

Ad Veritatem

Volume 11 Issue 5

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MAY 2006

*More pointed out the centrality
of pride, "the mischievous
mother of all manner of vice."*

*Thomas More:
A Portrait of Courage
Gerard Wegemer*

MAY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY MAY 17, 2006 NOON

SPEAKER: FR. EDWARD BECKER, J.D.

**TOPIC: THE LAW OF GOD & THE LAW OF MAN:
CAN LAWYERS HELP BRIDGE THE GAP?**

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. ☩

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MAY MEETING

FR. EDWARD BECKER, J.D. *"The Law of God & The Law of Man: Can Lawyers Help Bridge the Gap?"*

WHEN: **NOON**

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Fr. Ed Becker was born and grew up on a farm in Missouri. Although he knew even in his high school years that he wanted to become a lawyer, Fr. Ed also was active in his local parish as a cantor and student leader. He received his undergraduate degrees in 1987 from the University of Missouri – Columbia and his J.D. degree in 1990 from Georgetown University in Washington D.C. He then practiced law for 8 years as an associate in the law firm of Bryan Cave LLP in the firm's Washington, D.C., Kuwait City, Kuwait, & Irvine offices, primarily in the areas of international trade, government contracts and civil litigation. Although Fr. Ed had sworn upon graduation from law school that he would never go back to school, God had other plans! After moving to California in 1994, Fr. Ed realized that as much as he loved the law (and still does), being a lawyer was not his first calling. In 1999, he entered St. John's Seminary in Camarillo, studying to become a priest for the Diocese of Orange. Fr. Ed did not completely leave the law behind, however. Seminary professors sometimes felt that Fr. Ed's questions in class were more like cross-examination of a hostile witness than mere intellectual curiosity (old habits die hard!). For his M.A. thesis, Fr. Ed chose a topic integrating his legal and theological backgrounds: "Love Thy Neighbor: A Catholic Social Teaching Perspective on International Trade Policy of Developed Countries." In 2005, Fr. Ed graduated from St. John's with M.Div. and M.A. degrees. He was ordained by Bishop Tod Brown on June 11, 2005 and is currently serving as a parochial vicar at St. Pius V Church in Buena Park.

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July 8-9 Anaheim

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VOCATIONS

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

Our Chaplain

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



THE MARRIAGE OF
ST CATHERINE
OF SIENA

Fra Bartolomeo
(1511)

QUESTION: *My only daughter is 21 and wants to enter an order of sisters. She went on a vocational retreat and was really swept away by it all. My husband and I wonder if she should take such a drastic step so early in life. We think she should experience a little more of the world first, working, dating, etc. After all, she ought to know what she's giving up! She would make a good wife and mother, but seems to think that being a sister is a "higher way" than marriage. We told her marriage is just as good as being a nun, and that she does not have our support if she goes off into the convent. We're practicing Catholics, and we're not against sisters or anything like that, but we think she ought to wait. She'll probably do what we advise, but I'm a little worried we might not be acting according to the Church's teaching. What do you think?*

ANSWER: There are two main issues in your question. First, let's consider the relation of marriage and celibacy. Then we can take a look at the question of your attitude toward your daughter's vocation.

St. Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 7, "The unmarried woman or girl is anxious about the affairs of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit; but the married woman is anxious about worldly affairs, how to please her husband . . . He who marries his betrothed does well, but he who refrains from marriage will do better."

In Matthew 19, Our Lord talks about those who practice perfect chastity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven, saying, "He who is able to receive this, let him receive it." The Church, by Her solemn Magisterium, defined the sense of these scriptural teachings at the Council of Trent. That council defined as a dogma the preeminence of consecrated celibacy over marriage in these words, "If anyone says that the married state is to be placed before that of virginity or celibacy, and that it is not more blessed and better to remain in virginity and celibacy, than to be joined in marriage, let him be anathema" (session 24, canon 10). The superiority of virginity over marriage as a state of life is a matter then, of Catholic Faith. This superiority of the state of celibacy does not necessarily mean the individual *moral* superiority of virgins over married people. Holiness is a matter of the degree of our love of God and neighbor. The virginal state allows greater freedom in the service of God and neighbor, and so is a more secure path to perfect charity. Yet, this does not mean that married people cannot have a charity and holiness as great or greater than those dedicated to God in celibacy. Rather, it merely asserts that those who live in the world in marriage have a way of life in which the primacy of the spiritual life is not as clearly shown. This is precisely the meaning of St. Paul's words just quoted.

Why is this? To understand the reason, we have to look at the nature of our spiritual life as principally a union with Christ. In explaining the value of Christian celibacy, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says, "Christ is the center of all Christian life. The bond with Him takes precedence over all other bonds, familial or social . . . Virginity for the sake of the kingdom of heaven is an unfolding of the baptismal grace, a powerful sign of the supremacy of the bond with Christ and of the ardent expectation of His return, a sign which also recalls that marriage is a reality of this present age which is passing away" (1618-1619). In our day, it isn't popular or easily understood to speak of one way of life as being superior to another, and so the current Magisterium

Vocations (Continued on page 21)

MY CATHOLIC WALK OF FAITH

HON. DAVID MCEACHEN

In my judicial chambers, I have two large plaques that are very significant to me.

On my father's (McEachens) side is a 100 year old animal skin diploma of my grandfather Angus Dougall McEachen when he completed his residency as a Senior and House Physician and Surgeon signed by the Medical Board of Columbus Hospital in New York City. It also contains the original signature of the Mother Superior, Mother Frances X. Cabrini. (My grandfather started in his practice in Boston—the original name was Mac Eachen—he changed it to McEachen as he was dealing with a large, Irish Community). My grandfather was a doctor who was born in Nova Scotia as was his grandfather whose father immigrated from Scotland in 1802. Four years ago we celebrated the 200th year of the McEachens in the new world and had a reunion in Mabou, Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia.

The other significant plaque contains a special certificate belonging to my maternal grandfather, David M. Roth, who the Los Angeles Times in 1971 declared as the “world's foremost memory expert.” The certificate dated in 1918 certifies my grandfather as a founder of the Society of American Magicians in New York and duly constitutes him as a life member. That certificate was signed by then President of that organization - Harry Houdini! My grandfather and Houdini were good friends as evidenced by a collection of correspondence between them which I still have.

So my story requires a brief history of the Roth side of the family—my mother's side.

My father's family was Catholic and my mother's family was Jewish. (So I can get both sides—double the guilt!) My great great grandfather Benjamin M. Bernheim was raised in Germany. In 1853, he wrote a letter to his son Morris (who later changed his name from Bernheim to Roth). This letter was written in 1853 to say goodbye to his 18 year old son who was leaving Germany to immigrate America. This dear, loving letter was written to a son whom the father knows he will never see again. It has been translated from Hebrew and German and was signed in Hechingen, Germany on March 13, 1853. I never thought much about my Jewish roots as I was raised as a Catholic since my birth July 4, 1942. Neither my grandfather nor my mother ever discussed much about their original faith so I don't have much background except this letter which I will include the beginning part and then skip to the end. Remember this letter was written 150 plus years ago by a father who knew his first born son would never return – he is sending him off to a distant land.

