

# Ad Veritatem

Volume 11 Issue 7

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

JULY 2006

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

Thomas More:  
A Portrait of Courage  
Gerard Wegemer

## JULY MEETING:

**WEDNESDAY JULY 19, 2006 NOON**

**SPEAKER: FR. EDWARD BROOM, OMV**

**TOPIC: “PRAYER: THE SPIRITUAL TREASURES TO BE FOUND IN THE ‘OUR FATHER’”**

*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, five "fearless" members of the Orange County bar met shortly thereafter at the law offices of Rutan and Tucker in Costa Mesa. These lawyers all shared the realization that the legal practice takes a severe toll on the personal and spiritual lives of those involved in it and that many in the legal profession had become too focused on the material life with the natural consequence being the de-emphasis on their spiritual life. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a new organization for lawyers and judges in the County of Orange with its mission being to publicly support and encourage the spiritual development of its members in their Catholic faith. The group chose as its patron St. Thomas More, the greatest lawyer of his time, who was a dedicated husband and father with a deep and profound commitment to his Catholic faith, his profession and his fellow man. Thus the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County was born.

Attendance at the monthly meetings in the early years was sporadic. Our spiritual director, Fr Hugh Barbour, wisely advised us not to worry about numbers because it was more important "to be than to do or say." He encouraged the virtues of patience and perseverance. His sage advice, together with the guidance of the Holy Spirit and St. Thomas More, has led us to our current level of a fourteen member Board of Directors of lawyers and judges and a mailing list for the monthly newsletter of over 970.

The goal of the Society is to inspire and lift up the minds and hearts of the legal community of Orange County to follow the example of St. Thomas More by integrating God in every aspect of their professional and personal lives. The Society seeks to accomplish this goal through inspirational speakers at monthly meetings, this newsletter, the Red Mass, a website, an annual spiritual retreat and other events. The St. Thomas More Society also seeks to provide a haven where those who are committed to their Catholic faith as well as those who are seeking to learn more about the Church, can find fellowship and encouragement in the face of overwhelming media and cultural forces working against that pursuit.

*St. Thomas More, please pray for us. ☩*

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Don Hunsberger at (714) 663-8000 or email to [dah@hunsbergerlaw.com](mailto:dah@hunsbergerlaw.com), or  
Judy Patno at (714) 871-6655 or email to [jpatno@patnolaw.com](mailto:jpatno@patnolaw.com).

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at [www.stthomasmore.net](http://www.stthomasmore.net)

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*St. Michael's Abbey*

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**JULY**  
**MEETING**

**FR. EDWARD BROOM, O.M.V.**  
*Prayer: The Spiritual Treasures To  
Be Found in the "Our Father"*

**WHEN:**  
**NOON**  
**Wed. July 19th**

**WHERE:**  
**First American  
Title Ins. Co.  
5 First American  
Way, Santa Ana**

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

**COST:**  
**\$10 for lunch**

On May 25, 1986 Father Edward Broom was ordained by Pope John Paul II in Rome. Father was born and raised in Detroit. He served the Church for 7 years in Argentina and Chile working with the youth, giving retreats and spiritual direction. He is a member of the order Oblates of the Virgin Mary, an order dedicated to the Blessed Mother. For the last 12 years, Father Broom has served as associate pastor of St Peter Chanel Catholic Church in Hawaiian Gardens. He is a dedicated teacher of catechism classes, serves as a retreat master and is a frequent guest on St Joseph Radio. Father Broom has a spreading reputation as a powerful spiritual speaker.



For more information, please contact either Don Hunsberger (714) 663-8000 or [dah@hunsbergerlaw.com](mailto:dah@hunsbergerlaw.com) or Anne Lanphar at (714) 250-8605 [alanphar@firstam.com](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com) †

**STM MONTHLY MTGS:**  
**3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:**

**JULY 19**  
**AUGUST 16**  
**SEPTEMBER 20**  
**OCTOBER 18**  
**NOVEMBER 15**  
†

***RESERVE THE DATE!***  
**RED MASS**

**MONDAY SEPT 25, 2006**  
**HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL**  
**6:00 PM MASS**  
**RECEPTION FOLLOWING †**

**CALENDAR  
REMINDERS**



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## WHAT IS THE CHURCH'S TEACHING ON NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIANS?

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

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



STUDY OF AN  
APOSTLE'S HANDS

*Albrecht Durer*

(1508)

**QUESTION:** *Has the Church changed her teaching on the relation of non-Catholic Christians to the Catholic Church? A friend of mine has given me some literature written by followers of the Society of St. Pius X which says that the teaching of Vatican II and especially of Pope John Paul II on Ecumenism plainly contradicts the previous teachings of the Church, most especially the encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI *Mortalium Animos* of 1928.*

**ANSWER:** Anyone who reads Pope Pius XI on the ecumenical movement and then Vatican II and John Paul II on the same topic will surely notice a big difference, and perhaps an apparent contradiction. Faithful Catholics, however, will not be quick to judge that there is a real incompatibility between the two. There is a tremendous difference between the two approaches, but that does not mean there is a doctrinal contradiction. The Church can deal with various questions under different aspects. Ecumenism is one of those questions. The traditional approach to those who adhere to non-Catholic bodies was based on a constant, rigorous use of the terms heresy and schism in their full sense of an apparently deliberate, conscious dissent or doubt from Catholic dogma or communion with the Pope. Similar to this would be the way in which St. Paul states that “neither idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor revilers, nor robbers shall inherit the kingdom of God” (1 Cor 6:9-10). In this sense, there can be no dialogue or ecumenism with heresy or schism anymore than the Church could come to an agreement with stealing or drunkenness. But even though we accept St. Paul’s words, we still refer to the Good Thief who inherited the Kingdom on Good Friday. And even though we accept, for example, the truth of the ringing words of Pope Boniface VIII in *Unam Sanctam* (A.D.1302) denying membership in the Church and thus salvation those whom commit the sins of heresy and schism, still we call Protestants Christians and accept the possibility of a valid baptism administered by them. Thus it is that in current practice since Vatican II, the approach has been to assume not that non-Catholics are heretics and schismatics in the strict sense described above, but to assume that they are in good faith, raised in the profession of certain errors in matters of Catholic doctrine, and thus not real “formal” heretics or schismatics. With such as these, who are presumed to be without fault, there can be dialogue and even mutual prayer, as long as there is no doctrinal error in the prayers, just as one is free to associate charitably with those who hold moral errors in order to help them either to be converted or to avoid the sins to which they are prone, as long as one does not seem to approve of their misguided actions.

Even Christ at times dealt with doctrinal error in what seemed to be a contradictory way (though it was not really contradictory). For example, in speaking to the Pharisees, He warned, “He who is not with me is against me.” (Matt. 12:30; Luke 11:23). In speaking of those who invoke His name without being His followers, He said, “He who is not against us is for us.” (Mark 9:40). Some who profess errors are like the Pharisees, hardhearted, stubborn, deliberate heretics who deserve eternal damnation; they do not belong to Christ. Others, who unwittingly profess errors, through no

*Non Catholic Christians* (Continued on page 21)

## THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES: *YOU ARE INVITED!*

HON. FRANCISCO FIRMAT

The Spiritual Exercises were published in 1548 and were born out of the prayer experience of St. Ignatius. They are a coach's manual used to facilitate an experience similar to that of Ignatius, so long as the participant has an eagerness and hunger for God. No one ever experiences the Exercises in the same way—we each experience it in the way the Holy Spirit intends for us as an individual. The Exercises are not a “cookbook” but are a recipe for experiencing God's love in a way that is transforming. The Exercises are not about new information or new education rather they are about transformation and a deeper conversion.

