remitted.” ✠



*Obviously,  
in all cases,  
the conditions  
established to  
receive a plenary  
indulgence must  
be respected.*

## LENTEN OBLIGATIONS

The forty days of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 9th. “The seasons and days of penance in the course of the liturgical year (Lent and each Friday in memory of the death of the Lord) are intense moments of the Church’s penitential practice. These times are particularly appropriate for spiritual exercises, penitential liturgies, pilgrimages as signs of penance, voluntary self-denial such as fasting and almsgiving, and fraternal sharing (charitable and missionary works.)” (Catholic Catechism 1438).

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are both days of fast and abstinence. All Fridays in lent are days of abstinence. Abstinence means no meat allowed for anyone over age 14. Fast means one full meal and two small ones for anyone between ages of 18 and 59.

Note: A special Papal dispensation has been granted to Vietnamese Catholics who may celebrate Tet on February 9th and keep the fast and abstinence of Ash Wednesday on either Friday February 11th or Saturday February 12th. ✠



**PENITENT  
MAGDALENE**

*El Greco*  
(1585-90)

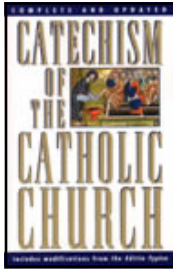
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## PART ONE: PROFESSION OF FAITH

### SECTION TWO: PROFESSION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

#### CHAPTER THREE: "I BELIEVE IN THE HOLY SPIRIT"

#### ARTICLE 12: "I BELIEVE IN LIFE EVERLASTING"



## CATECHISM CORNER



**PENITENT  
ST. JEROME**

*Georges de La Tour*  
(1630)

### III. THE FINAL PURIFICATION, OR PURGATORY

1030 All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

1031 The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire:

As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come.

1032 This teaching is also based on the practice of prayer for the dead, already mentioned in Sacred Scripture: "Therefore [Judas Maccabeus] made atonement for the dead, that they might be delivered from their sin." From the beginning the Church has honored the memory of the dead and offered prayers in suffrage for them, above all the Eucharistic sacrifice, so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God. The Church also commends almsgiving, indulgences, and works of penance undertaken on behalf of the dead:

Let us help and commemorate them. If Job's sons were purified by their father's sacrifice, why would we doubt that our offerings for the dead bring them some consolation? Let us not hesitate to help those who have died and to offer our prayers for them. ☩

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

*St. Augustine*

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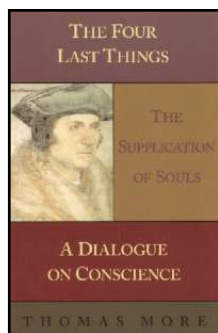
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BY: SAINT THOMAS MORE

### FROM THE LIBRARY



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More created *The Supplication of Souls* in response to a defamatory political tract against the Roman Catholic Church. In it he swiftly reduces to absurdities the charges set forth on the "greed and corruption" of the English clergy and the controversial topic of Purgatory. He sets the record straight in a clear, precise and humorous style.

*A Dialogue on Conscience* is a collection of letters and dialogues between More and his stepdaughter Alice Alington, and daughter Margaret. Written while imprisoned in the Tower of London by King Henry VIII, More adheres to his course while the others struggle to understand why he refuses to take the oath which ultimately costs him his life

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