“My Dear Son:

It is doubtful whether we will see each other again in this world. Unfortunately I cannot accompany you on your journey, and I cannot even warn you against all the dangers which life presents, since I shall not be near you. Therefore, I can only tell you in this letter that I shall be with you in spirit with all my paternal love, and however far away you may be, I shall always think of you with tender love and shall always be ready to do for you whatever is in my power. Feel free and unashamed in whatever situation you may become involved. I shall always give you proofs of my everlasting and constant love and tenderness. But before we part I would like to give you also the following rules as my advice. Take them to your heart and follow them, and you never be unhappy. Through them you will be able to find courage and consolation in every situation, consider these as a bequest from your father and strive to live according to them as much as you can.

I. Seek to always keep your conscience clean, i. e., never commit an act for which

My Catholic Walk of Faith (Continued on page 6)



**JACOB BLESSING THE
CHILDREN OF JOSEPH**

Rembrandt

(1656)

***Remember this letter
was written 150 plus
years ago by a father
who knew his first
born son would
never return – he
was sending him off
to a distant land...
The final part of my
Great Great Grand-
father's letter is to
impart what is really
important in life...***

(Continued from page 5) **My Catholic Walk of Faith**

you might have to repent later. Carefully weigh all things in advance which you intend to do, and consider what the consequences of each action might be.

II. Consider your money as a trust placed in your hands by God. Be economical and strive to increase it only in an honest manner. Consider your possessions also as if they were the property of your brothers and sisters. For them no sacrifice should appear to you to be too great. However, your honor and your clean conscience should never be consolation in every situation, consider these as a bequest from your father and strive to live according to them as much as you can.

III. Never give up the religion which you have inherited from your fathers! Neither money nor seduction, neither splendor nor expectations of honor, neither friendships nor love for a girl, should ever influence you to change your religion. You will meet situations and conditions which may make it difficult to observe or even prevent you from carrying out some of the ceremonies of our religion, all of which by the way, you should maintain as much as possible, since they purify and elevate the soul and make us a truly Holy Nation, AM KADOSH. However, under no circumstances should you abandon the principle of our religion: “SHEMA ISRAEL, ADONAI ELO-HENU, ADONAI ECHAD” (“HEAR, ISRAEL, THE LORD, OUR GOD IS ONE.” Deuteronomy 6:4)

The 10 page letter proceeds to provide advice on how to handle various situations in the new land and also reminds his son of his love for him. I never thought much about my Jewish roots until later in my life when I found this letter in my parent’s correspondence after they had gone to be with the Lord. Now I realize how important it is to know your background.

When I was a child, the furthest thing from my mind was how I would grow in my relationship with God. I was a classic “cradle” Catholic without much understanding of the Faith - I was merely a good rule and regulation follower.

After my formative years at All Soul’s School in Alhambra where I received 8 years of Catholic religious education. I thought that I was set—I knew all the rules. I continued to attend Mass regularly and was a good altar boy, learning the Latin responses. Unfortunately, my Catholic education pretty much came to a halt at age 14 which was pre-Vatican II. While I had flirted briefly with the idea of the priesthood, I instinctively knew that it was really my sister, Sally, who was being called to religious life.

While students at Oregon State University, my wife, Judi, decided to investigate the Catholic faith. So we both attended the inquiry classes at the local Catholic Church in Corvallis, Oregon. Part of that instruction included a thorough discussion of Vatican II. The instructor was a priest who had a good understanding of the impact of Vatican II and the changes that it was bringing into the Church. My wife converted to Catholicism and in 1965 we were married at St. Barnabas Catholic Church in Long Beach.

I served as a Naval officer during Vietnam during which I did do some intense soul searching. During this period, I read the “Imitation of Christ” which I knew was written by a scholarly monk. Although this book pushed me into reflecting on my relationship with God, it still seemed that God was a long way from me. At that time, my with God was solely tied into Sunday Mass.

In 1970, I made my Cursillo and was totally shocked when I virtually came face to face with Jesus Christ. I still can vividly remember exactly where I was when the Rector at the Cursillo talked about his relationship with Christ. I was further surprised as numerous other men, very strong and worldly men, shared without hesitation how their lives had been transformed when they surrendered their lives to Christ. This experience provided me with a whole new way of thinking about God and my faith.

After that pivotal weekend, I worked as a leader within the Cursillo movement for 15 years. It was a wonderful, comfortable and safe place being surrounded by a wonderful group of people who loved each other in Christ and were willing to express that love.

I also practiced law for 15 years and in January of 1990, a major change occurred in my professional life: Governor Deukmejian telephoned and informed me that I had been appointed to serve as a judge for the North Orange County Municipal Court! However, within 1 year of this professional high, Judi and I experienced a terrible personal challenge: Judi was diagnosed with breast cancer which had spread to the lymph nodes. Fervently I

My Catholic Walk of Faith (Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) **My Catholic Walk of Faith**

prayed to God to spare Judi's life as she underwent both radiation and vigorous chemotherapy following her lumpectomy. That was 15 years ago and, thanks be to the glory and mercy of God, Judi has not suffered any recurrences!

Our marriage of 41 years seems to grow stronger each year and we continually thank God for all His Many blessings on our family. In 1993, I was elevated to the Superior Court bench in and for the County of Orange.

My life in Christ has also been enriched though many activities at our parish, St. Hedwig's Church in Los Alamitos, especially the "Men of Promise Catholic Men's Fellowship." This group originally started in 1991 in San Francisco Solano parish in Santa Margarita and has spread through out the County. The purpose of the Catholic Men's Fellowship is to assist men to develop a closer relationship with Jesus and to encourage fellowship with other Catholic men.

One of the most significant occurrences in my Life in Christ was the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola which "class" was conducted under the tutelage of Judge Frank Firmat. This experience started in September of 1997 and was completed 9 months later. The key to the Exercises is prayer—quiet personal prayer—at least one hour each day which experience is also memorialized in a personal journal. The journal reflects our personal prayer experience as well as our feeling toward God, those persons and situations that seem to draw us closer to God and those that pull us away. Once a week the group met to share our prayer experience and to receive the next increment of the prayer direction and readings as originally designed by St. Ignatius. Once a month we individually met with our Spiritual Director, Judge Firmat, to discuss our progress and any personal issues. The seven members were all lawyers and judges who shared this journey though the Spiritual Exercises became a prayer group as we shared our travels through Scriptures and our development of a deeper, more spiritual relationship with Christ. Upon completion of the Exercises, many of us continued as a prayer group.