### FORMAT:

The Exercises are offered in a small group of 4 to 6 participants, led by a facilitator who has previously been through the experience of the Exercises. The participants typically spend one continuous hour of prayer per day, alone with their Bible, usually meditating on approximately 8 lines of Scripture with a different passage every night. Each person keeps a personal journal of their prayer experience. The group also meets once a week for one hour with the facilitator and the other participants to share their experience of prayer during the past week. Each participant also meets with the facilitator approximately once a month for about 45 minutes. The Exercises extend for 35 weeks commencing in September and ending in May.

### WHAT TO EXPECT FROM THE EXERCISES:

In October you will probably be praying: “God, what was I thinking when I committed to this? This is hard!” In April, the same person is likely to be praying: “God, this is over in three weeks. I don't want this to end!” During the 35 weeks you can expect a movement of soul of seismic proportions. One person has described it saying: “Before the Exercises, my faith was in black and white. Now it's in color!” Another has said “Before the Exercises, my faith was like a scratched record stuck on the same groove. There was plenty of motion but no progress, no forward movement.” You will develop a personal relationship with a living God that arises from experience, not from theory. Your heart will be touched by the love of God in a way that will force your mind to change in a movement from selfishness, bias and lack of and to one of unselfishness, gratitude and service. You will live with a greater experience of love, peace and joy in a way that affects everything in your life and those around you.

### WHO IS A GOOD CANDIDATE FOR THE EXERCISES:

Anyone is a candidate especially if they have a hunger for God and possess a generosity of spirit to commit one hour a day to prayer for a period of 9 months. Anyone is a candidate who ponders the words of C.S. Lewis “Christianity, if not true, is of no importance. If it is true, it is of infinite importance” and concludes that the latter is true. If you want to live your life accordingly, the Exercises will be a large stride of soul moving you in that direction.

### WHO SHOULD I CONTACT IF I WANT MORE INFORMATION:

Please e-mail Francisco Firmat at [frankf@cox.net](mailto:frankf@cox.net). You will be notified about an information meeting (approximately 1 hour) which will occur in early August for more information. The Exercises will start in September 2006. †

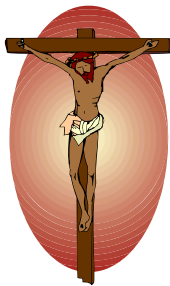


ST. IGNATIUS  
LOYOLA  
(DETAIL)

*Juan Martinez  
Montanes*  
(1610)

*In October you  
will probably  
be praying:  
“God, what was I  
thinking when  
I committed  
to this?  
This is hard!”  
In April, the same  
person is likely to  
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“God, this is over  
in three weeks.  
I don't want  
this to end!”*

## PRAYER PETITIONS



*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*

- ◆ Madeline McKimney (birth problems)
- ◆ Ellie Shonefelt & Her Children (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).
- ◆ 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) †

*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](mailto:alanphar@firstam.com)*



## SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

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**VOLUNTEER WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL  
COMMUNITY TO HELP SERVE DINNER  
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[gweiler@ptwww.com](mailto:gweiler@ptwww.com)

**OC CATHOLIC WORKER**  
(Isaiah House)  
316 Cypress  
Santa Ana, CA  
(714) 558-7478 †



## MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

DAVID BELZ, ESQ.

For many of us cradle Catholics, the journey of our spiritual life began in the early years of grammar school religion classes. I can recall the lessons of life and faith learned in those numerous religion classes taught by the Dominican nuns during my 8 years of elementary Catholic education at St. Boniface in Anaheim. With their full religious habit and gentle prayerful spirit, these nuns were icons of wisdom, discipline and example. The religion classes were sessions of Catholic formation and instruction derived mostly from the pages of the Baltimore Catechism. We certainly learned much about the dogmas and doctrines of the Catholic Faith. Religion by the numbers, as we use to call it.

While not always fully appreciated or practiced during the early years of my adult professional life, my Catholic roots have served me well. Although well-educated in the tenets of the faith, I can truthfully say that I was not always disposed to actually practice my faith despite my knowledge. Undoubtedly there have been times in our lives where we look back and wish we had done things differently. However, no matter what direction I have chosen to take in the roadways of my life, the truths of my spiritual formation have served me well when I have needed them. Thank you, Sr. Mary David, Sr. Mary Peter and Sr. Thora Marie and so many others.

However, I have come to accept a simple fact of my spiritual life: that staying on the right track spiritually is a never ending process. Numerous saints speak of the obstacles with which they struggled in the pursuit of holiness. There have been a number of specific events that steered my life back toward a deeper understanding of God. One of those spiritual journeys began during the 1997 Red Mass reception in the Holy Family Cathedral parish hall. Judge Frank Firmat approached me and asked if I would be interested in joining a small group of men and women who were entering the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. I asked Frank what was involved and he said, not much, just 1 hour of prayer per day, and a weekly study group for 9 consecutive months. My unstated thoughts were “Not much!! Easy for him to say!” How can I possibly find time to do this? And then ego took over. Flattered by the invitation, I responded that it sounded very interesting! (Ever notice how the word “interesting” can be a code word for the “no”?) However, before I could finish my sentence, Frank interrupted me and said, “Good. I am having a gathering in my Chambers next Wednesday. Why don’t you come and join. Us?” I gulped and thanked him for the invitation. The context of my gratitude was in the same circumstance in which we all have found our self: thanking His Honor but not really meaning it after being on the receiving end of a unwanted judicial ruling.

Have you ever had a negative first impression to something in life and then later realized that your first impression was totally off mark? The Spiritual Exercises was one of those experiences. After overcoming several considered excuses to not attend the orientation meeting, I decided to go and learn more. After listening to Judge Firmat shared how the Spiritual Exercises had been such an important part of

*My Spiritual Journey* (Continued on page 8)



**THE MIRACLES  
OF ST. IGNATIUS**

*Peter Paul Rubens*

(1615-20)

(Continued from page 7) *My Spiritual Journey*

his life, I decided to “Go for it!” Good choice. In fact, this was a great choice.

I have always been an advocate and lover of physical fitness. In the early 1980’s I hired a personal trainer before they were popular to help me with a rigorous weight training program. I remember sharing this tidbit of trivia one day with Greg Weiler, at which time he immediately responded, “So how come it didn’t work?” So much for flattery. The truth is that we often spend a lot of time and money exercising our bodies to stay physically fit. However, how much time do we spend exercising our spiritual selves? The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola is a nine month spiritual conditioning program that “tones-up” our spiritual sensibilities to allow us to become more in touch with our Creator. During this process, we learn how to strike up a conversation with God so that we can move by God’s spirit. If I was asked to place a “value” on the experience, I would respond with the question “Using what measuring stick?” The Spiritual Exercises is a unique and priceless opportunity to experience life at a higher level.

In September 1997, the first meeting was held at lunchtime in Judge Firmat’s Chambers. There were two groups of 6 men and women with Judge Firmat serving as the Spiritual Director for both groups. Our group was comprised of the late Vern Hunt, Alecia Davis (Judge Firmat’s clerk), Judge David McEachen, Terry Nelson and Paul Shisby and was an equal mix of Catholics and non Catholics which added to the wealth of sharing in the 9 month course of daily bible readings, meditations and prayer. The discipline of the process is at the heart of its value to each person who participates in the Exercises.

The core dynamic of prayer, spiritual friendship, sharing and conversation is accomplished within the prayer group format used with the Exercises. The course takes one through the life of Christ as celebrated in the liturgical year and as narrated in Holy Scripture. The course structure allows for a disciplined focus on the person of Jesus Christ, His life and His teachings. Nothing is forced (except maybe the occasional need to stay on track with the daily rigor of reading and prayer). The Holy Spirit is the guide. The path is clearly laid out before you and all you have to do is participate and follow the path laid out.

