

Ad Veritatem

Volume 11 Issue 3

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MARCH 2006

"St. Thomas led his family's
nightly prayers, showing through
daily example that his life had a
clear purpose and direction."

*Thomas More:
A Portrait of Courage
Gerard Wegemen*

MARCH MEETING:

WEDNESDAY MARCH 15, 2006 NOON

SPECIAL SPEAKER:

BISHOP NORMAN F. MACFARLAND

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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. ☩

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MARCH MEETING

MARCH SPEAKER:

BISHOP NORMAN F. MACFARLAND

WHEN:

NOON

Wed. Mar. 15th

WHERE:

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Recently retired as Bishop of Orange, Bishop McFarland will speak to our March luncheon meeting. Bishop McFarland was appointed Bishop of Orange in 1987 after having served as bishop in the Diocese of Reno-Las Vegas (which covers the entire state of Nevada). Prior to that he served as the Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco while concurrently acting as its Vicar General and the Pastor of Mission Dolores. A native of California from Martinez, Bishop McFarland received his Bachelor of Arts degree from St. Patrick's Seminary College in 1943 and completed his theological studies at St. Patrick's Theologate. He was ordained in 1946 in the Archdiocese of San Francisco. In 1997, Bishop MacFarland was instrumental in the formation of the St Thomas More Society.

COST:

\$10 for lunch

For more information, please contact either David Belz at (949) 218-6800
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STM MONTHLY MTGS: 3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:

APRIL 19
MAY 17
JUNE 21
JULY 19
AUGUST 16



HOLD THE DATE!

ST THOMAS MORE SOCIETY
SILENT RETREAT
Saturday April 7-9, 2006
Prince of Peace Abbey
Rector: Fr. Hugh Barbour
For details, see page 13 †

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**A
MESSAGE
FROM
OUR
CHAPLAIN**

GO ASK YOUR FATHER

*The ancient Christian Church always cited
the authority of the Church Fathers.*

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

Although the Catholic Church venerates the early Fathers (teachers who share the marks of antiquity, orthodoxy and personal sanctity, and are approved by the Church), and invests their writings with great authority, she does not place them on par with Sacred Scripture. Nor are they ranked in authority above the Magisterium. So what exactly is the place of the Fathers of the Church?

Their role is best stated by a modern "father," the Venerable Cardinal Newman. Cardinal Newman was a great student and expert on the Fathers of the Church, and found his way from the errors of Protestantism to the fullness of Catholic teaching through them. The great 19th century teacher said: "They do speak of their own private opinion; they do not say, 'This is true because we see it in Scripture' -- about which there might be differences in judgment -- but, 'This is true because in matter of fact it is held, and has ever been held, by all the churches down to our times, without interruption, ever since the apostles' " (Discussions and Arguments ii). The Fathers, then, are witnesses to the ancient, universal ("catholic"), orthodox faith of the Church. Let's hear what the Fathers have to say about each other.

ST. IRENAEUS OF LYONS

In this very early passage, we're shown the original example of a Father of the Church. He is an authoritative teacher of the ancient Church, a bishop of Smyrna in Asia Minor, who, having received the apostolic Faith from authentic sources (in this case, from the apostle St. John), hands on this Faith, and his teaching is confirmed by the witness of the same Faith in the rest of the Church. St. Irenaeus was fighting the Gnostic heresy, which taught the essence of Christianity was a secret knowledge, over and above the public teaching of the Church, and was reserved for a few initiated elite, something like Masonry or the New Age spirituality today. In contrast, the Fathers always show us the open, public, and verifiable nature of the orthodox Catholic doctrine of the Church.

"But Polycarp also was not only instructed by the apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also by the apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the Church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried on earth a very long time, and when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffered martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the Church has handed down, and which alone are true. To all these things the Asiatic churches testify, as well as do also those men who have succeeded Polycarp down to the present time" (Against Heresies 3:3; A.D. 191).

EUSEBIUS OF CAESAREA

The writing of encyclopedic works is proof of the existence of a long-standing, highly-developed body of doctrine. The first to do this for the Church was Eusebius, the bishop of Caesarea in Palestine. He began his work even before the legalization of

Go Ask Your Father (Continued on page 6)



ST AUGUSTINE
Sandro Botticelli
(1480)

THE ALTAR BOY

RICHARD H. KILEY

We had made a rapid advance across Northern France from the Normandy beachhead. (Historians say it was the fastest opposed advance in the history of modern warfare.) Now, our 105-millimeter howitzer battalion was bivouacked in an abandoned castle on the outskirts of a small Belgian town. The exact locations of occupied and unoccupied territory were not well known, and due to an error in map reading, we learned at daybreak that we were close to a German infantry unit. Watching our artillery battalion attempting to act as infantry was laughable, but we had no choice. Using our pieces at close range with time bursts, we caused the enemy to retreat.

Later that morning, I ventured away from the castle and observed the local townspeople walking to the center of the village to the sound of church bells. I realized that it was Sunday and people were on their way to a Catholic Mass. I followed them.

Inside the church, when the priest appeared from the sacristy, I saw that he was without an altar boy. I was only nineteen years old, not too far away from my own altar boy days in Philadelphia. So almost by rote, I went into the sanctuary, knelt down next to the priest and, still in my uniform, started to perform the normal functions of an acolyte:

"Ad deum qui laetificat juventutem meam" ("To God, the joy of my youth.")

"Qua to es Deus fortitudo mea" ("For Thou, O God, art my strength.")

"Confiteor Deo omnipotenti" ("I confess to Almighty God.")

The priest and I went through the whole mass as if we had done it together many times before: water and wine; lavabo (the ritual of washing hands after the offertory); changing the book; suscipiat (a five-line prayer of acceptance); and the final blessing.

As prescribed, I preceded the priest into the sacristy and, as is the custom, stood apart from him with my hands in the prayer position while he divested. He removed the chasuble, then the cincture. When his arms lifted the alb, I saw that he was wearing a German uniform. My heart stopped: the priest was a German officer!

The man was a German chaplain and though he had realized immediately that he had an American sergeant as an altar boy, during the entire twenty minutes of the Mass, he had given no outward sign of recognition.

My German was rather rudimentary, and the only thing I could put together was, "Gut Morgen, Vater" ("Good morning, Father"). Evidently, his English was nonexistent, for somewhat flustered, he only smiled at me. Then, we shook hands, and I left.

I walked back to the castle strangely exhilarated. Two strangers, enemies at war, had met by chance and for twenty minutes, without any direct communication, had found complete unanimity in an age-old ritual of Christian worship.