My life in Christ has been a "work in progress" over many years. Judi and I have adopted two children. Our son, Ryan (age 30) has received his Bachelor's of Arts degree in English from the University of California at Riverside and presently serves as a Fireman in the City of Calexico. My daughter Sarah (age 28) is married to Dan Vissor, a Long Beach Police officer. Thus, we have my wife Judi, the principal of Carver School in Long Beach, a fireman, police officer and my daughter Sarah—the teacher. The newest addition to our family is our granddaughter, Peyton age 1 ½.

I thank God for allowing me the opportunity to serve the people of Orange County as a judge of the Superior Court. Twelve years ago I was one of the first judges to serve in the Drug Court where I have seen many transformations in the lives of drug addicts which rival being "born again" as a Christian. My work in this special Court helped me in my faith as I have seen many miracles through people who were arrested for drug possession and who subsequently turned their lives around through the help of a system designed to treat addicts rather than incarcerate them.

Since most of us are in the second half of life, I have learned that I should not be continuing to strive for upward mobility as I have learned more from my failures than successes and I thank God every day for my Catholic faith which is a priceless gift.

The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius presents a set of guidelines for living a daily journey toward a closer relationship with God: "I believe that I was created to share my life and love with God and other people, forever. I believe that God created all things to help me achieve this goal. I believe, therefore, that I should use the other things God created insofar as they help me attain my goal and abstain from them insofar as they hinder me. It follows, therefore, that I should not value, automatically, health over sickness, wealth over poverty, honor over dishonor, or a long life over a short one. I believe my sole norm for valuing and preferring a thing should be this: How well does it help me attain the end for which I was created?"

During this period of Lent we should follow these precepts and understand that Christ is in every person we meet. We are indeed blessed!

The final part of my Great-Great Grandfather's letter is to impart what is really important in life and he closes with the following:

"Herewith, then I hand down to you, Beloved Son of my heart, these rules for your life. Try to follow them.

My Catholic Walk of Faith (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) **My Catholic Walk of Faith**

May they accompany you on your way, and if you have them always in your heart and mind, they will bring you blessing and happiness; but they will be silent reproaches if you abandon them. May they be to you the best inheritance which I can give you in this world.

If you have seen certain things in my life which are not in harmony with these rules or even contradictory to them and which displease you and your pure and spotless character, know that I am a frail human like others, not free from deficiencies and faults and that I have always been striving to become better. I confess that I have not resisted all passions, and that experience taught me lessons which shall become useful for you who are young and inexperienced.

All my happiness is now the happiness of my children. No sacrifice is too great for me, if I make it for your happiness and contentment. It requires a great self-control (I have concealed my inner struggle in your mother's interest) to let you go, young as you are, inexperienced as you are, so far away to strange and cold people. I would gladly have sacrificed the greater part of my possessions and even more, if it could have been avoided. I wonder whether all fathers have those feelings, but I cannot help myself: I would never have given my permission for this step if it had not you're your firm and irrevocable will. Man's will is his Heaven (prvb). Maintain your filial love and affection toward me as I always shall love you.

Love and respect your mother: She is the most estimable woman in this world. From day to day she commands higher respect and comes closer to the ideal woman whom Solomon in his Proverbs has described and praised as "THE VIRTUOUS WIFE" (Hebrew: ESHET CHAYIL). She is an angel to you and to me. May God keep her many, many years.

Love your brothers and sisters, and if ever they need you, be a loving brother to them. If God takes your parents to the other world, you as the oldest brother, be to them a protecting father and like a tender mother.

Respect and honor your relatives. There are not many families in which, as in ours, all members are imbued with love and affection for each other. We all are like loving brothers and sisters rather than relatives.

Finally, "Love your neighbor as yourself". This law refers to all humans.

If you fulfill your duties faithfully, the Almighty will bless you and will give you the strength to endure even disaster and distress quietly and calmly.

And now I am giving you my paternal blessing which may accompany you on all the ways of your life:

"God make thee as Ephraim and Menashe, as Moses and Ahron, as David and Solomon, as Samson in his strength and Absalom in his handsomeness. The Lord bless thee and keep thee, the Lord make His countenance shine upon thee, the Lord lift up His countenance towards thee and give thee peace. May God give thee of the dew of the heavens and of the richness of the earth and abundance of corn and wine. And may the Almighty God bless thee, make thee fruitful and multiply thee. May rest upon you the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

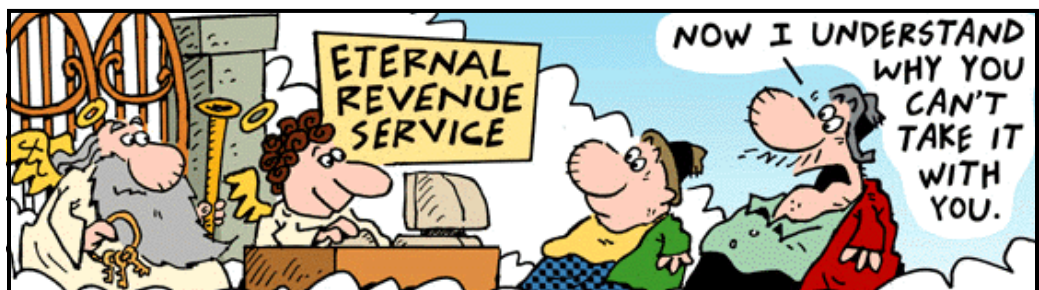
Hechingen, Germany

March 13, 1853

Signed

Benjamin M. Roth

(Both in Hebrew & German) ✚



TREASURES OF THE SUBCONSCIENCE

ARCHBISHOP FULTON J. SHEEN

Has psychology revealed totally the mystery of the subconsciousness? Besides our libidinous instincts, repressed desires, drives to pleasure and sex, and the collective myths of our human ancestry, is there not another drive? Our consciousness and anthropology reveal a great treasure in the depths of our being. The subconsciousness need not be just a cesspool, something we are so ashamed of that it takes constant prodding to bring it to the surface; it is not always a sewerage and drainage system full of the muck and rot of our lives.

Besides the id there is another neglected area for which we have to find a name. Since Freud used the Latin word *Id* to signify that cellar of repressed desires, we will use a Greek word *pneuma* to describe the other aspect, though we could use the Hebrew word *ruah*.