You may be thinking at this point some of the same thoughts that were running through my mind when I was considering the Exercises like “Do I need this?” “How will this affect who I am?” “Will I get too much religion?” My answers to each and every one of these questions is an unequivocal “No!” Each participant will gain a new appreciation of his or her self through a greater knowledge of the Truths in the Christ’s teachings and His message to you.

One last word of encouragement comes from Christ’s thought-provoking words found in the Gospel of Matthew:

“Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?’ Then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoer.’” Matt. 7:21-23.

“I NEVER KNEW YOU!” Whether read literally or metaphorically, these sobering words are certainly something to seriously consider. Participating in the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola is one way to respond to the challenge of Christ’s words. ✠



**ALTAR OF  
ST IGNATIUS LOYOLA**

*Andrea Pozzo*

(1695-99)



## THE SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

LAURA KNOX, ESQ.

**“But all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.” (John 1: 12 - 13)**

I believe that we all come to a point in our lives when we experience a great amount of discomfort and longing. Some feel this insatiable longing when “middle-agedness” creeps into our lives or when you reach age 40, and for the first time begin introspection – to reflect, to inventory accomplishments, and to try to determine our mission in life. Perhaps this is why society has coined the phrase, “mid-life crisis.” For me, this “discomfort” grew to an unbearable level during my thirties. Now I thank God for it. Ultimately it led me to the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola which led me to a closer personal and fulfilling relationship with the Father and Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Also, through the Exercises, I was led to understand my mission in life—but I’m jumping ahead of my story.

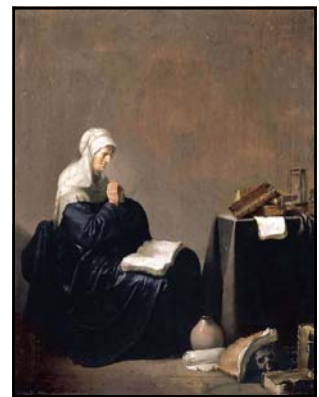
St. Ignatius of Loyola has always had such a strong presence in my life. As a “cradle” Catholic, I received the first sacraments (i.e., Baptism, Reconciliation and Holy Communion) at St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Ohio. I attended the Parish elementary school. With the passage of time and my journey through life, I eventually found myself separated from the spiritual joy and fulfillment I once felt as a child in the warm embrace of the Parish and my parochial school. Despite my weekly attendance at Church, I eventually arrived in the desert of worldliness—translate as “sin.”

Following the death of my mother and then impacted by my marriage, my spiritual life drifted. My mother, who was my spiritual foundation, was gone, and so I began my search for a similar spiritual rock. Regrettably, I allowed the busyness of life to consume me with many demands including my career as well as other secular interests. Through this period, a nagging internal discomfort slowly increased. Of course, I did not take personal responsibility for this problem. Instead I began to search out other churches believing that the Catholic Church just was not giving me the relationship that I wanted with God. Little did I realize that the spiritual maladies of “blindness and malaise” were the true culprits for my discontent, not the Catholic Church.

I felt unfulfilled in my position in a large defense firm. My personal relationships also grew intolerable forcing me to finally act.

It first began with a small voice I heard every morning after awakening which would say (without fail), “I LOVE YOU.” Was it my mother, encouraging me from Heaven or was I having a “middle-age crisis”? Little did I know the Truth. Soon thereafter, I began to receive words of encouragement from friends and colleagues who told me about Daniel’s Inn, a group of Christian lawyers who gather monthly for an hour of Bible study and prayer. Through Daniel’s Inn I came to realize that there were other lawyers and judges who were also seeking answers. What an uplifting experience! Yet, as a “cradle” Catholic, I felt like a fish out of water because so many of our Protestant brothers and sisters were able to quote Scripture, and participate in meaningful discussions about the impact of Scripture in their life. Feeling driven by an insatiable hunger for Truth, I began my spiritual awakening with a great fervor.

God is so good---He delivered several “angels” to me who guided me through my



**A WOMAN PRAYING**

*Willem de Poorter*

(Date Unknown)

*The Spiritual Exercises (Continued on page 10)*

(Continued from page 9) *The Spiritual Exercises*

awakening. After listening to my lamentations about a traumatic professional experience, one of these angels (a great and dear friend) spiritually “kicked” me with the unequivocal direction “to get into your Bible.” She proceeded to give me twenty (20) scripture citations to read that evening which I did. Remarkably, my stress and feelings of worry were gone the next morning and I felt this amazing spiritual peace about the situation. I was amazed! If reading those passages could do that for me, then what other gifts lie uncovered in the Scriptures? From that point forward, I made a personal commitment to God that I would endeavor to study the Bible and improve my relationship with Him. In fulfillment of my commitment, I began reading the Holy Scriptures every morning and during the night when I was unable to sleep.

God blessed me with other “angels” along my way back to Him. Through these people, God gave me many incredible gifts which validated my progress on this journey back. One “angel” appeared as a beggar outside the Orange County Superior Court. His name was John. During the Fall of 1998 and Winter 1999, I ran into John on several occasions and during each of these random meetings he seemed able to read my heart. Thirty days after my first meeting with John, I was walking into court when he called out to me using my name. I put him off telling him that I would speak with him after my court appearance. When I came out of the courthouse and started walking to the parking lot, I heard a voice reading the Bible. It was John. As I approached, John ran to greet me extending his hands to shake mine. Once he held my hands in his, he indicated that God had a message for me. Was this a dream? Was it real? What was it?? Then John repeated the words of the Psalm that I had read that very morning about “enemies and foes,” and proceeded to tell me that God wanted me to know that passage and to integrate it into my life. My head spinning in disbelief, John then proceeded to read my heart: he told me that I was searching for the truth and reminded me that “...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) For the rest of the day, my feet barely touched the ground. Filled with the Holy Spirit, I began to hunger ever more for the Truth.

At a Daniel’s Inn annual fellowship meeting, I was seated next to another “cradle” Catholic, Dave Belz. He told me about his experiences with the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola including the time commitment. Dave’s endorsement of the Spiritual Exercises occurred at a time when I was ready to increase my efforts to search for the Truth. That same day, I asked Judge Frank Firmat to put my name on a list of those who were interested in the Spiritual Exercises.

When I started my journey with the Spiritual Exercises in Fall 2000 with Judge Dave McEachen as the facilitator, he told our group that through the Exercises, we may discover certain revelations about ourselves. I felt certain that my revelation would involve my professional life since I was then at a crossroads as to what I was to do professionally. But, as usual, God had a bigger and more magnificent message.

Despite a number of concurrent and stressful personal, professional and financial matters (e.g., involvement in an aggressive business litigation case involving computer software, purchasing a new house and remodeling it), I nevertheless realized a peacefulness after my daily meditation over Scripture as part of the Exercises. The Exercises guide the evolution of the interior relationship with Christ. This process includes periods of joy contrasted by periods of desolation. For example, painful times occur when the meditation of certain Scriptural passages forces the soul to face its own sinfulness. If faced honestly, these cathartic experiences result in introspective reflection on the soul’s relationship with God.

Soon after completing six weeks of Scriptural readings focusing on sin, the season of Advent brought Scriptures filled with love and the birth of Christ. During this time, I

*The Spiritual Exercises* (Continued on page 11)



**THE PRAYER OF  
THE SPINNER**

*Gerrit Dou*

(Date Unknown)

(Continued from page 10) *The Spiritual Exercises*

felt an overwhelming warmth and a healing light in my heart. During this joyful period, one evening I “discovered” that we are called to be “children of God.” What does that mean? Suddenly it became clear that God calls us all to come to Him for all of our needs, not just when we are in distress, but also for the little daily matters and even when we are happy in life.

“Jesus said to his disciples: ‘I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser... 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...*If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you will, and it shall be done for you. By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.*’ (John 15: 1-8)

I realized that we are called to seek Him in all aspects of our life--both our personal and professional life. Our communion with God does not cease when we exit Mass but also extends into every moment of our life.