The memory of this incident has remained with me for over fifty years. It still brings the same elation, for I know firsthand that, even in war, our common humanity - under the same God - can triumph over hatred and division. ☩



(Continued from page 4) **Go Ask Your Father**

the Christian religion in the Roman Empire, as the last persecutions were about to rage. Eusebius wrote the first chronicle of the Church, concentrating on Our Lord, the apostles, the writers, the martyrs and the heretics who had marked the history of the Church in her first three and a quarter centuries. His example led other writers, like St. Jerome at the end of the fourth century, to write up lists of great writers of the Christian period, to be extended by others later on, including Gennadius of Marseilles (A.D. 480) and St. Isidore of Seville (A.D. 618). St. Isidore is regarded by some as the last of the Fathers in the West. His list was continued in the 17th century by St. Robert Bellarmine, Doctor of the Church and great student of the writings of the Fathers.

"It is my purpose to hand down a written account of the successions of the holy Apostles, as well as of the times extending from Our Savior to ourselves; the number and nature of the events which are said to have been treated in ecclesiastical history; the number of those who were her illustrious guides and leaders in specially prominent dioceses; the number of those who in every generation, by word of mouth or by writings, served as ambassadors of the Word of God" (Ecclesiastical History 1:1; A.D. 303).

ST. BASIL OF CAESAREA

Writing to the Christians of Antioch, St. Basil offers them his profession of faith, which is none other than the Nicene Creed which we recite (or, at least, we're supposed to recite) every Sunday at Mass. The humility of the Fathers, who simply pass on what they have received from their mother the Church, is evident in this passage. This is quite a contrast to one very famous contemporary theologian, who finishes one of his last works with his own "creeds," suggested as practical replacements for the classical ones.

"Now, as to a creed, we neither receive a more recent one written for us by others, nor do we ourselves dare to hand over the fruits of our own mind, lest we make the words of religion mere human words, but rather whatever we have been taught by the holy Fathers, that do we announce to those who ask us. Here they are: We believe in one God, the Father Almighty. . ." (Letter 140; A.D. 373).

ST. GREGORY NAZIANZEN

Utterly exhausted by his battles for the orthodox Faith of the Bible and the apostles, St. Gregory, the great friend of St. Basil, defends himself, relating his office of a teacher of orthodox doctrine to the example of the Lord Jesus Himself, reminding us of His words to the apostles: "He who hears you, hears me" (Luke 10:16).

"My sheep hear my voice, which I have heard from the oracles of God, which I have been taught by the Holy Fathers, which I have taught alike on all occasions, not conforming myself to the opportune, and which I will never cease to teach, in which I was born and in which I will depart" (Oration 33 15; A.D. 380).

ST. AUGUSTINE

The Pelagian heresy denied the necessity of grace for the conversion of the soul to God, especially at its beginnings. They held fundamental errors about original sin and the nature of the redemption. The Pelagians made use of an argument which has been used a great deal in the modern Church to promote various heresies and errors. They pitted the tradition of the Eastern Fathers against the tradition of the Western Fathers. St. Augustine brings to the fore the universal witness of the Fathers against the false separation of the witness of East and West. Thus the Fathers also bear witness to each others' orthodoxy. The errors of Pelagius were accordingly condemned in the East at the Council of Ephesus in A.D. 431, the year after St. Augustine's death.

"You are convicted of your error from every side. The testimony of so many saints regarding the matter of original sin is brighter than light itself. Look around at whose company I have introduced you. Here is Ambrose of Milan, here is John of Constantinople, here is Basil, here are the others whose great consensus should move you . . . They shone in the Catholic Church with the study of sound doctrine, protected and girded with spiritual arms they waged bitter war against the heretics, and having fulfilled faithfully the works intended for them by God, they slept in the abode of peace. Behold now where I have led you, into the company of the saints, not just the number of the people, for they were not only sons, they were the Fathers of the Church" (Against Julian

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1:7:30; A.D. 421).

"Holy and blessed priests, famous in their treatment of Sacred Doctrine, Irenaeus, Cyprian, Reticus, Olympius, Hilary, Ambrose, Gregory, Innocent, John [Chrysostom], Basil, to whom I add, whether you like it or not, the priest Jerome . . . have declared against you their opinion about the generation of all men which is bound by original sin, from which no one can rescue them except Him Whom a Virgin conceived without the law of sin warring against the law of the mind . . . What they found in the Church they held; what they learned they taught; what they received from the Fathers they handed down to the sons. When we were not as yet involved with you before these judges, they tried our case" (Against Julian 2:10; A.D. 421).

THEODORET

Although this writer of the patristic period is not an official saint of the Church, he has traditionally been called "blessed." He had the misfortune of being a close personal friend of the heretic Nestorius, and so he ran afoul of the rather saintly, but ferocious, St. Cyril of Alexandria. In the end, though, he vindicated his orthodoxy at the Council of Chalcedon by publicly professing the Faith of the Church against his friend's errors. Note here that the Faith of the Fathers and of the apostles is for him one and the same.

"I have ever kept the faith of the apostles undefiled . . . So I have learnt not only from the apostles and the prophets, but also from the interpreters of their writings, Ignatius, Eustathius, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, John, and the rest of the lights of the world; and before these from the Holy Fathers in council at Nicaea whose confession of the faith I preserve in its integrity, like an ancestral inheritance, styling corrupt and enemies of the truth all who dare to transgress its decrees" (Letter 89; A.D. 449).

ST. VINCENT OF LERINS

A masterful, eloquent and exciting vindication of the truth of the Catholic Faith against heresies is offered by St. Vincent of Lerins. This great Father, like St. Irenaeus, provides a general rule whereby doctrines can be discerned to be orthodox or heretical, namely, their agreement with the constant interpretation of the Church from the time of the Apostles as evidenced by the ancient Fathers. Note once more the scriptural justification for the role of the Fathers as witnesses of authentic doctrine taken from 1 Cor 12:27-28.

"Lest anyone perchance should rashly think the holy and Catholic consent of these blessed Fathers to be despised, the Apostle says in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, 'God hath placed some in the Church, first Apostles,' of whom himself was one; 'secondly Prophets,' such as Agabus of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles; 'then doctors,' who are now called homilists, expositors, whom the same Apostle sometimes also calls 'prophets,' because by them, the mysteries of the prophets are revealed to the people. Whosoever therefore shall despise these who had their appointment of God in the Church in their several times and places, when they are unanimous in Christ in their interpretation of some point of Catholic doctrine, despises not man, but God . . . if anyone should dissent from their unanimous decision, let him listen to the words of the apostle: 'God is not the God of dissension, but of peace' " (Commonitorium 73; A.D. 450).