Both the id and the *pneuma* are in the subconscious levels of our mind; through them pass suggestions, desires, urges, drives, and impulses that seek entrance into the conscious level of life and conduct. They are also the same in that there is a little censor at the top of the stairs who can keep down the dynamisms, drives, and thrusts of the *pneuma* if it does not like them. In fact, there are seven censors battling against the *pneuma*: egotism, lust, greed, anger, laziness, intemperance, and jealousy. But there is one big difference: The id is principally concerned with the drive to pleasure. The *pneuma* is concerned with a drive toward peace, harmony, integration, and happiness. There is in us a double drive: one toward giving release to our carnal nature, the other giving freedom to our deeper spiritual nature. One is an urge to flaunt conscience and the moral law and to be bad; the other is to grow in goodness and love of neighbor; one is to exalt our own ego, the other to serve neighbor and to crush our selfishness.

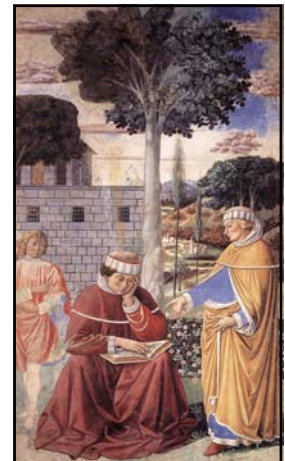
We are, therefore, solicited in two ways: one toward release of what is egotistic, the other toward a harmony and perfection of our nature. In other words, we are tempted also to be good.

How far we have gotten away from the total understanding of our subconscious mind will be clear from one word. When I say the word “temptation,” what images and ideas are conjured up in your mind? “Engage in illicit sex”? “Get drunk”? “Rob”? “Steal”? and so on. Why do we always associate the word with what is rotten, immoral, or antisocial? Why does the subconsciousness always have to be considered a Gehenna or a drainage ditch? Why do we assume that every solicitation we have is something we would be ashamed to admit in polite society? Analyze yourself, and you will find this astounding fact: You have more temptations to be good than you have to be bad.

How many times have you been tempted to help a poor family, and how often have you felt sad if you did not and happy when you did? How often were you tempted to give up excessive drinking, bad temper, stealing, to “see what is in the Bible,” to be kinder to your spouse, more gentle to your children, less cranky with your employees, less sarcastic to your neighbor, to try praying, to share your wealth with the hungry, to be more interested in community welfare? It is not only devils who walk up those stairs to the conscious mind; the stairs are really like Jacob’s ladder with angels on every rung. And as regards repression, we knock more good thoughts over the head than we do bad thoughts. If, as some say, repression of our primitive instincts is wrong, why is not the repression of our meaningful instincts also wrong?

Why must we think of our subconscious always as a garbage pail instead of a dinner table? Why conceive that the energy of electric power is to give us a shock and not to light and heat? Are there only snakes underground, or do we also find gold? Do not the depths of the soil shoot up oil and fountains of water, as well as being the centers of earthquakes? The time has come when psychiatrists must see the subconscious not just as a mudhole where pigs love to wallow but also a runway where planes take off for a flight into the sky. The subconscious may be a basement, but it is one where we not only throw out refuse, but also

Treasures of the Subconscience (Continued on page 10)



ST AUGUSTINE
READING THE
EPISTLE OF ST PAUL

Benozzo Gozzoli

(1464—65)

(Continued from page 9) *Treasures of the Subconscious*

keep our groceries, our hobbies, our playroom and our wine.

What about the origin of this *pneuma* that transmits urges and drives from the subterranean part of our lives? Where does it come from? As psychiatrists say, the id has its origin outside us; so does the *pneuma*. The id, they say, is due either to contacts with our environment or more remotely with our animal ancestry, or it is cultural lag in the evolutionary process, a result of the collective unconsciousness of the race.

As the origin of the id is external — that is, not wholly of our making — and yet that through which all our drives function, so the origin of the *pneuma* is external, even much more so, though it too functions through our subconsciousness. In fact, it is very mysterious, something like the wind, which is invisible and yet strong. We pass over naming the source of the *pneuma* to concentrate on its silent, enigmatical intrusion into our subconsciousness.

How often we have been moved by an inspiration to change our lives; we know that it does not come from ourselves, for when we have it, we say, “I don’t know what made me do this.” A truck driver in Los Angeles, speeding down a highway, saw a large paper carton ahead of him. Generally, he said, he would drive over it and crush it, for it gave him a sense of power. But this time, he suddenly swerved to avoid it, stopped, got out of his truck cab, and went back to take it off the highway. Lo and behold, it was moving! A little boy had crawled into it and was propelling himself across the road. When asked what made him do it, the driver answered, “God! Because I never acted that way before.”

How often a soldier in battle will be suddenly inspired to crawl out of a trench in the face of murderous shellfire to rescue a wounded buddy in a veritable no-man’s-land. Braver than ever before in his life, he is praised for his rescue but will disdain it, saying, “Anyone else would have done it. I deserve no credit.” In other words, “I did not do it — something else moved me.”

A characteristic of the upsurge of the subconscious mind is what might be called sensing a crisis. H. G. Wells expressed it well: “At times in the silence of the night, and in rare lonely moments, I come upon a sort of communion of myself and something great that is not myself. . . it takes on the effect of a sympathetic person and my communion has a quality of fearless worship.” What is present is a kind of dissolving of the elements of consciousness, as if some new chemical had been poured into the soul, and there begins to be a surrender to what the individual believes to be a higher power.

Thus there pass through the subconscious mind inspirations, insights, new values, and motivations that never before were entertained. They did not come from ourselves, and if we correspond with them, they completely remake us. They change fear into love, indifference into enthusiasm, hate into service. This *pneuma does not belong to our nature as such*, though the id does. But it is so constantly introduced into our impoverished nature that it seems to be a part of our life. When it touches us, it seems to affect principally our intellect and our will: the intellect, by enlightening us to see a truth we never saw before, and our will by giving us a power to do something we never had the strength to do before.

But the healing and elevating power of the *pneuma* always sets up a counterresistance on the part of our disordered human condition. We are not easily persuaded to give up our sinking ship. The id revolts against the *pneuma* and the *pneuma* against the id, making our heart the battleground. The egotistic self is threatened with its conceits, lusts, intemperance, anger, and the like. To die to them is not easy, even though the prospect of peace is so appealing and desirable. But once the *pneuma* is at the helm of the ship, the psychic regions are filled with an indescribable joy and delight.

Just as not everyone gives way to the sexual license that the id may suggest, so not everyone accepts the temptation of the *pneuma* to reorganize one’s life. But when one does, among many effects that might be mentioned we concentrate on but one—a com-

Treasures of the Subconscious (Continued on page 11)



THE CONVERSION ON
THE WAY
TO DAMASCAS

Caravaggio
(1600)

(Continued from page 10) **Treasures of the Subconscience**

plete change of life's direction.

If I take a ball and roll it across the floor, it will move in one direction unless diverted by a superior power. So too our lives very quickly become grooved through habit. They will roll by mere inertia in that same direction of crime, insensibility, mediocrity, emptiness, banality, unless some outside power or force alters their direction.