To re-affirm this “revelation,” God sent yet another “angel” to me. Her name was Katie Darnell, a 17 year old teenager living in Princeton, Kentucky who had been afflicted with cancer since the age of 14. One morning while getting dressed for the office, I happened to see a segment on the “Today Show” about Katie Darnell. While this story was similar to many other heart-rendering stories about a child struck by cancer, Katie was different. There was a bright light that surrounded her. I knew immediately that I had to find and persuade her to travel to California for a local American Cancer Society event called “*Dancin’ Cowpokes*” which was a fundraiser to support children with cancer as well as their families. As I came to know Katie and her family, I learned her personal mission—to glorify God through her cancer. Neither she nor her mother ever prayed for her healing despite her physical losses resulting from the cancer including her eyesight, a good portion of her hearing, her teeth, and her ability to walk. Yet, Katie—a true child of God—never lost her faith. Her mission was to comply with her Father’s will by completely surrendering her own will and desires to Him.

The Spiritual Exercises and God’s many “angels” showed me that my spiritual foundation begins with an intimate, familial relationship with the Trinity. The Father provides unconditional love to me---He hears my prayers, hears my needs, and bestows gifts more magnificent than I could ever imagine. His Son, Jesus Christ, is ever present in every moment of my life and I now dialogue with Him constantly as a brother (one that I never had), as a confidante, as my Redeemer, as my Savior, and as my advocate with the Father. And, the Holy Spirit is a wonderful guidance counselor who leads me through the good and bad that life may bring.

Through the Spiritual Exercises I developed a intensely personal relationship with God. I also came to understand and more deeply appreciate His special gifts of the Sacraments administered to us through His holy Catholic Church.

The Spiritual Exercises are a fulfilling treasure trove just waiting to be discovered. Indeed, one prevailing question that I hear repeatedly upon completing the facilitation of the Exercises with a group is, “Can I do the Exercises again?” †



OLD WOMAN  
READING A BIBLE

Gerrit Dou

(1630)



FRANK  
ERNEST

## COME TO ME

Come to Me, My friend  
 I call you to a deeper surrender of yourself  
 I call you to come to Me  
 I call you to come to My freedom  
 Unloose your heart  
 Surrender again to Me today  
 Come to Me, My friend  
 I will give you all you need  
 Believe and trust in Me  
 I know you will not understand  
 Only know My way is the perfect way  
 My plan is a perfect plan for your life  
 Turn yourself to Me again today  
 I wish to deepen My life in you  
 I wish to give you My love



My friend, I want to transform you  
 to make you a new creation  
 ever new, ever changing  
 I want to bring you into a deeper freedom  
 I want you to believe in My power  
 to transform you, to heal you  
 Do not limit what I can do  
 There is still so much MORE  
 I want to do with you and through you  
 I call you to a deeper faith  
 that I may be still  
 more powerful in you.

By Father Jim Ferry †

## MORE ON THE TRUE CHURCH



### THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE

After being condemned in his trial, More made a final statement before being condemned to death. Aware that his words would echo throughout England, throughout Europe, and throughout subsequent history, Sir Thomas More now brought into full play all of the rhetorical power and legal expertise that a lifetime of training had placed at his disposal. Challenging the very ground on which Audley and the rest of the judges intended to condemn him, he said:

*Inasmuch, my lord, as this indictment is grounded upon an Act of Parliament directly repugnant to the laws of God and His Holy Church, the supreme government of which, or of any part thereof, may no temporal prince presume by any law to take upon him, as rightfully belonging to the See of Rome, a spiritual preeminence by the mouth of our Savior Himself, personally present upon the earth, only to St. Peter and his successors, bishops of the same See, by special prerogative guaranteed, it is therefore in law among Christian men insufficient to charge any Christian man.*

**Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage**

**By: Gerard B. Wegemer**

**(Pg. 215) †**

## RECOVERING STRAY CATHOLICS

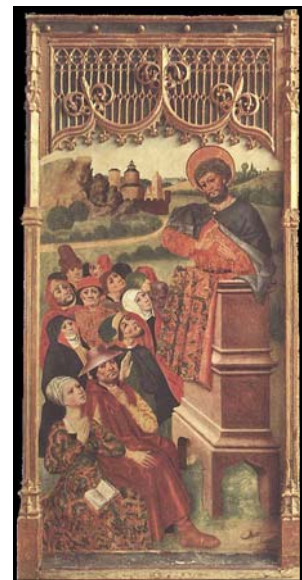
FATHER C. JOHN McCLOSKEY, III, STD

One of the monumental missions of the Catholic Church in the United States in the next millennium will be to recover our lost sheep and help them to “revert.” Recovering Catholics are those who have returned after having fallen-away. There are many millions of these prodigal sons. We have to be the merciful father who rushes out to meet them half way and then escorts them back home to the sacramental feast. We are the Emergency Medical Technicians of the faith, called to perform cardiac resuscitation. We must also prepare to be care givers of long-term rehabilitation. Providentially, our fallen-away Catholic relatives, friends, or colleagues are normally only one good confession away from reconciliation with Christ here on earth: one heartbeat away from entrance into the Father’s loving embrace. We have to stay with them till the end with our prayer, sacrifice, and friendship. We can worry about Purgatory afterwards. The Church provides the means to help souls even after the particular judgment.

The Lord tells us that “For the Son of Man came to save what was lost. What do you think? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them stray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the mountains, and go in search of the one that has strayed? And if he happens to find it... he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so, it is not the will of your Father in heaven that a single one of these little ones should perish.” (Matthew: 18: 11-14). The Catechism of the Catholic Church does not address the loss of these Catholics or give any advice as how to win them back. Perhaps it is because the Church must trust in the apostolic spirit of her sons and daughters to catch them again them in our nets before they slip away forever.

We have every confidence that at some point in the next millennium, we will enter into what our Holy Father John Paul II calls a “new springtime.” We anticipate a re-evangelization in our country; in fact this movement is already underway. One need only look at the multiplicity of faithful Catholic initiatives in education, journalism, and family life to be convinced of this. Hundreds of thousands are joyfully entering into the barque of Peter (see Scepter booklets # 197 & 209 )as is evidenced by the great growth in recent years in convert Catholics who have been prepared through the diocesan RCIA programs. In addition there are more and more well-known persons from every profession who are embracing the Faith publicly. In the next several decades we will see a large increase of priestly vocations of select young men, reversing thirty-five years of decline in the U.S. The Church in America will belatedly join the rest of the Church which has enjoyed surging vocations during the pontificate of John Paul II. For example, vocations are up 300% in Africa and S.E. Asia. These priests will possess a deep piety, sound doctrine, and zeal for souls and will be imbued with the vision of the Second Vatican Council as implemented by John Paul II (see Scepter booklet # 211). However, as our Lord implies, this future “civilization of love” will not begin to come to fulfillment until the Heavenly Father has received back many, if not the great majority, of the sheep who have strayed. The Father loves them, the Good Shepherd tells us, even more than those of us who have been faithful. How merciful is our God with his children! He is counting on us to be His instruments in this great task and He wants them all back.

Let’s look at the present situation. Out of approximately sixty million nominal Catholics only 25% or so actually practice their faith. by attending Sunday Mass regularly and confession yearly. The other 45 million Catholics are lukewarm (we know what Our Lord said about that!). They are simply “sacramental” Catholics at key moments of their existence: baptism, marriage, wake, and funeral (hatched, matched, and dispatched). Of course, there are probably millions of former Catholics who are not even on the books . I am not referring here to the typical college-age student or young adult who “questions” or takes a “vacation” from Catholic practice -- he who chooses to pursue the supposed pleasures of immorality, forever young and healthy, until marriage and family awaken him from his Cartesian dream into the reality of work and children. I am not referring to the couch potato Catholic who lacks the will to repent and change his life for the time being. He prefers to simply put off his confession until shortly before death or



SAINT PREACHING

*Jorge Ingles*

(1455)

*Recovering Stray Catholics* (Continued on page 14)

(Continued from page 13) *Recovering Stray Catholics*

the Final Judgment, whichever comes first. He may be in for an nasty surprise.