"These then are the men whose writings, whether as judges or as witnesses, were recited in the council [of Ephesus]: St. Peter, bishop of Alexandria, a most excellent Doctor and most blessed martyr, St. Athanasius, bishop of the same city, a most faithful teacher and eminent confessor, Saint Theophilus, also bishop of the same city, a man illustrious for his faith, his life, his knowledge, whose successor, the revered Cyril, now adorns the Alexandrian Church. And lest perchance the doctrine ratified by the council should be thought to be peculiar to some city or province, there were added also those lights of Cappadocia, St. Gregory of Nazianzen, bishop and confessor, St. Basil of Caesarea in Cappadocia, bishop and confessor, and the other St. Gregory, Gregory of Nyssa, for his faith, his conversation, his integrity, his wisdom, most worthy to be the brother of Basil. And lest Greece or the East should seem to stand alone, to prove that the Western and Latin world also have always held the same belief, there were read at the council certain epistles of St. Felix, martyr, and St. Julius, both bishops of Rome. And that not only the head [Rome] but the other parts of the world also might bear witness to the judgment of the council, there was added from the South the most blessed Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, and from the

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North, St. Ambrose, bishop of Milan" (Commonitorium 79; A.D. 450).

"A much greater number of the ancients might have been adduced; but it was needless, because neither was it fit that the time should be occupied by a multitude of witnesses, nor does anyone suppose that those ten were really of a different mind than their colleagues" (Commonitorium 80; A.D. 450).

POPE ST. GELASIUS I

Perhaps the most complete patristic era witness to the Fathers is the famous decree of Pope Gelasius "on which books are to be received and which are not to be received" in the Church. The pope establishes once again the canon of sacred Scripture and the apostolic succession of the see of Rome, and then goes on as follows to assert the authority of the Fathers and the Councils of the Church. Note again how clear he is about the original, gospel origin of the Fathers' teaching in his quotation of 1 Cor 3:11.

"And although 'no one can lay a foundation other than that which has been laid, which is Christ Jesus,' nevertheless for the purpose of instruction, the holy, that is, the Roman Church does not forbid these writings also, that is: the sacred synod of Nicea, Ephesus and Chalcedon to be received after those of the Old and New Testament, which we regularly accept. Likewise the works of Blessed Cyprian . . . and in the same way, the works of Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Athanasius, John, Theophilus, Cyril of Alexandria, Hilary, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome and Prosper. Also the letter of the Blessed Leo the Pope to Flavian . . . likewise it decrees that the works and treatises of all the orthodox Fathers . . . ought to be read . . . Likewise we acknowledge with all honor the lives of the Fathers, of Paul the first hermit, of Anthony, of Hilary . . . But let the judgment of Blessed Paul the Apostle lead the way: 'Prove all things, hold that which is good.' Other things which have been written or published by heretics or schismatics, the Catholic and apostolic Roman Church in nowise receives" (Letter 42, "The Decretal"; A.D. 495).

POPE ST. HORMISDAS

After the period of the Fathers of the Church, it has been normal for the magisterium of the Church to recommend the teaching of a particular Father or Doctor, whether explicitly or implicitly. For example, St. Alphonsus Ligouri is looked to in moral theology; St. Thomas Aquinas for all branches of theology. Modern popes have written apostolic letters and encyclicals on individual Fathers and Doctors. Here is the earliest explicit magisterial approval of the works of some Fathers for a specific point of doctrine, rather than as witnesses to Catholic teaching in general. Note, however, that the pope here asserts the sufficiency of Scripture to establish the Church's doctrine. The Fathers are only witnesses who confirm what the Apostle has written and the Church teaches.

"Yet what the Roman, that is, the Catholic Church follows and preserves concerning free will and the grace of God can be abundantly recognized both in the various books of the Blessed Augustine and especially those to Hilary and Prosper . . . although he who diligently considers the words of the Apostle should know clearly what he ought to follow" (Letter to Possessor; A.D. 520).

POPE ST. MARTIN I

Here is a witness from the very tail end of the period of the Fathers of the Church. Pope Martin presided at a council which condemned the Monothelite heresy, an error which denied that Our Lord had both a human and a divine will. In this council there were promulgated 19 canons which reaffirmed all the dogmas regarding the Trinity and Incarnation which had been defined by the Church up to that point, by condemning the opposite errors. Thirteen of these canons begin with the words "If anyone in word and mind does not properly and truly confess in accordance with the Holy Fathers . . ." Here is one which sums them all up.

"If anyone in word and mind does not properly and truly confess according to the Holy Fathers, all, even to the last portion, that has been handed down and preached in the holy, Catholic and apostolic Church of God, and likewise by the holy Fathers and the universal Councils, let him be condemned" (Canon 17 of the Lateran Council of A.D. 649). ✠

TWO FUNERALS

GREGORY H. WEILER, ESQ.

Funny, but I've always enjoyed funerals in a certain way. Since I was a young boy, I have attended a long procession of Catholic funerals. Great-Uncle George, Great-Uncle Ralph, Great-Aunt Florence, one elderly patriarch or matriarch after another: Mass, funeral homily, incense, prayers and blessings, etc. Later, as a young man, I took my place as a pallbearer who more directly participated in these ceremonies which are a part of the life of our family.

Funerals were places where the family got together in-between our normal family holidays. Yes, there were tears and grief but more than that, I heard the story of that person's life. Each funeral was a story of a soul, a celebration of a life.

As I matured in my faith, I came to better understand the "good news" of Christ, the same "good news" I had simply sensed as a young boy. My more sophisticated understanding that Catholic's preach Christ crucified and resurrected, coincided with different types of funerals, not of distant relatives, of unknown generations, but those of my parents and in-laws. Pain and emotions from the recesses of my soul rose and shook me like a rag doll. My understanding of our faith told me not to grieve or fear but, that these were *different* funerals. These were the feelings of those in the front pews at all those many earlier funerals. With every funeral I now attend, I always remember these "front pew" feelings.

Recently I attended the funeral of the 21 year-old nephew of a good friend who died prematurely, at such a young age. He was a young man both physically and mentally challenged. I didn't know him well and attended the funeral out of love and respect for my friend and his family. As I approached the Basilica at the Mission San Juan Capistrano, it was immediately apparent that this was not going to be some small family ceremony. The Church, which holds more than 1,000, was overflowing. There were tears and laughter—"front row" feelings abounded, and love. This young man who had never made a million dollars or achieved his doctorate in field, had touched the lives of countless people in Christ-like ways. This funeral was a celebration of his short but significant life. As I took in Tyler's funeral Mass amidst the tears, laughter and incense, my memory of two distinct funerals hit me.

Years ago, one of my partners died of cancer after a short illness. He was an incredibly successful lawyer, well-respected by the entire Southern California legal community. He had many wonderful attributes, a great sense of humor, an encyclopedic knowledge of films, political sophistication, and that certain something that Italians have, I guess you call it passion. He was certainly one of the top trial attorneys in California, the patriarch of our firm and a wealthy man.