A law runs through nature that the lower is taken up into the higher. Chemicals are taken up into plants, plants into animals, and animals into man. Everywhere there is an upsurge to life. Lower life is meant to be born to a higher life. But there is one condition — the carbons, phosphates, oxygen, nitrogen, and other chemicals are never privileged to live in a plant kingdom, unless two things happen: The plant must intercept them, incorporate them into itself, and the chemicals, in their turn, must die to their lower nature. It is as if the grass and the trees and the roses said to the chemicals, "Unless you die to yourself, you cannot live in my kingdom. You must be reborn from above" (Jn 3:3).

Plants, in their turn, can become one with the sentient, mobile life of the animal, if the animal comes down to them, descends to their lower life, and takes them up into itself. The plant, in its turn, must be pulled up from the roots. The same is true of the lower orders living in our body—to become one with the living, thinking, loving being, man must humble himself and go down to their lower state; they in turn must submit to the sacrifice of the knife and the fire, and thus the law is fulfilled: "Unless you die to yourself you cannot live in my kingdom. You must be born again from above" on Jn 3:3).

Now the pneuma that works inside us is a summoning presence, a kind of alien intruder, but one that always respects our freedom. Animals do *not* consult plants or carry on a dialogue with them before using them as food. But the pneuma does not violently possess us; it solicits quietly, it tempts, it leads us into a desert, it begs us to die to what is lower. Once we freely consent to absorb the élan and drive of the pneuma, there is a peace that the world cannot give and a joy that surpasses all understanding. Most of us miss the exhilaration, because we prefer to move in the horizontal areas of monotony instead of the vertical heights where there is new knowledge and deeper

There is not a single person in the world who has not experienced both the id and the pneuma, though greater priority is given to the id than the pneuma, because it titillates the flesh and makes no demands on the ego. The id belongs to what William James has called the once-born; the pneuma to those who are twice-born. We have three ways of knowing: One is by our senses, such as the clasp of a hand. The second is by abstract ideas and scientific training, such as the science of physics. Over and above both feeling and intellect, there is another kind of knowledge, such as that which a husband and wife attain after many years of married life they have come to know one another by loving one another. This kind of knowledge the pneuma gives, only its love is more intense.

A new heart is created within us by a response to the pneuma. From the fleshy heart, there goes forth blood to the body and then a return flow to it. The heart understood psychologically also is understood as the center from which flows our mental and moral activity. From it comes all our character worth, and to it returns all our good merits; but the heart can also be the center of depravity that corrupts the whole circuit of life.

A boy in a family could not be induced to keep himself clean. He had dirty fingernails, hair hanging like a mop, clothes unpressed, dirty shoes. The parents begged, pleaded, coaxed, and even tried to bribe him into cleanliness. It did no good. But one day he appeared clean, brushed, and neat. He did not slam the door as he went out. What made the difference? He was in love with Suzie! This is the key to pneuma, the Spirit that reorients life; it is essentially love but not an earthly love.

As there are compulsive drinkers and compulsive addicts in the world, so there are compulsive lovers of humanity and compulsive lovers of Love in the pneuma world. We are no longer in the presence of demons and pink elephants, but of a Light that unfailingly

Treasures of the Subconscience (Continued on page 12)



**ST MARTIN &
THE BEGGAR**

El Greco
(1597-99)

(Continued from page 11) *Treasures of the Subconscious*

allows us to follow footprints in the darkest forest of life.

I knew a man in London who told me that he had been an alcoholic for years; so enslaved was he that he would take off his shoes at the saloon door and sell them for a drink. This particular year he was seated on a bench at Hyde Park, musing about his miserable condition. Suddenly he felt a strong urge to reform his life. He professed ignorance as to where the resolution came from, but he said that it was not from himself. Following this inspiration was easy, but putting it into practice was difficult. He went into a church, and immediately there came over him an intense craving for drink. He ran to the rear of the church to escape, but he knelt down at the door. From that time on, the goal of his life was changed. He now spends his time caring for his fellow alcoholics in the same London dive where he lived for years. The day the inspiration seized him, he knew only one thing — it came not from himself. He had been hell-bent, and suddenly he was, after a struggle, on the heaven-bent road to inner happiness. The pneuma confronted him on the inside of his being, but it came from the outside. It was as if another Presence was in his life, acting like a radar bringing him to the port of peace.

Another example is given by the Russian novelist Tolstoy. His despairing nature drove him to the thought of suicide. Then, as he put it, something contrary to his mood seized him:

I felt that something had broken within me on which my life had always rested, that I had nothing left to hold on to, and that morally my life had stopped. An invincible force impelled me to get rid of my existence, in one way or another.

Yet, whilst my intellect was working, something else in me was working too, and kept me from the deed—a consciousness of life, as I may call it, which was like a force that obliged my mind to fix itself on another direction, and draw me out of my situation of despair.

During the whole course of this year, when I almost unceasingly kept asking myself how to end the business, whether by the rope or by the bullet, during all that time, alongside of all those movements of my ideas and observations, my heart kept languishing with another pining emotion. I can call this by no other name than that of a thirst for God.

We have in our subconscious a mass of dead ideas, lifeless hopes, faded childhood memories, and lost faiths. We would like to get back to our innocence and joy, but they are cold and sepulchered. Then what was crucified by us suddenly rises from the dead; what was cold is now hot; what was crystal now becomes a living cell. What was on the periphery of life now becomes a center; what we ignored now is valued. And we know very well that this old building in which we lived, with its leaky plumbing and cracked walls, did not suddenly become a mansion without some builder from the outside. If my life is traveling in the direction of “confusion worse confounded,” and all of a sudden changes its course, with new goals, then the Latin maxim applies: *Nihil movetur nisi per aliud movetur* (“Nothing is moved unless it is moved by another”). The new mental arrangement of ideas, the sudden thrust of some alien motor efficacy, demands a source outside of me and yet working inside me and principally through my subconsciousness.

The classic playboy of all antiquity was Augustine, who combined the greatness of the intellect with a sexual abandon that he justified by rationalization. One day the dissension between his sex life and his higher aspirations became so intense that he picked up St. Paul’s Letter to the Romans; in it he read that not in wantonness, immorality, strife, and envy do we work out salvation. The words acted as a thunderbolt in Augustine’s soul with his wasted young life. Changing the direction of his life after the impact of the pneuma, he cried out: “Too late, O Ancient Beauty, have I loved Thee!”

A spiritual knowledge under the pneuma is arrived at so quickly that the intellectual is left behind; one is not able to find a cause for the change in any previous thought. No one goes from the life of sin to holiness without some intervening cause that is sufficient to account for the change. What has taken place is nothing less than a divine-human encounter. A power enters into the subconsciousness that regenerates, changes direction, alters the moral character, making precious what was previously vile and vile what was previously precious.