Many millions of others, however, have openly and apparently definitively left the Church. They do not profess or live a prayerful sacramental life.. They do not behave according to the teachings of the Church or see these teachings as authoritative or divine. Some merely drift off into a comfortable American bourgeois existence of work during the weekday, and the life of entertainment in the evening and on weekends. Vacations each year provide them additional places and pleasures until death does them part. Others pay lip service to the Christian creed by worshipping at mainstream liberal Protestant Churches (talk about jumping into a sinking ship!) Millions of others have joined Evangelical and Fundamentalist denominations, or strange sects and cults, or free-standing mega-churches. They have discovered an emptiness in their lives that is filled by various forms of non-Catholic religious enthusiasms. This movement is all in the great American subjective spirit of the individual as the sole arbiter of Sacred Scripture and his own conscience. "To worship the God of your choice," as one of our former Presidents puts it, is the American way of life, right alongside the mythical separation of Church and State. "They sing of and worship themselves," as our proto-typical American poet Walt Whitman might have put it.

Not one of the readers of this article does not have a friend, relative, colleague, or acquaintance who does not fit into one of the these categories. How many tears have been shed, hearts broken, voices raised, nights of sleep lost, marriages ruined, and families split apart since the 1960's in the United States over the defection of literally millions of Catholics? Many have left, as they say, after "twelve years of Catholic education" and appear to have shed their Catholic beliefs as easily as taking off one's shoes. I believe this exodus to be unprecedented in the history of the Church. Large numbers were certainly lost due to persecution and martyrdom in the Roman empire prior to the Edict of Milan. Others disappeared in large swatches of the Middle East and North Africa due to the Islamic jihads. Millions were evidently lost -- although who really knows-- under the ruthless atheistic Communist regime of the Chinese. However, the experience of America and other English-- speaking countries is unique in peacetime in any country with a large Catholic population. What is particularly troubling for those of us with a historical viewpoint is to think of the sacrifices of those generations of faithful Catholics who both lived and handed down their Faith under difficult circumstances only to see it tossed away by their descendants. They lived that Faith heroically only to see it, from their perspective of eternal life, discarded as not "relevant" to their offspring. We may take solace in the fact that these faithful Catholics must be interceding before God for their children, or their children's children . God will hear them.

Let us look at the causes for these defections. In supernatural endeavors, we must understand the root of the problem. Let us treat the disease, not the symptoms.

Why have these people left the Church? It is, first of all, a mystery. We cannot peer into their heads or their hearts. Ultimately they are responsible before God for their decisions. The Catechism, however, gives us some clues: "Ignorance of Christ and his Gospel, bad example given by others, enslavement to one's passions, assertion of a mistaken notion of autonomy of conscience, rejection of the Church's authority and her teaching, lack of conversion and of charity: these can be at the source of errors of judgment... in moral conduct" ( CCC 1792). Let us be unflinchingly clear about this while retaining all understanding, mercy, and forgiveness. The great majority of people who leave the Church do so because of moral faults. They are not ready to submit their sins to God and to the Church's judgment and mercy through the sacrament of penance. This unwillingness to ask for God's forgiveness for having offended Him leads to rationalization and self- justification. Over time, this will lead to a loss of the virtues of faith, hope, and charity necessary for eternal life. The culpability of these moral faults may be mitigated by religious ignorance, the result of a decades-long failure of the faithful to properly catechize. God does not call us to judge but rather to understand, call, and welcome back the fallen away. Knowing ourselves to be sinners, this should not surprise us. We should generally be praying for conversion of their hearts first. Their minds will follow.

Right at the beginning we have to emphasize the importance of our truly having a relationship of friendship with the potential revert, even if he be a relative. Friendship is a special word with a sacred meaning of "a sincere gift of self" to the other. True friendship means sharing the best we have without reserve forever. For a Catholic, this means sharing Christ and His Church. We are only interested in our friend's happiness here on earth and his destination in eternal life. We have no axes to grind, ulterior motives, or hidden agendas. We do not come to judge or condemn, analyze, or disdain but rather to help a friend. The Church exists ultimately to forgive sins through the application of Christ's merits through the sacraments. We want them to truly believe that "to live is Christ, and to die, is gain."

Perhaps the first approach to helping our friend to revert will be to ask him in a friendly conversation why he left the Church in the first place. We know, of course, there is no such thing as a "good reason" to leave the Church. There are plenty of bad ones, however, and our friend will provide a few. You will have to address his responses carefully, patiently diagnosing his motivations. Are they intellectual, or moral , or simply ignorance? You will most likely encounter the normal assortment of emotions such as anger, rancor, personal resentments, bruised feelings, and supposed slights. These reactions

*Recovering Stray Catholics* (Continued on page 15)

(Continued from page 14) *Recovering Stray Catholics*

will be accompanied by shopworn excuses and rationalizations. You, as well as I, have heard them all. Your friend must know that you are truly sympathetic and understanding while at the same time uncompromising in your defense of the Gospel and the teachings of the Church. Once you have heard him out, and this may take many hours during numerous conversations, you can begin to address his problems or objections. You will do so only after having seriously meditated upon them during your prayer and after having asked for the Holy Spirit's guidance. You want to be able to convincingly "give a reason for the hope which is within you." This hope has, for the moment, been lost in your friend. This may well also involve your own study of the particular teachings of the Church to which your friend objects so that you can explain them clearly and attractively. You may also want to consult with a learned Catholic who can point you in the right direction regarding resources and give you the wisdom of his own experience in rescuing lost sheep. I am assuming a modicum of good will on your friend's part. He must at least be partially willing to listen to what you have to say. His heart and mind must be somewhat open to the possibility that he may have chosen the wrong path. His willingness will depend to a large extent on the depth of your friendship and what Cardinal Newman referred to as your "personal influence" upon him.

He will certainly pay much more attention if he sees you are a happy, well-adjusted Catholic. He will see your human frailties and defects, but he will be impressed at your effort to live an exemplary Christian life. He will see the connection between the interior and exterior life of a Catholic by observing your prayer, frequent confession and Mass, and Scripture reading. Potential reverts love to complain of "hypocrisy" in the lives of Christians. They are sometimes right. We have to help them understand that the best way to judge an institution is by the people who strive to live up to its ideals, not by the people who do not. That is why the Church provides us the saints as the institution's role models. With God's grace the saints have succeeded in the imitation of Christ in this life -- and not without tremendous lifelong struggle. Sainthood is the job description for a serious Catholic. If our friend sees that sanctity is our ideal, he will pay attention, and the Holy Spirit will act through us to call him to repentance.

You may have to gradually reintroduce him to Catholic sacramental and liturgical practice. Bring him to Mass; make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; explain the meaning of Catholic customs and sacramentals to him. He probably never lived or understood these Catholic practices in the first place. You will want to see that he has good Catholic books and pamphlets. Expose him to websites like **catholicity.com**, **ewtn.com**, and **catholic.com**. Catholic radio and television programming are becoming more available. These resources will answer many of his questions and reveal to him -- often for the first time -- the "splendor of the truth." Introduce him to your devout Catholic friends at social events and family functions.

As you delve deeper into his life and he opens up, you may find there is a marital situation, past or present, that has to be resolved. He may never have had his first Confession, first Holy Communion, or Confirmation. Perhaps he has assisted at an abortion or been involved in witchcraft or the occult. You may also need to refer him to a good Catholic psychologist or psychiatrist. His problems may require a team approach.