Although he was not a churchgoer, upon his death there was a religious service at one of the mainline Protestant churches. All of the lawyers of our firm



ENTOMBMENT OF
ST STEPHEN MARTYR

Juan de Juanes

(1560)



FUNERAL OF
ST JEROME

Fra Filippo Lippi

(1460-65)

Two Funerals (Continued on page 10)

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were there, as well as representatives of many of the top law firms in Orange County. It was a nice, small funeral, and many humorous war stories were shared.

There was not anything negative about my partner's funeral. But nonetheless there was a sharp contrast with another funeral that occurred a short time later. A secretary in our firm with whom I had just a passing, friendly "how ya doing" type of relationship had been out of the office for a number of weeks. I returned to the office one day only to find out that Donna had passed away from a battle with Lupus. Donna was by all accounts a non-descript member of the staff, one legal secretary among dozens, but a person who seemed to be liked by everybody in the firm. She was a person who would be missed. The time of Donna's funeral was announced for later in the week to be held at St. John Neumann parish in Irvine. Most of the firm planned to attend the funeral Mass and to pay their respects.

My assistant Nan and I drove into the parking lot arriving minutes before the Mass was scheduled. We were immediately struck by the congestion. The parking lot was packed to overflowing. There were people everywhere and I was really taken back by the number of young people, many crying, many embracing, a veritable volcano of emotions in the parking lot that flowed into the church. At this funeral, the law firm seemed to be a miniscule part of the congregation. Both the homily and eulogies described a woman far different, well not different, but so much "more" than I knew. Donna had impacted for the better hundreds if not thousands of people, and they were present at her funeral to express their love and loss. It was absolutely clear that Donna had completed a life well lived.

What occurred to me after Donna's funeral, especially in such close proximity to my partner's funeral, was not that one was better than the other, not that the other person was better than the other, but something else. By the standards of the world, my partner was a "success" because he was educated, erudite, professionally successful and wealthy. By the standards of the world, Donna was quite plain, not famous, not flamboyant and of modest means.

However, Donna's funeral showed that she was a **real** Somebody. Donna's funeral showed that you don't need to be rich and powerful to be a somebody in the Christian sense of the word, a somebody who loved, is loved and will be missed. Somebody whose loving actions, like the stone thrown in a pond, will ripple through the generations and have eternal significance. Donna's life, like that of my friend's nephew Tyler, beautifully illustrate the promise of Christ, that those who in a worldly sense are last, will be first; that those who live a life of loving self-giving, a life that transcends worldly accomplishment, are the "blessed" of the Beatitudes.

When I ponder memorable, emotive funerals which I have observed (apart from those of my loved ones), I think of JFK's, Mother Theresa's, John Paul II's, Tyler's and Donna's. There is, I think, a common theme: these people, each in their own way, appealed to the better angels of our nature. They pointed by word and action, that a life well-lived is not about acquiring the most toys, having the most fun, making the most money, but rather the giving to others the extravagant gift of themselves by caring, joy, laughter and love in Christ.

Well, I guess we all have a choice of funerals: either the funeral of Ebenezer Scrooge funeral pictured by Dickens in his A Christmas Carol where the mourners said, "Well, I'll go if lunch is served", OR the funeral of Donna and Tyler.

I often wonder if a funeral on earth is a shadow reflecting the real party going on in heaven for that person?

I'm still trying to discern the lessons of these two funerals. Maybe the lesson is that it is not important how you die, but how you live. Or maybe it is that anybody can be a saint. Or maybe the lesson is as simple as Donna's smiles and Tyler's hugs all given in the name of Jesus. †

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

TRUTH: FORGOTTEN IDEAL

Submission is one of the deepest needs of the human heart. After a century and a half of false liberalism, in which it was denied that anything is true, and that it makes no difference what you believe, the world reacted to totalitarianism. It grew tired of its freedom, just as children in progressive schools grow tired of their license to do whatever they please. Freedom fatigues those who want to shirk responsibility. Then it is they look for some false god into whose hands they can throw themselves, so they will never have to think or make decisions for themselves. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism came into being during the twentieth century, as a reaction against false liberalism.

Self-will always repudiates a truth which challenges it. However successful self-will may be, it is never satisfied; that is why the egotist is always critical. The "head that wears the crown is uneasy," not because he is tired of the crown, but because he is tired of himself. He has it within his power to do anything he pleases, and this living without boundaries and limitations becomes as dull and stagnant as a swamp. A river must be happier than a swamp because it has banks and boundaries; a swamp is a valley of liberty that lost its shores and became "liberal."

The only ones who are truly free from the bondage and the burden of self are those who hold to a truth. *"The truth will make you free,"* said Our Divine Lord (John 8: 32). Only the boxer who knows the truth about fighting is free to stay on his feet. Only the one who knows the truths of engineering is free to build to build a bridge that will stand. The lover of truth is under an eternal law of rectitude; as he submits to it, he enjoys peace. Truth is not something that we invent; if we do, it is a lie; rather truth is something we discover, like love. In that great book of C.S. Lewis called *Screwtape Letters*, there is a series of correspondence between an uncle devil in hell and a young nephew devil on earth. The young devil is trying to win souls over to himself by talking about the "Truth of Materialism." The old devil reprimands him saying that he must not talk about "truth"; that is the word that is used by our "enemy God." You might confuse minds; get them to inquire whether a thing is "liberal or reactionary," "right or left," "modern or behind the times." Evidently Screwtape, the old devil, has succeeded pretty well with politicians and others.

Truth does not challenge, but truth does develop. Two and two do not make four in the thirteenth century, and sixteen in the twentieth, but arithmetic does develop into geometry, and geometry into calculus. Nor is truth easy to discover, particularly when it affects our lives. There are two kinds of truth; speculative and practical. Speculative truth is the truth of knowing, such as comes to us from philosophy, mechanics, physics and chemistry. Practical truth, however, is concerned with doing and living, such as ethics and morals.

The first kind of truth is very easy to accept, e.g., London is the capital of England. The reason is because it does not in any way involve a change in our conduct. It makes no practical difference to our lives. But the truth of morality, such as purity, justice and prudence and charity are not so easy for acceptance, because they often demand a revolution in our behavior. That is why men are more willing to accept objections against a principle of morality than against a theory of science. Our Divine Lord referred to the difficulty of accepting practical truths when He said: *"You will not come to Me because your lives are evil"* (cf. John 5: 19-47).