No new faculties are created. They are just regenerated. What happens may be likened to putting a lamp inside the Japanese lantern. First it was nothing but a crisscross of crazy patterns. Once the light was put in it, there was a unification of color and line so that a pattern was revealed. The change may also be likened to a new kind of vision. We have the same eyes at night as we have in the day, but we cannot see at night because we lack the light of the sun. So a new light is given that enables us to see things that before we could not see.

Change never involves any violation of personality. There is no invasion like to what has been described as possession. But there is a *surrender* of self to Another. Looking back on the evil that one has done, one never sees it as a

Treasures of the Subconscious (Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12) *Treasures of the Subconscious*

violation of the law, but rather as hurting someone we love. A new master center takes possession of personality and gives it what Frankl calls "a will to meaning." The whole life begins to be organized, not merely as a sum of parts but rather as a whole, very much the same as the melody that is heard very differently from the distinct notes on the paper.

Id requires analysis, because the mind is all mixed up. The pneuma synthesizes. To analyze the waters that pour into a sinking ship is not to save the ship; to plow by constantly looking back to see if the furrow is crooked may even make life more zigzag. Under probing, the true essence of life vanishes. Our physiological life demands harmony, the tiny cell choosing from its environment what it is able to assimilate; the psychological demands similar peace. A regulator, a kind of thermostat, is at the center of our organism, seeking to establish constants, such as temperature, blood pressure, and digestion. The automatic control is ever working to synthesize harmony and meaning.

So too there functions in the depths of our being another kind of regulator, or constant, summoning us back to order and to peace. Little warning lights begin to flicker as they do in the cockpit of a plane when anything is wrong, such as an unlocked door or an overheated motor. That is, organized sensitivity to the body becomes spiritual sensitivity in the conduct of our lives. A carpenter uses a gauge containing a colored liquid. He lays it on a board to see if it is level. Once he finds it off center, he begins to make the adjustment and correction. So too there is in us an adjuster that makes us rediscover inner peace and the true center, even in the midst of errors and excesses.

It has been proved medically that the power of healing wounds at a certain age increases when the temperature of the body is raised by four degrees. It is conceivable that the power of the pneuma, which increases the joy and the love in a person, may also accelerate the healing of the anxiety and chaos in the depths of being.

Now, what is this pneuma? Pneuma is the Spirit, the Spirit of God. As my body lives, thanks to my soul, so my soul begins really to live, thanks to the Spirit. Because this Spirit comes from outside us and is not either of our making or of our deserving, it is free or gratis or what is commonly called grace. The id draws to pleasure of the flesh; the pneuma to the joys of the spirit. It might be well to cut down on the temptations of the id and begin giving way to the temptations of the *pneuma*. ✠

***Heavenly Father, I offer you this day
all that I shall think, 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) 250-8605 or email your request to
alanphar@firstam.com***

PRAYER PETITIONS



- ◆ Madeline McKimmey (birth problems)
 - ◆ Ellie Shonefelt (Divorce)
 - ◆ Janet Prahll (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).
- ◆ 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)
 - ◆ Joan Hansen (conversion) ✠

MORE ON WEALTH



THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE

Though they were, by any standard, quite wealthy, the Mores were taught never to consider money their own. This lesson Sir Thomas taught his children by both word and deed. In a writing contest he set up between his daughter Meg and himself, he explained how to use riches properly:

It is not a sin to have riches, but to love riches. "If riches come to you, set not your heart on them," says Holy Scripture...He who forgets that his goods are the goods of God, and who reckons himself an owner rather than a disposer, takes himself to be rich. And because he reckons these riches to be his own, he casts his love on them and so much is his love set less upon God, For as Holy Scripture says, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart."

This theoretical lesson was proved by More's own practice. For example, he rented a house for the poor and had his children care for it. Then there was the year of famine when More fed a hundred people a day at his home.

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

By: Gerard B. Wegemer

(Pg. 84-5) †

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

WHO SHOULD MAKE THE COFFEE?



A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning.

The wife said, "You should do it, because you get up first, and then we don't have to wait as long to get our coffee."

The husband said, "You are in charge of the cooking around here and you should do it, because that's your job, and I can just wait for my coffee."

Wife replies, "No, you should do it. And besides, it's in the Bible that the man should do the coffee."

Husband replies, "I can't believe that. Show me."

So she fetches the Bible and opens the New Testament and shows him at the top of several pages that it does, indeed, say ... "HEBREWS!" †

(Continued from page 15) Do You Smell That?

Still caught in the moment, Dana shook her head, patted her thin shoulders with her small hands and loudly announced, "No, it smells like Him. It smells like God when you lay your head on His chest."

Tears blurred Diana's eyes as Dana happily hopped down to play with the other children.

Before the rains came, her daughter's words confirmed what Diana and all the members of the extended Blessing family had known, at least in their hearts, all along.

During those long days and nights of her first two months of her life, when her nerves were too sensitive for them to touch her, God was holding Dana on His chest and it is His loving scent that she remembers so well.

"I can do all things in Him who strengthens me." †

DO YOU SMELL THAT?

A cold March wind danced around the dead of night in Dallas as the doctor walked into the small hospital room of Diana Blessing. She was still groggy from surgery. Her husband, David, held her hand as they braced themselves for the latest news.

That afternoon of March 10, 1991, complications had forced Diana, only 24-weeks pregnant, to undergo an emergency Cesarean to deliver couple's new daughter, Dana Lu Blessing.

At 12 inches long and weighing only one pound nine ounces, they already knew she was perilously premature. Still, the doctor's soft words dropped like bombs.

"I don't think she's going to make it," he said, as kindly as he could.

"There's only a 10-percent chance she will live through the night, and even then, if by some slim chance she does make it, her future could be a very cruel one."

Numb with disbelief, David and Diana listened as the doctor described the devastating problems Dana would likely face if she survived.

She would never walk, she would never talk, she would probably be blind, and she would certainly be prone to other catastrophic conditions from cerebral palsy to complete mental retardation, and on and on.

"No! No!" was all Diana could say.

She and David, with their 5-year-old son Dustin, had long dreamed of the day they would have a daughter to become a family of four. Now, within a matter of hours, that dream was slipping away.

But as those first days passed, a new agony set in for David and Diana.

Because Dana's underdeveloped nervous system was essentially 'raw', the lightest kiss or caress only intensified her discomfort, so they couldn't even cradle their tiny baby girl against their chests to offer the strength of their love. All they could do, as Dana struggled alone beneath the ultraviolet light in the tangle of tubes and wires, was to pray that God would stay close to their precious little girl.

There was never a moment when Dana suddenly grew stronger. But as the weeks went by, she did slowly gain an ounce of weight here and an ounce of strength there.