Like you, I have encountered these situations and many others when dealing with my potential revert friends and relatives. Satan has had a successful century and has left his ugly mark everywhere in our "culture of death." Assume nothing about your friend other than he is a lost sheep. Jesus is eager to bring him back into the fold, regardless of how far he has strayed or how low he has fallen. Show no surprise. There but for the grace of God go I, or perhaps went I!

At some point you will have him "show yourself to the priest" as the Gospel tells us. You may want to find a priest friend of yours whom you know is eager to hear confessions, give spiritual direction, and a hug to this prodigal son. You may want to fill the priest in on the particulars of how your friend got to this point. Then let him apply God's saving grace in the Sacrament of Confession and any other sacramental ministrations that are necessary to bring him home.

What if your efforts do not bear fruit? Your friend continues on his run away from God and towards perdition, for whatever variety of bad reasons. "It ain't over till it's over" should be your attitude. You continue to pray, to sacrifice, to give example, to let your friend know that you love him unconditionally in the Lord. You will always be there for him. God tells us that He gives us whatever we ask for in prayer, and we are asking for our friend's return to the fold. God will answer us in His own way and in His own time. While we are overjoyed with the repentance of one lost sheep, we know there are millions more to round up. In the meantime we have the holy satisfaction and consolation of the words of Scripture in the epistle of St. James 5:18-20: "My brethren, if anyone of you strays from the truth and someone brings him back, he ought to know that he who causes a sinner to be brought back from his misguided way, will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins." If only for selfish reasons, the above promise is a powerful incentive to continue to search for the lost sheep.

The Holy Spirit is particularly active in these years surrounding the Jubilee Year 2000. Many people are realizing that they are being presented with an ultimate binary choice: God or Self. As Blessed Josemaria Escriva once taught: "The Lord has shown us this refinement of Love: he has let us conquer the world for him. He is always so humble that he has wished to limit himself to making it possible... To us he has granted the most agreeable part: taking action and gaining the victory." The agreeable part for us is to act as God's instruments in calling back stray Catholics to the Father's embrace. ✠

# Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\*



\*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

## THE LORD AND THE BIKER

A biker was riding along a California beach when suddenly the sky clouded above his head and, in a booming voice, the Lord said, "Because you have tried to be faithful to me in all ways, I will grant you one wish."

The biker pulled over and said, "Build a bridge to Hawaii so I can ride over anytime I want."

The Lord said, "Your request is materialistic, think of the enormous challenges for that kind of undertaking. The supports required to reach the bottom of the Pacific! The concrete and steel it would take! It will nearly exhaust several natural resources. I can do it, but it is hard for me to justify your desire for worldly things. Take a little more time and think of something that would honor and glorify me."

The biker thought about it for a long time. Finally he said, "Lord, I wish that I could understand my wife. I want to know how she feels inside, what she's thinking when she gives me the silent treatment, why she cries, what she means when she says nothing's wrong, and how I can make a woman truly happy."

The Lord replied, "You want two lanes or four on that bridge?" †



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

The separation of people into sheep and goats will take place only at the last day. Until then we are forbidden to make any classification. It is very likely that there will be many surprises in Heaven. Many people will be there that we never expected to find, and many will not be there whom we expected to see; and finally, we probably will be most surprised to find ourselves there. †



## ONE OF GOD'S LITTLE MIRACLES

"Just a couple hours now," said Dad, "and we'll soon be at our campsite!" The year was 1950, and we were on our family vacation, doing our family thing--camping. I settled down in my corner of the back seat to take a nap. The rhythm of the moving car soothed me into a deep sleep. Wham! I woke with a start, my face on the floorboard of the back seat. Dad had braked sharply.

"What happened?" I asked. "Where are we?"

"Half an hour from our campsite," he answered, "and I don't know what the holdup is, but all the cars have stopped. I'll see what's going on."

Dad stepped out of the car. Mom, my little brother David and I waited. "Bet there's been an accident!" David was excited.

Mom shook her head. "Probably a bear crossing the road," she said. David bounced up and down in his seat. That was even better than an accident!

Dad came running back to the car. "Come on!" he said very excitedly. "Come on, kids! You've all got to see this!"

I jumped out of the car and ran to catch up with him. "What is it, Daddy?" I asked. He grinned and reached for my hand. "Come see, Carolyn," he said.

I knew that, whatever it was, it was nice because my father was happy about it. I grabbed his hand and skipped excitedly along beside him. We walked past a dozen parked cars. Ahead, a group of people stood "ooh-ing" and "aah-ing."

Looking in the same direction as everyone else, we saw a mother duck, sleek and proud, promenading up the middle of the road, nine little ducklings waddling after her. The babies were marching single file behind their mother, totally ignoring the people and automobiles.

*No one appeared to mind waiting...*

No one from any of the stalled cars appeared to mind waiting on a fearless mother duck and her nine ducklings parading. We all followed Mrs. Duck and family a quarter of a mile up the hill. There Mrs. Duck led her children off the road, over a small embankment and into a little creek winding its way down the mountainside.

I walked back to the car with the adults and listened to their conversation with strangers.

"Oh, you're from Milwaukee? We lived there for four years!" They were discovering people and places they had in common.

I was quiet as we continued our journey, wondering about what we had just witnessed. Later in camp, I sat on a large rock next to my father, our feet dangling in the creek.

"Daddy?" I asked. "How did Mrs. Duck know that all those busy people would stop to let her walk along the road with her babies?"

Dad picked up a smooth stone, thoughtfully rubbed it between his thumb and forefinger, then skimmed it over the water.

"Well, honey," he said, watching the little stone skim the water, "that's one of God's miracles. God used that mother duck and her babies to slow everyone down so they could enjoy life a little bit more. He arranges opportunities like this, sort of as a reminder to make people think about what's important in life."

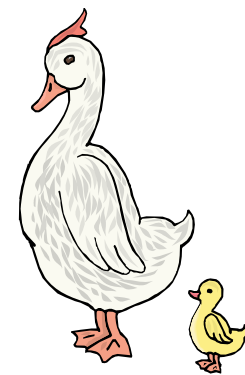
I sat there for a moment, smiling over Dad's words. Soon, Mom joined us, stuck her tired feet into the cool water and sighed, "Oh-h, that feels good!"

David wandered up and sat beside Mom, cuddling close. We all relaxed there by the creek as the mountain breeze played a soothing symphony in the trees above, just for us.

Yes, it truly was a miracle! ✚



THOUGHT  
FOR  
THE  
DAY



## JOHN 17: 20-21

SCRIPTURAL  
CORNER

<sup>20</sup>I do not pray for these only, but also for those who believe in me through their word, <sup>21</sup>that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

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

Union of Christians with Christ begets unity among themselves. This unity of the Church ultimately rebounds to the benefit of all mankind, because since the Church is one and unique, she is seen as a sign raised up for the nations to see, inviting all to believe in Christ as sent by God come to save all men, The Church carries on this mission of salvation through its union with Christ, calling all mankind to join the Church and by so doing to share in union with Christ and the Father.

The Second Vatican Council, speaking of the principles of ecumenism, links the Church's unity with her universality: "Almost everyone, though in different ways, longs for the one visible Church of God, a Church truly universal and sent forth to the whole world that the world may be converted to the Gospel and so be saved, to the glory of God" (*Unitatis redintegration*, 1) This universality is another characteristic of the Church, technically described as "catholicity." "For any centuries now the Church has been spread throughout the world, and it numbers persons of all races and walks of life. But the universality of the Church does not depend on its geographical distribution, even though this is a visible sign and a motive of credibility. The Church was catholic already at Pentecost: it was born catholic from the wounded heart of Jesus, as a fire which the Holy Spirit enkindled.