Truth is a narrow path; either side is an abyss. It is easy to fall either to the right or the left; it was easy to be an idealist in the nineteenth century, as it is easy to be a materialist in the twentieth century; but to avoid both abysses and walk that narrow path of truth is as thrilling as a romance. Truth is like the veins of metal in the earth; it is often very thin and runs not in a continuous layer. If we lose it once, we may have to dig for miles to find it again. Grains of truth are like grains of gold that prospectors find; they can be discovered after a long search; they must be sifted from error with great patience; they must be buried with sacrifice to erase the dross and washed in the streams of honesty. Notice how often today men in public life accuse one another of "lying." Why is it they never speak of truth? May it not be that they studied in the same school as Pilate and asked "What is Truth?" (John 18: 38) and then turn their backs on it. It takes a heap of virtuous living for any one of us to discover Truth. ✚

MORE ON VIRTUE



THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



THE CARDINAL
VIRTUES

Sanzio Raffaello
(1511)

As More put it, the liberal arts can “*prepare the soul for virtue.*” They can quicken the reason; they can form and perfect good judgment; they can clarify the highest principles which “*both instruct and inspire the mind in the pursuit of virtue*”; they can develop prudence in human affairs. By themselves, however, they cannot produce virtue or strong character.

That More did a great deal of thinking about these issues is particularly evident in the fact that he raised five brilliant daughters (including his adopted daughter and a ward) who would have been denied a liberal arts education by the custom of the times. More considered this education so important that he hired tutors from Oxford and personally supervised not only his son’s but also his daughters’ education in languages, mathematics, science, history, literature, and philosophy. In doing so, he was criticized by the European literati, Erasmus included, but he soon won them over to his novel educational practices.

More’s fundamental principle in education was crystal clear: “*Put virtue in the first place..., learning in the second.*” In this way, as we have seen, he was convinced that his children would grow to be “*inwardly calm and at peace and neither stirred by praise of flatterers nor stung by the follies of unlearned mockers of learning.*” In stating this principle, More was simply reaffirming the commonsense observations of Plato and Aristotle that a person needs stability of character to see the world with objectivity. Since passion and pride cloud the intellect, he realized, the point of a complete education is to help a person achieve the self-mastery needed for reason to reign.

The liberal arts, he said, can foster this self-mastery not only by developing reason, but also by helping people reach “*the contemplation of celestial realities through the study of nature.*” Such contemplation can bring about a profound grasp of first principles. When this depth of understanding is combined with the experience found especially in the study of history, law, and literature, students can “*learn prudence in human affairs*”—and thus acquire the “*one special thing without which all learning is half lame...; [a] good mother wit.*”

More considered a well-trained wit to be one of the greatest helps available in this world. Nevertheless, he saw clearly that it cannot ensure the preservation of virtue. Lucifer, after all became so enamored with the power and beauty of his brilliant wit that he failed to remain loyal to his first love. Similarly, Adam and Eve became so caught up in the attractive power of their own “*fond fantasies*” that they neglected to attend to the true demands of life. Such is the drama of freedom, More would say. And the best defense of that freedom is vigilance in virtue, aided by the best mother wit one can fashion.

St. Thomas More Society Retreat

“And he came and found them sleeping, and he said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not watch one hour? Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” (Mark 14: 37-38)



**Then Jesus
“went out to the
mountain to pray,
spending the night
in communion
with God. ...”**

—Luke 6:12

When: Friday evening, April 7, 2006 (check-in 7:30-8:30 p.m.) through Noon on Sunday, April 9, 2006

Where: Prince of Peace Retreat Center, Oceanside, CA (Benedictine)
www.princeofpeaceabbey.org

Cost: \$130 (includes food and lodging)

Summary: The retreat will be a traditional, silent retreat with conferences and meditations taken from the writings of our patron, St. Thomas More, with opportunities for the Sacrament of Penance, Eucharistic Adoration and quiet time with the Lord.

Retreat Master: Father Hugh Barbour, O. Praem, Ph.D.

Contact: Anne Lanphar (714) 250-8605 or via email at alanphar@firstam.com or mail your check as set forth below.

PLEASE REGISTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AS SPACE IS LIMITED †

Please register me for the St. Thomas More Retreat for the weekend of April 7–9, 2006

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ email: _____

Make check payable to the “St Thomas More Society” and mail to:

Anne Lanphar c/o First American Title Insurance Company, 5 First American Way, Santa Ana, CA 92707



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In Memory of Brother Jerome West
Monday, April 24, 2006
Candlewood Country Club • Whittier, California

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Signature _____ Exp. _____

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Please mail this completed form and your payment by April 17, 2006 to: Linda Rickter, Saint Mary's College, P.O. Box 4300, Moraga, CA 94575-4300, or Fax to (925) 631-4871.

Thanks for your support!

**Saint Mary's College
2006 Southern California Gael Classic
Invitational Golf Tournament**

In Memory of Brother Jerome West

Monday, April 24, 2006

Candlewood Country Club, Whittier, CA

☐ **Scramble Format**

☐ **Individual Medal Play**

Player _____ Shirt Size _____ Index/Hcp _____

Player _____ Shirt Size _____ Index/Hcp _____

Player _____ Shirt Size _____ Index/Hcp _____

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Please complete both sides of the form.

WHERE IS GOD'S PERFECTION?

In Brooklyn, New York, Chush is a school that caters to learning-disabled children. Some children remain in Chush for their entire school career, while others can be mainstreamed into conventional Jewish schools. At a Chush fundraising dinner, the father of a Chush child delivered a speech that would never be forgotten by all who attended. After extolling the school and its dedicated staff, he cried out, "Where is the perfection in my son Shaya? Everything God does is done with perfection. But my child cannot understand things as other children do. My child cannot remember facts and figures as other children do. Where is God's perfection?" The audience was shocked by the question, pained by the father's anguish and stilled by the piercing query. "I believe," the father answered, "that when God brings a child like this into the world, the perfection that He seeks is in the way people react to this child."

He then told the following story about his son Shaya:

One afternoon Shaya and his father walked past a park where some boys Shaya knew were playing baseball. Shaya asked, "Do you think they will let me play?" Shaya's father knew that his son was not at all athletic and that most boys would not want him on their team. But Shaya's father understood that if his son were chosen to play it would give him a comfortable sense of belonging.

Shaya's father approached one of the boys in the field and asked if Shaya could play. The boy looked around for guidance from his teammates. Getting none, he took matters into his own hands and said, "We are losing by six runs and the game is in the eighth inning. I guess he can be on our team and we'll try to put him up to bat in the ninth inning." Shaya's father was ecstatic as Shaya smiled broadly. Shaya was told to put on a glove and go out to play short center field. In the bottom of the eighth inning, Shaya's team scored a few runs but was still behind by three. In the bottom of the ninth inning, Shaya's team scored again and now with two outs and the bases loaded with the potential winning run on base, Shaya was scheduled to be up. Would the team actually let Shaya bat at this juncture and give away their chance to win the game?