At last, when Dana turned two months old, her parents were able to hold her in their arms for the very first time. And two months later, though doctors continued to gently but grimly warn that her chances of surviving, much less living any kind of normal life, were next to zero, Dana went home from the hospital, just as her mother had predicted.

Five years later, when Dana was a petite but feisty young girl with glittering gray eyes and an unquenchable zest for life. She showed no signs whatsoever of any mental or physical impairment. Simply, she was everything a little girl can be and more. But that happy ending is far from the end of her story.

One blistering afternoon in the summer of 1996 near her home in Irving, Texas, Dana was sitting in her mother's lap in the bleachers of a local ball park where her brother Dustin's baseball team was practicing.

As always, Dana was chattering nonstop with her mother and several other adults sitting nearby when she suddenly fell silent. Hugging her arms across her chest, little Dana asked, "Do you smell that?"

Smelling the air and detecting the approach of a thunderstorm, Diana replied, "Yes, it smells like rain."

Dana closed her eyes and again asked, "Do you smell that?"

Once again, her mother replied, "Yes, I think we're about to get wet. It smells like rain."



**THOUGHT
FOR
THE
DAY**





SCRIPTURAL CORNER



NICODEMUS

*Unknown Master
(Flemish)*

(Unknown)

**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.*

JOHN 3: 1-8

¹Now there was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. ²This man came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these things that you do, unless God is with him.” ³Jesus answered him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” ⁴Nicodemus said to him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵Jesus answered, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. ⁶That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which born of the spirit is spirit. ⁷Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born anew.’ ⁸The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whether it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

COMMENT FROM THE NAVARRE BIBLE:*

Nicodemus’ first question shows that he still has doubts about Jesus (is he a prophet, is he the Messiah?); and our Lord replies to him in a completely unexpected way: Nicodemus presumed he would say something about his mission and, instead, he reveals to him an astonishing truth: one must be born again, in a spiritual birth, by water and the spirit; a whole new world opens up before Nicodemus.

Our Lord’s words also paint a limitless horizon for the spiritual advancement of any Christian who willingly lets himself or herself be led by divine grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which are infused at Baptism and enhanced by the sacraments. As well as opening his soul to God, the Christian also needs to keep at bay his selfish appetites and the inclinations of pride, if he is to understand what God is teaching him in his soul: “therefore must the soul be stripped of all things created, and of its own actions and abilities—namely, of its understanding, perception and feelings—so that, when all this is unlike God and unconfirmed to him is cast out, the soul may receive the likeness of God and nothing will then remain in it that is not the will of God and it will thus be transformed in God. Wherefore, although it is true that, as we have said, God is ever in the soul, giving it, and through his presence conserving within it, its natural being, yet he does not always communicate supernatural being to it. For that is communicated only by love and grace, which not all souls possess; and all those that possess it have it not in the same degree; for some have attained more degrees of love and others fewer. Wherefore God communicates himself most to that soul that has progressed farthest in love; namely, that has its will in closest conformity with the will of God. And the soul that has attained complete conformity and likeness of will is totally united and transformed in God supernaturally” (St John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, book II, chap. 5). ☩

HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*BASILICA OF ST JOHN LATERAN
HOLY THURSDAY APRIL 13, 2006*

*Dear Brothers in the Episcopate
and in the Priesthood,*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

“Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end” (Jn 13: 1).

God loves his creature, man; he even loves him in his fall and does not leave him to himself. He loves him to the end. He is impelled with his love to the very end, to the extreme: he came down from his divine glory.

He cast aside the raiment of his divine glory and put on the garb of a slave. He came down to the extreme lowliness of our fall. He kneels before us and carries out for us the service of a slave: he washes our dirty feet so that we might be admitted to God's banquet and be made worthy to take our place at his table - something that on our own we neither could nor would ever be able to do.

God is not a remote God, too distant or too great to be bothered with our trifles. Since God is great, he can also be concerned with small things. Since he is great, the soul of man, the same man, created through eternal love, is not a small thing but great, and worthy of God's love.

God's holiness is not merely an incandescent power before which we are obliged to withdraw, terrified. It is a power of love and therefore a purifying and healing power.

God descends and becomes a slave, he washes our feet so that we may come to his table. In this, the entire mystery of Jesus Christ is expressed. In this, what redemption means becomes visible.

The basin in which he washes us is his love, ready to face death. Only love has that purifying power which washes the grime from us and elevates us to God's heights.

The basin that purifies us is God himself, who gives himself to us without reserve - to the very depths of his suffering and his death. He is ceaselessly this love that cleanses us; in the sacraments of purification - Baptism and the Sacrament of Penance - he is continually on his knees at our feet and carries out for us the service of a slave, the service of purification, making us capable of God. His love is inexhaustible, it truly goes to the very end.

“You are clean, but not all of you,” the Lord says (Jn 13: 10). This sentence reveals the great gift of purification that he offers to us, because he wants to be at table together with us, to become our food. *“But not all of you”* - the obscure mystery of rejection exists, which becomes apparent with Judas' act, and precisely on Holy Thursday, the day on which Jesus made the gift of himself, it should give us food for thought. The Lord's love knows no bounds, but man can put a limit on it.

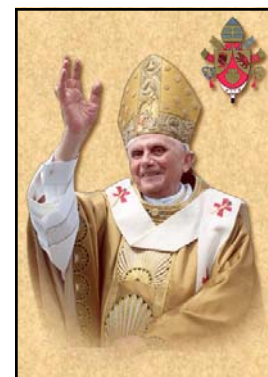
“You are clean, but not all of you.” What is it that makes man unclean?

It is the rejection of love, not wanting to be loved, not loving. It is pride that believes it has no need of any purification, that is closed to God's saving goodness. It is pride that does not want to admit or recognize that we are in need of purification.

In Judas we see the nature of this rejection even more clearly. He evaluated Jesus in accordance with the criteria of power and success. For him, power and success alone were real; love did not count. And he was greedy: money was more important than



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



***Holy Thursday Homily** (Continued on page 18)*

(Continued from page 17) **Holy Thursday Homily**

communion with Jesus, more important than God and his love.

He thus also became a liar who played a double game and broke with the truth; one who lived in deceit and so lost his sense of the supreme truth, of God. In this way, he became hard of heart and incapable of conversion, of the trusting return of the Prodigal Son, and he disposed of the life destroyed.

"You are clean, but not all of you." Today, the Lord alerts us to the self-sufficiency that puts a limit on his unlimited love. He invites us to imitate his humility, to entrust ourselves to it, to let ourselves be "infected" by it.

He invites us - however lost we may feel - to return home, to let his purifying goodness uplift us and enable us to sit at table with him, with God himself.

Let us add a final word to this inexhaustible Gospel passage: *"For I have given you an example"* (Jn 13:15); *"You also ought to wash one another's feet"* (Jn 13: 14). Of what does "washing one another's feet" consist? What does it actually mean?