"In the second century the Christians called the Church catholic in order to distinguish it from sects which, using the name of Christ, were betraying his doctrine in one way or another. 'We call it catholic,' writes St Cyril, 'not only because it is spread throughout the world, from one extreme to the other, but because in a universal way and without defect it teaches all the dogmas which men ought to know, of both the visible and the invisible, the celestial and the earthly. Likewise because it draws to true worship all types of men, governors and citizens, the learned and the ignorant. And finally, because it cures and heals all kinds of sins, whether of the soul or of the body, possessing in addition—by whatever name it may be called—all forms of virtue, in deeds and in words and in every kind of spiritual life' (Catechesis, 18, 23)" (J. Escriva, *In Love with the Church*, 9).

Every Christian should have the same desire for this unity as Jesus Christ expresses in his prayer to the Father. "A privileged instrument for participation in pursuit of the unity of all Christians is prayer. Jesus Christ himself left us his final wish for unity through prayer to the Father: 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that thou has sent me' (Jn 17:21)

"Also the Second Vatican Council strongly recommended to us prayer for the unity of Christians, defining it 'the soul of the whole ecumenical movement' (*Unitatis redintegratio*, 8). As the soul to the body, so prayer gives life, consistency, spirit, and finality to ecumenical movement.

"Prayer puts us, first and foremost, before the Lord, purifies us in intentions, in sentiments, in our heart, and produces that 'interior conversion,' without which there is no real ecumenism, (cf *Unitatis redintegratio*, 7).

"Prayer, furthermore, reminds us that unity, ultimately, is a gift from God, a gift for which we must ask and for which we must prepare in order that we may be granted it" (John Paul II, General Audience, 17 January 1979). †



ALTARPIECE OF THE  
CHURCH FATHERS

*Michael Pacher*

(1483)

*\*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.*

**LITURGY OF VESPERS  
ON THE FEAST OF THE CONVERSION OF ST PAUL  
FOR THE CONCLUSION OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY  
HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI**

*Patriarchal Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls*

*Wednesday, 25 January 2006*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,*

On this day when we celebrate the Conversion of the Apostle Paul, we conclude the annual Week of Prayer for Christian Unity united in fraternal liturgical assembly. It is meaningful that the Feast of the Conversion of the Apostle to the Gentiles coincides with the final day of this important Week, in which we are asking God with particular intensity for the precious gift of unity among all Christians, making ours the invocation that Jesus himself raised to the Father for his disciples: “that they may all be one; even as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me” (Jn 17: 21).

The desire for unity on the part of every Christian Community and every individual believer and the power to achieve it is a gift of the Holy Spirit and goes hand in hand with a more profound and radical fidelity to the Gospel (cf. Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*, n. 15).

We realize that at the base of the commitment to ecumenism there is the conversion of heart, as the Second Vatican Council clearly affirms: “There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without interior conversion. For it is from newness of attitudes of mind, from self-denial and unstinted love, that desires of unity take their rise and develop in a mature way” (Decree *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n. 7).

*Deus caritas est* (I Jn 4: 8, 16), God is love. The faith of the Church, in its entirety, is founded on this solid rock. In particular, the patient pursuit of full communion among all of Christ's disciples is based upon it: by fixing one's gaze on this truth, summit of divine revelation, it seems possible to overcome divisions and not to be discouraged, even though they continue to be gravely serious.

The Lord Jesus, who broke down the “dividing wall of hostility” (Eph 2: 14) with the blood of his Passion, will not fail to grant to those who faithfully invoke him the strength to heal every wound. But it is always necessary to start anew from this point: “*Deus caritas est.*”

It is to the theme of love that I wanted to dedicate my first Encyclical, which was published today; this happy coincidence with the conclusion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites us to consider, even more than our gathering together, the entire ecumenical journey in the light of God's love, of the Love that is God.

If, under the human profile, love manifests itself as an invincible force, what must we, who “*know and believe the love God has for us*” (I Jn 4: 16), say?

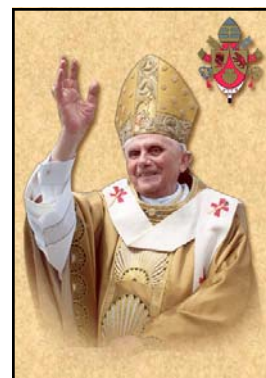
True love does not eliminate legitimate differences, but harmonizes them in a superior unity that is not ordered from the *outside* but gives form from *within*, so to speak, to the whole.

As the mystery of communion unites man and woman in that community of love and life known as matrimony, it too forms the Church into a community of love, uniting a multiform wealth of gifts and traditions. The Church of Rome is placed at the service of that unity of love which, according to a saying by St Ignatius of Antioch, “presides in charity” (*Ad Rom 1, 1*).

Before you, dear brothers and sisters, I wish to renew today the entrustment to God



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



*Papal Message* (Continued on page 20)

(Continued from page 19) Papal Message

of my particular Petrine ministry, invoking upon it the light and power of the Holy Spirit so that it will always encourage fraternal communion among all Christians.

The theme of love profoundly links the two short biblical readings of today's Liturgy of Vespers.

In the first, divine charity is the strength that transforms the life of Saul of Tarsus and makes him the Apostle to the Gentiles. Writing to the Christians at Corinth, St Paul confesses that God's grace worked the extraordinary event of conversion in him: "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace toward me was not in vain" (I Cor 15: 10).

On the one hand, he feels the weight of having hindered the spread of Christ's message; but on the other, he lives in the joy of having met the Risen Lord and having been enlightened and transformed by his light. He keeps a constant memory of that life-changing event, an event so important for the entire Church that in the Acts of the Apostles reference is made to it three times (cf. Acts 9: 3-9; 22: 6-11; 26: 12-18).

On the road to Damascus, Saul hears the disturbing question: "Why do you persecute me?" Falling to the ground and interiorly troubled, he asked: "Who are you, Lord?" receiving that answer which is the basis of his conversion: "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" (Acts 9: 4-5). Paul understood in an instant what he would later express in his writings: that the Church forms a single body of which Christ is the Head. And so, from a persecutor of Christians he became the Apostle to the Gentiles.

In the Gospel passage of Matthew that we heard a little while ago, love acts as the principle that unites Christians and guarantees that their unanimous prayer is heard by the Heavenly Father. Jesus says: "If two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven" (Mt 18: 19).

The word that the Evangelist uses for "agree" is *synphonesosin*: there is reference made to a "symphony" of hearts. This he took from the heart of God. Agreement in prayer is therefore important as it is welcomed by the Heavenly Father.

Asking together already marks a step towards unity between those who ask. This certainly does not mean that God's answer is in some way determined by our request. We know well: the hoped-for fulfillment of unity depends in the first place on the will of God, whose plan and generosity surpass the understanding of man and his own requests and expectations.

Relying precisely on divine goodness, let us intensify our common prayer for unity, which is more than ever a necessary and very effective means, as John Paul II reminded us in the Encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*: "Along the ecumenical path to unity, pride of place certainly belongs to common prayer, the prayerful union of those who gather together around Christ himself" (n. 22).

Analyzing these passages in greater depth, we understand better the reason why the Father responds positively to the request of the Christian Community: "For," Jesus says, "where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

It is the presence of Christ that makes the common prayer of those gathered in his Name effective. When Christians gather to pray together, Jesus himself is in their midst. They are one with Christ, who is the only mediator between God and man.

The Second Vatican Council's Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy refers precisely to this Gospel passage to indicate one of the ways that Christ is present: "He is present when the Church prays and sings, for he has promised 'where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them' (Mt 18: 20)" (*Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 7).