Surprisingly, Shaya was given the bat. Everyone knew that it was all but impossible because Shaya didn't even know how to hold the bat properly, let alone hit with it. However, as Shaya stepped up to the plate, the pitcher moved a few steps to lob the ball in softly so Shaya should at least be able to make contact. The first pitch came in and Shaya swung clumsily and missed. One of Shaya's teammates came up to Shaya and together they held the bat and faced the pitcher waiting for the next pitch. The pitcher again took a few steps forward to toss the ball softly toward Shaya.

As the pitch came in, Shaya and his teammate swung the bat and together they hit a slow ground ball to the pitcher. The pitcher picked up the soft grounder and could easily have thrown the ball to the first baseman. Shaya would have been out and that would have ended the game. Instead, the pitcher took the ball and threw it on a high arc to right field, far beyond reach of the first baseman.



**THOUGHT
FOR
THE
DAY**



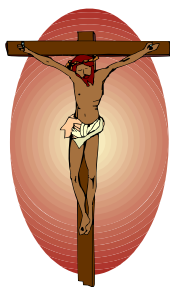
(Continued from page 15) Where is God's Perfection?

Everyone started yelling, "Shaya, run to first. Run to first!" Never in his life had Shaya run to first. He scampered down the baseline wide eyed and startled. By the time he reached first base, the right fielder had the ball. He could have thrown the ball to the second baseman that would tag out Shaya, who was still running. But, the right fielder understood what the pitcher's intentions were, so he threw the ball high and far over the third baseman's head. Everyone yelled, "Run to second, run to second." Shaya ran towards second base as the runners ahead of him deliriously circled the bases towards home. As Shaya reached second base, the opposing shortstop ran to him, turned him in the direction of third base and shouted, "Run to third." As Shaya rounded third, the boys from both teams ran behind him screaming, "Shaya run home!" Shaya ran home, stepped on home plate and all 18 boys lifted him on their shoulders and made him the hero, as he had just hit a "grand slam" and won the game for his team.

"That day," said the father softly with tears now rolling down his face, "those 18 boys reached their level of God's perfection." ✠



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*

- ♦ Ellie Shonefetl (Divorce)
- ♦ Janet Prah (illness)
- ♦ Lindsay Stevens (illness)
- ♦ Douglas Kniec (illness)
- ♦ Anne Lanphar (special intention)
- ♦ Eleanor Kott & Family (illness)
- ♦ Jeff Weber (serious illness)
- ♦ David Macdonald (illness)
- ♦ Eric & Marie Bessem
- ♦ Charles Godwin (serious illness).
- ♦ Kevin Guice (serious illness)
- ♦ Julia Nelson (serious illness).
- ♦ Sean Nelson (illness).
- ♦ 3 yr old Kallie Townsend (serious illness).
- ♦ Mary Keelan (illness).

*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) 250-8605 or email your request to
alanphar@firstam.com*

- ♦ Karl Abeyta (serious illness).
- ♦ Lauri Becker Kalinowski (serious illness).
- ♦ John Thompson (employment).
- ♦ Duain Cruzat (serious disease).
- ♦ Keith Wilson (serious illness).
- ♦ Milos & Edith Myrik (serious illness).
- ♦ Scott Smith (illness).
- ♦ Ryan Ronk (serious injury)
- ♦ Kristin Burkett (serious illness).
- ♦ Darren M (questioning the Faith).
- ♦ Fr. Matt Munoz (special intention).
- ♦ Cindie Burnes (serious illness).
- ♦ John Flynn & his wife (serious illness).
- ♦ Ron Gable (special intention).
- ♦ Earle Nelson (epiphany) ✠



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 ATTORNEY MERRITT McKEON
 ATTORNEY THOMAS ANDERSON
 ATTORNEY ELIZABETH LOPEZ

("Verdict: Jesus Christ Is Who He Said He Was," free copy for all attending)

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SERVING GOD IN A SECULAR SYSTEM



SCRIPTURAL CORNER



CHRIST AS SAVIOR

El Greco

(1610-14)

**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.*

JOHN 15: 4-6

⁴*Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If a man does not abide in me, he is cast forth as a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire and burned.*

COMMENT FROM THE NAVARRE BIBLE:*

⁴⁻⁵Our Lord draws more conclusions from the image of the vine and the branches. Now he emphasizes that anyone who is separated from him is good for nothing, like a branch separated from the vine. “You see, the branches are full of fruit, because they share in the sap that comes from the stem. Otherwise, from the tiny buds we knew just a few months back, they could not have produced the sweet ripe fruit that gladdens the eye and makes the heart rejoice. Here and there on the ground we may find some dry twigs, lying half-buried in the soil. Once they too were branches of the vine; now they lie there withered and dead, a perfect image of barrenness: ‘apart from me, you can do nothing’” (J. Escriva, *Friends of God*, 254).

The life of union with Christ is necessarily something which goes far beyond one’s private life: it has to be focused on the good of others; and if this happens a fruitful apostolate is the result, for “apostolate, of whatever kind it be, must be an overflow of the interior life” (J. Escriva, *Friends of God*, 239). The Second Vatican Council, quoting this page from St John, teaches what a Christian apostolate should be: “Christ, sent by the Father, is the source of the Church’s whole apostolate. Clearly then, the fruitfulness of the apostolate of lay people depends on their living union with Christ; as the Lord himself said: ‘He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.’ This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is maintained by the spiritual helps common to all the faithful, chiefly by active participation in the liturgy. Laymen should make such a use of these helps that, while meeting their human obligations in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate their union with Christ from their ordinary life; but through the very performance of their tasks, which are God’s will for them, actually promote the growth of their union with him” (*Apostolicam actuositatem*, 4).

⁶ If a person is not united to Christ by means of grace he will ultimately meet the same fate as the dead branches—fire. There is a clear parallelism with other images our Lord uses—the parables of the sound tree and the bad tree (Mt 7:15-20), the dragnet (Mt 13:49-50), and the invitation to the wedding (Mt 22:11-14), etc. Here is how St Augustine comments on this passage: “The wood of the vine is the more contemptible if it does not abide in the vine, the more glorious if it does abide...For, being cut off it is profitable, neither for the vinedresser nor for the carpenter. For one of these only is it useful—the vine or the fire. If it is not in the vine, it goes to the fire; to avoid going to the fire it must be joined to the vine” (In *Ioann, Evang.*, 81, 3). ☩

MESSAGE OF BENEDICT XVI FOR LENT 2006

“Jesus, at the sight of the crowds, was moved with pity” (Mt 9:36)