This: every good work for others - especially for the suffering and those not considered to be worth much - is a service of the washing of feet.

The Lord calls us to do this: to come down, learn humility and the courage of goodness, and also the readiness to accept rejection and yet to trust in goodness and persevere in it.

But there is another, deeper dimension. The Lord removes the dirt from us with the purifying power of his goodness. Washing one another's feet means above all tirelessly forgiving one another, beginning together ever anew, however pointless it may seem. It means purifying one another by bearing with one another and by being tolerant of others; purifying one another, giving one another the sanctifying power of the Word of God and introducing one another into the Sacrament of divine love.

The Lord purifies us, and for this reason we dare to approach his table. Let us pray to him to give to all of us the grace of being able to one day be guests for ever at the eternal nuptial banquet.

Amen! ✠



**SCENES FROM THE
LIFE OF CHRIST:
WASHING OF FEET**

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(Continued from page 4) Vocations

tends to describe celibacy as showing the supremacy of union with the Lord, or of being a closer follower of Christ (cf. CCC 916). Under this aspect, what applies to virginity applies also to religious and consecrated life in general. The exaltation of virginal and religious life, far from lowering the value of marriage, only points out how great a good it is, and how significant is the sacrifice of giving up so good a thing for the sake of the kingdom.

While marriage is indeed a very good thing, a vowed espousal to Christ in celibacy shows more fully the hope of the life of heaven and the resurrection beyond this world, as the *Catechism* points out. There, Christ Himself will be the Bridegroom of the whole race of the redeemed, and of each one in particular. Our Lord teaches us in Luke 20 that the saints in glory “neither marry nor are given in marriage, for they cannot die anymore, because they are equal to the angels and are the sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.” The earliest tradition of the Church, especially in the East, calls the celibate and religious life “the angelic life” for just this reason: It points, even in this life, to the future kingdom.

All of this urges you to adopt a different, more faith-filled and Catholic attitude toward your daughter’s vocation. Catholic parents, in fact, according to all the tradition of moral teaching in the Church, have an obligation to foster religious vocations in their children who show an inclination and suitability for such a holy way of life. The Second Vatican Council teaches of parents, “They should encourage them in the vocation which is proper to each child, fostering with special care any religious vocation” (*Lumen Gentium*, 11). In fact, it is a grievous sin to block a religious vocation without a serious reason. If your daughter is well-suited and desires religious life, you have no right to discourage her, unless only temporarily because you absolutely depend on her financial or physical care to live. Otherwise, to discourage her would go against the very purpose of your own married life, which is to bring forth children in love for the glory of God. Parents who foster religious vocations in their children show they understand what marriage is all about.

Of course, children should not be forced or “programmed” to become religious, and not every individual is suited to religious life. It remains true, though, that a girl who would make a good, holy mother would probably make a good, holy sister. The same virtues of “charity, of hospitality, and of sacrifice” (CCC 1654) which characterize Christian marriage are also the virtues of religious life. A good priest, brother or sister worth his or her salt would make a good husband, wife, father or mother. Take it as a blessing, and a sign that you have done well as parents that your daughter wants to be a spouse of Christ! †



SAINT ELIZABETH
ANNE SETON

*Mother of 5 Children,
Convert & Founder of
The Sisters of Charity
of St Joseph*

(1774-1821)

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"One basic reason for tiredness of mind is the conflict in all of us between ideal and achievement, between what we ought to be and what we are, between our longing and our having, between our powers of understanding and the incomprehensible mysteries of the universe." †

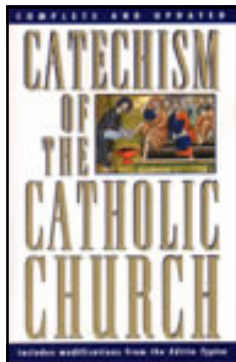
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST

SECTION ONE: MAN'S VOCATION: LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

CHAPTER ONE: THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

ARTICLE 6: MORAL CONSCIENCE



CATECHISM CORNER



**ST JEROME
PENITENT**
El Greco
(1610)

1776 “Deep within his conscience man discovers a law which he has not laid upon himself but which he must obey. Its voice, ever calling him to love and to do what is good and to avoid evil, sounds in his heart at the right moment. . . . For man has in his heart a law inscribed by God. . . . His conscience is man's most secret core and his sanctuary. There he is alone with God whose voice echoes in his depths.”

I THE JUDGMENT OF CONSCIENCE

1777 Moral conscience, present at the heart of the person, enjoins him at the appropriate moment to do good and to avoid evil. It also judges particular choices, approving those that are good and denouncing those that are evil. It bears witness to the authority of truth in reference to the supreme Good to which the human person is drawn, and it welcomes the commandments. When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking.

1778 Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed. In all he says and does, man is obliged to follow faithfully what he knows to be just and right. It is by the judgment of his conscience that man perceives and recognizes the prescriptions of the divine law:

Conscience is a law of the mind; yet [Christians] would not grant that it is nothing more; I mean that it was not a dictate, nor conveyed the notion of responsibility, of duty, of a threat and a promise. . . . [Conscience] is a messenger of him, who, both in nature and in grace, speaks to us behind a veil, and teaches and rules us by his representatives. Conscience is the aboriginal Vicar of Christ.

1779 It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience. This requirement of interiority is all the more necessary as life often distracts us from any reflection, self-examination or introspection:

Return to your conscience, question it. . . . Turn inward, brethren, and in everything you do, see God as your witness.

1780 The dignity of the human person implies and requires uprightness of moral conscience. Conscience includes the perception of the principles of morality (synderesis); their application in the given circumstances by practical discernment of reasons and goods; and finally judgment about concrete acts yet to be performed or already performed. The truth about the moral good,

stated in the law of reason, is recognized practically and concretely by the prudent judgment of conscience. We call that man prudent who chooses in conformity with this judgment.

1781 Conscience enables one to assume responsibility for the acts performed. If man commits evil, the just judgment of conscience can remain within him as the witness to the universal truth of the good, at the same time as the evil of his particular choice. The verdict of the judgment of conscience remains a pledge of hope and mercy. In attesting to the fault committed, it calls to mind the forgiveness that must be asked, the good that must still be practiced, and the virtue that must be constantly cultivated with the grace of God:

We shall . . . reassure our hearts before him whenever our hearts condemn us; for God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

1782 Man has the right to act in conscience and in freedom so as personally to make moral decisions. “He must not be forced to act contrary to his conscience. Nor must he be prevented from acting according to his conscience, especially in religious matters.” ☩

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MEDITATIONS ON THE PATH TOWARDS ENLIGHTENMENT

BY: ROBERT LANPHAR

FROM THE LIBRARY



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