### THE CONVERSION OF SAUL

*Michelangelo*

(1542-45)

Papal Message (Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20) **Papal Message**

Commenting on this text of the Evangelist Matthew, St John Chrysostom asks: “Well then, are there not two or three who gather in his name? There are,” he responds, “but rarely” (*Homily on the Gospel of St Matthew*, 60, 3).

This evening I experience an immense joy in seeing such a large and prayerful assembly that implores the gift of unity in harmony.

To each and all I extend my cordial greeting. I greet with particular affection the brothers of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities of this City, united in the one Baptism that makes us members of the one Mystical Body of Christ.

Forty years have passed since, in this very Basilica on 5 December 1965, the Servant of God Paul VI, of happy memory, celebrated the first common prayer at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council with the solemn presence of the Council Fathers and the active participation of the Observers of the other Churches and Ecclesial Communities.

Following this, beloved John Paul II persevered in the tradition of closing the Week of Prayer here. I am certain that this evening both of them are looking down from Heaven and joining in our prayer.

Among those who are taking in this assembly I would especially like to greet and thank the group of Delegates from Churches, Episcopal Conferences, Christian Communities and Ecumenical Organizations that are beginning to prepare for the Third European Ecumenical Assembly to be held in Sibiu, Romania, in September 2007 on the theme: “*The light of Christ shines upon all. Hope for renewal and unity in Europe.*”

Yes, dear brothers and sisters, we Christians have the duty to be, in Europe and among all peoples, the “light of the world” (Mt 5: 14). May God grant us a quick arrival at the hoped-for full communion.

The reformation of our unity will make evangelization more effective. Unity is our common mission; it is the condition that enables the light of Christ to be spread better in every corner of the world, so that men and women convert and are saved.

The road stretches before us! And yet, we must not lose trust; instead, with greater vigor we must once more continue our journey together. Christ walks before us and accompanies us. We count on his unfailing presence and humbly and tirelessly implore from him the precious gift of unity and peace. †



**THE CONVERSION OF  
ST PAUL**  
*Caravaggio*  
(1600)

(Continued from page 4) **Non Catholic Christians**

fault of their own, and so are not “of our following” (i.e. in full communion with us), are nonetheless on the road to heaven, calling on the Holy Name of Christ our Savior. Christ, and His Church, treat these two groups differently.

The question of whether it was wise to change the approach so quickly and dramatically from the strict and objective, to the pastoral and personal is another matter. We shouldn’t be surprised if the approach changes, at least in regard to certain groups or circumstances, nor is it wrong for the faithful to suggest that changes should be made if the current approach is not contributing effectively to the evangelization of the world. If the followers of the Society of St. Pius X had done only that, making use of the freedom proper to clergy and lay faithful, there would be no problem. Sadly, they have not done their duty as Catholics to seek to understand and obey respectfully, even if they have criticisms on the practical level. †

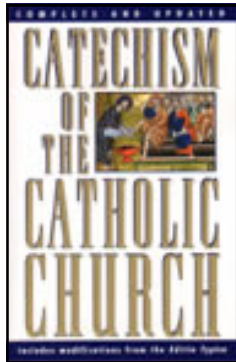


**LAST JUDGMENT**  
*Michelangelo*  
(1537-41)

## THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

### PART FOUR: CHRISTIAN PRAYER

#### SECTION ONE: PRAYER IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE



## CATECHISM CORNER



**ST FRANCIS IN  
PRAYER BEFORE  
A CRUCIFIX**

*El Greco*

(1585-90)

**2558** “Great is the mystery of the faith!” The Church professes this mystery in the Apostles’ Creed (Part One) and celebrates it in the sacramental liturgy (Part Two), so that the life of the faithful may be conformed to Christ in the Holy Spirit to the glory of God the Father (Part Three). This mystery, then, requires that the faithful believe in it, that they celebrate it, and that they live from it in a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God. This relationship is prayer.

#### WHAT IS PRAYER?

**For me, prayer is a surge of the heart; it is a simple look turned toward heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.**

#### PRAYER AS GOD'S GIFT

**2559** “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” But when we pray, do we speak from the height of our pride and will, or “out of the depths” of a humble and contrite heart? He who humbles himself will be exalted; humility is the foundation of prayer. Only when we humbly acknowledge that “we do not know how to pray as we ought,” are we ready to receive freely the gift of prayer. “Man is a beggar before God.”

**2560** “If you knew the gift of God!” The wonder of prayer is revealed beside the well where we come seeking water: there, Christ comes to meet every human being. It is he who first seeks us and asks us for a drink. Jesus thirsts; his asking arises from the depths of God’s desire for us. Whether we realize it or not, prayer is the encounter of God’s thirst with ours. God thirsts that we may thirst for him.

**2561** “You would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” Paradoxically our prayer of petition is a response to the plea of the living God: “They have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water!” Prayer is the response of faith to the free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God.

#### PRAYER AS COVENANT

**2562** Where does prayer come from? Whether prayer is expressed in words or gestures, it is the whole man who prays. But in naming the source of prayer, Scripture speaks sometimes of the soul or the spirit, but most often of the heart (more than a thousand times). According to Scripture, it is the heart that prays. If our heart is far from God, the words of prayer are in vain.

**2563** The heart is the dwelling-place where I am, where I live; according to the Semitic or Biblical expression, the heart is the place “to which I withdraw.” The heart is our hidden center, beyond the grasp of our reason and of others; only the Spirit of God can fathom the human heart and know it fully. The heart is the place of decision, deeper than our psychic drives. It is the place of truth, where we choose life or death. It is the place of encounter, because as image of God we live in relation: it is the place of covenant.

**2564** Christian prayer is a covenant relationship between God and man in Christ. It is the action of God and of man, springing forth from both the Holy Spirit and ourselves, wholly directed to the Father, in union with the human will of the Son of God made man.

#### PRAYER AS COMMUNION

**2565** In the New Covenant, prayer is the living relationship of the children of God with their Father who is good beyond measure, with his Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. The grace of the Kingdom is “the union of the entire holy and royal Trinity . . . with the whole human spirit.” Thus, the life of prayer is the habit of being in the presence of the thrice - holy God and in communion with him. This communion of life is always possible because, through Baptism, we have already been united with Christ. Prayer is Christian insofar as it is communion with Christ and extends throughout the Church, which is his Body. Its dimensions are those of Christ’s love. ✠

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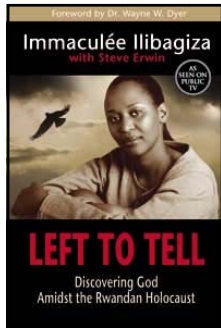
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**FROM  
THE  
LIBRARY**



**LEFT TO TELL  
BY: IMMACULEE ILIBAGIZA**

This book has renewed my faith in God and the Universe in a profound and real way that has changed me forever." **Dr. Christiane Northrup, women's wellness pioneer and best-selling author.**

"Left to Tell reminds us that we are all sons and daughters of God; that with faith, miracles will always appear; and that forgiveness is the key to freedom. A must-read for all of us in these troubled times." **Colette Baron-Reid, the author of Remembering the Future**

Could you ever imagine what it would be like to be cramped in a tiny room with seven other people, huddled in silence for more than three months while cold-blooded killers lurked nearby calling your name?

*There were many voices, many killers I could see them in my mind: my former friends and neighbors, who had always greeted me with love and kindness, moving through the house carrying spears and machetes and calling my name. "I have killed 399 cockroaches," they chanted. "Immaculée will make 400. It's a good number to kill."*

It's hard to believe even now that this haunting event actually took place in our lifetime. The Rwandan holocaust claimed the lives of nearly a million people. Miraculously, a brave and remarkable woman-Immaculée Ilibagiza-survived the slaughter by finding shelter in the confines of a small bathroom. By the grace of God, Immaculée was left to tell her triumphant story about faith, forgiveness, and endurance during one of modern time's most horrific events.

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