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

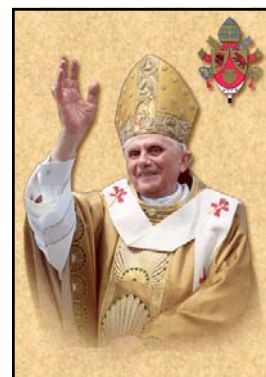
Lent is a privileged time of interior pilgrimage towards Him Who is the fount of mercy. It is a pilgrimage in which He Himself accompanies us through the desert of our poverty, sustaining us on our way towards the intense joy of Easter. Even in the “valley of darkness” of which the Psalmist speaks (*Ps* 23:4), while the tempter prompts us to despair or to place a vain hope in the work of our own hands, God is there to guard us and sustain us. Yes, even today the Lord hears the cry of the multitudes longing for joy, peace, and love. As in every age, they feel abandoned. Yet, even in the desolation of misery, loneliness, violence and hunger that indiscriminately afflict children, adults, and the elderly, God does not allow darkness to prevail. In fact, in the words of my beloved Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, there is a “divine limit imposed upon evil,” namely, mercy (*Memory and Identity*, pp. 19ff.). It is with these thoughts in mind that I have chosen as my theme for this Message the Gospel text: “Jesus, at the sight of the crowds, was moved with pity” (*Mt* 9:36).

In this light, I would like to pause and reflect upon an issue much debated today: the question of development. Even now, the compassionate “gaze” of Christ continues to fall upon individuals and peoples. He watches them, knowing that the divine “plan” includes their call to salvation. Jesus knows the perils that put this plan at risk, and He is moved with pity for the crowds. He chooses to defend them from the wolves even at the cost of His own life. The gaze of Jesus embraces individuals and multitudes, and he brings them all before the Father, offering Himself as a sacrifice of expiation.

Enlightened by this Paschal truth, the Church knows that if we are to promote development in its fullness, our own “gaze” upon mankind has to be measured against that of Christ. In fact, it is quite impossible to separate the response to people’s material and social needs from the fulfillment of the profound desires of their hearts. This has to be emphasized all the more in today’s rapidly changing world, in which our responsibility towards the poor emerges with ever greater clarity and urgency. My venerable Predecessor, Pope Paul VI, accurately described the scandal of underdevelopment as an outrage against humanity. In this sense, in the Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, he denounced “the lack of material necessities for those who are without the minimum essential for life, the moral deficiencies of those who are mutilated by selfishness” and “oppressive social structures, whether due to the abuses of ownership or to the abuses of power, to the exploitation of workers or to unjust transactions” (*ibid.*, 21). As the antidote to such evil, Paul VI suggested not only “increased esteem for the dignity of others, the turning towards the spirit of poverty, cooperation for the common good, the will and desire for peace”, but also “the acknowledgement by

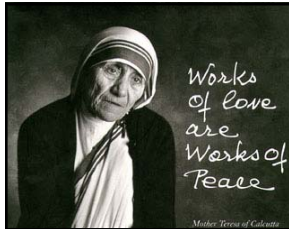


**FROM
PETER’S
SUCCESSOR,
POPE
BENEDICT XVI**



*Summary from ZENIT
January 25, 2006
www.zenit.org

2006 Lenten Message (Continued on page 20)



**BLESSED TERESA
OF CALCUTTA**

Michael Collopy



**BATTLE OF
CARNIVAL AND LENT**

*Pieter Brueghel
the Younger*

(Date Unknown)

(Continued from page 19) 2006 Lenten Message

man of supreme values, and of God, their source and their finality" (*ibid.*). In this vein, the Pope went on to propose that, finally and above all, there is "faith, a gift of God accepted by the good will of man, and unity in the charity of Christ" (*ibid.*). Thus, the "gaze" of Christ upon the crowd impels us to affirm the true content of this "complete humanism" that, according to Paul VI, consists in the "fully-rounded development of the whole man and of all men" (*ibid.*, 42). For this reason, the primary contribution that the Church offers to the development of mankind and peoples does not consist merely in material means or technical solutions. Rather, it involves the proclamation of the truth of Christ, Who educates consciences and teaches the authentic dignity of the person and of work; it means the promotion of a culture that truly responds to all the questions of humanity.

In the face of the terrible challenge of poverty afflicting so much of the world's population, indifference and self-centered isolation stand in stark contrast to the "gaze" of Christ. Fasting and almsgiving, which, together with prayer, the Church proposes in a special way during the Lenten Season, are suitable means for us to become conformed to this "gaze." The examples of the saints and the long history of the Church's missionary activity provide invaluable indications of the most effective ways to support development. Even in this era of global interdependence, it is clear that no economic, social, or political project can replace that gift of self to another through which charity is expressed. Those who act according to the logic of the Gospel live the faith as friendship with God Incarnate and, like Him, bear the burden of the material and spiritual needs of their neighbors. They see it as an inexhaustible mystery, worthy of infinite care and attention. They know that he who does not give God gives too little; as Blessed Teresa of Calcutta frequently observed, the worst poverty is not to know Christ. Therefore, we must help others to find God in the merciful face of Christ. Without this perspective, civilization lacks a solid foundation.

Thanks to men and women obedient to the Holy Spirit, many forms of charitable work intended to promote development have arisen in the Church: hospitals, universities, professional formation schools, and small businesses. Such initiatives demonstrate the genuine humanitarian concern of those moved by the Gospel message, far in advance of other forms of social welfare. These charitable activities point out the way to achieve a globalization that is focused upon the true good of mankind and, hence, the path towards authentic peace. Moved like Jesus with compassion for the crowds, the Church today considers it her duty to ask political leaders and those with economic and financial power to promote development based on respect for the dignity of every man and woman. An important litmus test for the success of their efforts is religious liberty, understood not simply as the freedom to proclaim and celebrate Christ, but also the opportunity to contribute to the building of a world enlivened by charity. These efforts have to include a recognition of the central role of authentic religious values in responding to man's deepest concerns, and in supplying the ethical motivation for his personal and social responsibility.

2006 Lenten Message (Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20) **2006 Lenten Message**

ties. These are the criteria by which Christians should assess the political programs of their leaders.

We cannot ignore the fact that many mistakes have been made in the course of history by those who claimed to be disciples of Jesus. Very often, when having to address grave problems, they have thought that they should first improve this world and only afterwards turn their minds to the next. The temptation was to believe that, in the face of urgent needs, the first imperative was to change external structures. The consequence, for some, was that Christianity became a kind of moralism, 'believing' was replaced with 'doing'. Rightly, therefore, my Predecessor, Pope John Paul II, of blessed memory, observed: "The temptation today is to reduce Christianity to merely human wisdom, a pseudo-science of well-being. In our heavily secularized world, a 'gradual secularization of salvation' has taken place, so that people strive for the good of man, but man who is truncated...We know, however, that Jesus came to bring integral salvation" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 11).

It is this integral salvation that Lent puts before us, pointing towards the victory of Christ over every evil that oppresses us. In turning to the Divine Master, in being converted to Him, in experiencing His mercy through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we will discover a "gaze" that searches us profoundly and gives new life to the crowds and to each one of us. It restores trust to those who do not succumb to scepticism, opening up before them the perspective of eternal beatitude. Throughout history, even when hate seems to prevail, the luminous testimony of His love is never lacking. To Mary, "the living fount of hope" (Dante Alighieri, *Paradiso*, XXXIII, 12), we entrust our Lenten journey, so that she may lead us to her Son. I commend to her in particular the multitudes who suffer poverty and cry out for help, support, and understanding. With these sentiments, I cordially impart to all of you a special Apostolic Blessing. ✠



PORTRAIT OF DANTE

Sandro Botticelli

(1495)

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem* 

*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

A LITTLE IRISH HUMOR

An Irishman who had a little too much to drink is driving home from the city one night and, of course, his car is weaving violently all over the road.

A cop pulls him over. "So," says the cop to the driver, "where have you been?"

"Why, I've been to the pub of course" slurs the drunk.

"Well," says the cop, "it looks like you've had quite a few too many to drink this evening".

"I did all right," the drunk says with a smile.

"Did you know," says the cop, standing straight and folding his arms across his chest, that a few intersections back, your wife fell out of your car?"

"Oh, thank heavens," sighs the drunk. "For a minute there, I thought I'd gone deaf." ✠



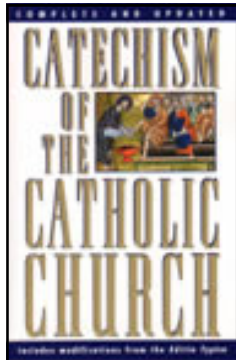
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART FOUR: Christian Prayer

SECTION ONE: Prayer in the Christian Life

CHAPTER THREE: The Life of Prayer

ARTICLE 2: THE BATTLE OF PRAYER



2725 Prayer is both a gift of grace and a determined response on our part. It always presupposes effort. The great figures of prayer of the Old Covenant before Christ, as well as the Mother of God, the saints, and he himself, all teach us this: prayer is a battle. Against whom? Against ourselves and against the wiles of the tempter who does all he can to turn man away from prayer, away from union with God. We pray as we live, because we live as we pray. If we do not want to act habitually according to the Spirit of Christ, neither can we pray habitually in his name. The "spiritual battle" of the Christian's new life is inseparable from the battle of prayer.

I. OBJECTIONS TO PRAYER

CATECHISM CORNER

2726 In the battle of prayer, we must face in ourselves and around us *erroneous notions of prayer*. Some people view prayer as a simple psychological activity, others as an effort of concentration to reach a mental void. Still others reduce prayer to ritual words and postures. Many Christians unconsciously regard prayer as an occupation that is incompatible with all the other things they have to do: they "don't have the time." Those who seek God by prayer are quickly discouraged because they do not know that prayer comes also from the Holy Spirit and not from themselves alone.



**ST FRANCIS IN
PRAYER BEFORE
THE CRUCIFIX**

El Greco
(1585-90)

2727 We must also face the fact that certain attitudes deriving from the *mentality* of "this present world" can penetrate our lives if we are not vigilant. For example, some would have it that only that is true which can be verified by reason and science; yet prayer is a mystery that overflows both our conscious and unconscious lives. Others overly prize production and profit; thus prayer, being unproductive, is useless. Still others exalt sensuality and comfort as the criteria of the true, the good, and the beautiful; whereas prayer, the "love of beauty" (*philokalia*), is caught up in the glory of the living and true God. Finally, some see prayer as a flight from the world in reaction against activism; but in fact, Christian prayer is neither an escape from reality nor a divorce from life.

2728 Finally, our battle has to confront what we experience as *failure in prayer*: discouragement during periods of dryness; sadness that, because we have "great possessions," we have not given all to the Lord; disappointment over not being heard according to our own will; wounded pride, stiffened by the indignity that is ours as sinners; our resistance to the idea that prayer is a free and unmerited gift; and so forth. The conclusion is always the same: what good does it do to pray? To overcome these obstacles, we must battle to gain humility, trust, and perseverance.



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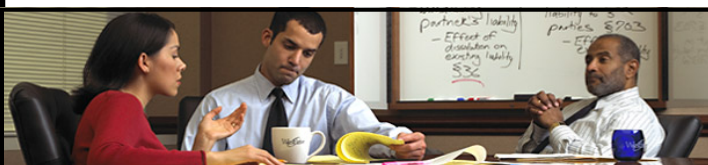
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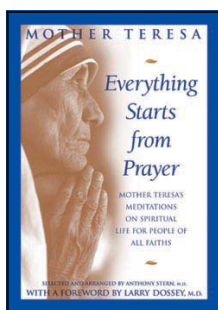
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EVERYTHING STARTS WITH PRAYER MOTHER TERESA'S MEDITATIONS ON SPIRITUAL LIFE

At the Home for the Dying in Calcutta, Mother Teresa often cared for the residents as they approached the end. As she was ministering to one illness-ravaged man, a visitor overheard her whisper a few words to him. These few words embody some of Mother Teresa's most wonderful wisdom. This is what she said: "You say a prayer in your religion, and I will say a prayer as I know it. Together we will say this prayer and it will be something beautiful for God." These gentle words of solace and care provide us with a glimpse at a Mother Teresa we've often overlooked: Mother Teresa the universal teacher of prayer. The world has admired the Mother Teresa who devoted her life to caring for the poorest of the poor everywhere. But, her close associates knew that all of Mother Teresa's outer activity of caring and action was the natural consequence of her devotion, the overflow of her deep inner life. They witnessed her reliance upon contemplative practice, and they recognized Mother Teresa not only as a devout Catholic, but also as a great ecumenical teacher of prayer.

An excerpt from "Chapter 1: The Need to Pray"

"Everything starts from prayer. Without asking God for love, we cannot possess love and still less are we able to give it to others. Just as people today are speaking so much about the poor but they do not know the poor, we too cannot talk so much about prayer and yet now know how to pray. People throughout the world may look different or have a different religion, education, or position, but they are all the same. They are the people to be loved. They are all hungry for love. Whatever religion we are, we must pray together. Children need to learn to pray and they need to have their parents pray with them. It is easy to love the people far away. It is not always easy to love those close to us. It is easier to give a cup of rice to relieve hunger than to relieve the loneliness and pain of someone unloved in our own home. Bring love into your own home for this is where our love for each other must start."

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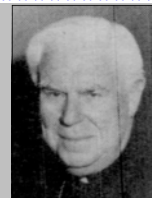
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