


ad. veritatem

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

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A detailed portrait of St. Thomas More, the English lawyer, philosopher, and statesman. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a black cap and a dark, fur-lined robe. He has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the right. A gold chain with a large, ornate pendant is visible around his neck.

A Lawyer
and Man of
Conscience
Based on Virtue—
St. Thomas More
ROBERT JOHN ARAUJO, S.J.

The Tree of Life
JOHN J. FLYNN III

Q&A: New Marian
Apparition?
HUGH BARBOUR, O. PRAEM

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

GREGORY N. WEILER

It is a common theme amongst the New Atheism movement that there cannot be a God because: “the natural world is so arbitrary,” “evil exists,” “bad things happen to good people” or “scientific advances refute God’s existence.” Such feelings are really as old as the classic philosophical question: “how can a good God allow evil to exist?” (see C.S. Lewis’ *The Problem of Pain*).



It is fascinating that in a time when science, philosophy and theology are actually converging toward the logical existence of a transcendent First Thing (see Fr. Robert Spitzer’s book, *New Proofs for the Existence of God*), modern culture is careening into absolute relativism.

Notwithstanding our pluralistic society, one would think that our intelligentsia would logically and honestly pursue the challenges that science, theology and philosophy are now posing against pluralism, with the same indefatigable zeal that inspires physicists to search for the ultimate subatomic particle! But sadly, no. Rather than tackle such a difficult task, academia throws up their hands with indifference (so much for “the Enlightenment”), and concludes there is no “truth” or “my truth is as good as your truth.”

The new atheists conclude that which can’t be replicated by scientific method has no bearing on their lives. Lives untethered to the supernatural, lived as if there will were no soul, no eternity, no ascertainable and absolute goodness. Such lives find their sole measure and purpose only in self gratification. Sound familiar? The vacuum left in a soul which rejects the transcendent is often filled by pathological self focus. The 20th century taught us again that humanity untethered from Truth will affirmatively tend toward the inhuman on a grand scale.

While Americans will point to the ghastly human toll from the atheistic philosophies of Marxism and Fascism in the 20th century, has not the ambivalence of our postmodern America equaled or exceeded that previous

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- encouraging its members to live a Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- promoting and foster high ethical principals in the legal profession generally and, in particular, in the community of Catholic lawyers.
- assisting in the spiritual growth of its members.
- encouraging interfaith understanding and brotherhood.
- sponsoring the annual Red Mass for

elected and appointed officials and members of the legal profession.

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Each member of the Society is committed to:

- strive to live an exemplary Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their daily lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- attend monthly meeting of the Society and provide personal support to the St. Thomas More Society.
- attend and support the Red Mass.

LAWYER'S PRAYER

Give me the grace, Good Lord, to set the world at naught; to set my mind fast upon thee and not to hang upon the blast of men's mouths; to be content to be solitary; not to long for worldly company but utterly to cast off the world and rid my mind of the business thereof.

- ST. THOMAS MORE

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**A LAWYER
AND MAN OF CONSCIENCE
BASED ON VIRTUE:**

ST. THOMAS MORE

ROBERT JOHN ARAUJO, S.J.

JOHN COURTNEY MURRAY, S.J. UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR,
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

If the word virtue is mentioned, what would come to your mind? An antiquated approach to life that may harken back to days past? Or, a remarkable person who personifies objectivity for neighbors and fellow citizens and takes actions based on truth that seeks the common good for all with a conscience well-formed? In my presentation, I shall rely on this second characterization, and I shall develop it using the life of Sir and Saint Thomas More, a lawyer of London, a citizen of England, a servant of King Henry VIII, and a martyr of his Church. As a man of faith, More subscribed to the counsel of the Psalmist, “Happy are we if we exercise justice and constantly practice virtue.”¹

Thomas More was a virtuous man

and lawyer. He was also a practitioner of the well-formed conscience. He acknowledged the correlation between the law, the legal system that administers the law, and the need for the members of society to live in right relation with one another under the rule of law. More harnessed virtues relevant to the task of lawyering—courage, wisdom, prudence, and justice. These virtues fortified his conscience. Their combination made him the man for all seasons immortalized by Robert Bolt.

Here we must take stock of what is virtue, and we can do so by recalling Alasdair MacIntyre’s definition of virtue as “an acquired human quality the possession and exercise of which tends to enable us to achieve those goods which are internal to practices and the

lack of which effectively prevents us from achieving such goods.”² Thomas Aquinas recalled that virtue is “a good quality of the mind” by which people live righteously.³ When people live righteously, they are disposed to living in right relation with one another—a goal for the law and an objective for lawyers as ministers of the law. Thomas More was such a lawyer who treasured courage, prudence, justice, and wisdom. He also possessed and exercised a well-formed conscience.

Let me first consider the virtue of justice. Plato acknowledged that justice is the fundamental component of society—“the necessary conduct in everything from beginning to end.”⁴ The virtue of justice has been viewed as the guarantor of some of the other

¹ Psalm 106:3.

² Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* 191 (Notre Dame, 1984) (emphasis omitted). He further states that practices are any “coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.” *Id.*, at 187.

³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, Q. 55, art. 4 (Benzinger Brothers, Inc. ed. & Fathers of the English Dominican Province trans., 1947).

⁴ Plato, *The Republic*, bk. IV, at 432d (G.M.A. Grube trans., 1992).

virtues that are crucial to lawyers, i.e., prudence, courage, and wisdom. Thomas Aquinas acknowledged this when he expressed that justice facilitates the *suum cuique*, to each person his due.⁵ The virtue of justice, like the legal system itself, is practiced or engaged in a community setting. It is not understood as something which is good or proper simply for the individual alone; rather, it manifests itself in good relationships or true friendship where each person renders the other his or her due. Justice as a virtue manifests itself in the midst of people who are in relationship with one another; it does not exist in the vacuum of persons who are isolated from one another. Essentially, the virtue of justice depends on community; its prerequisite is two or more people who acknowledge one another's existence and who honor the other person's right to co-exist. More lived and practiced the virtue of justice.

If the virtue of justice prescribes the just goal or end, then prudence and compassion are means to that end. The virtues of prudence and compassion work in tandem to promote improvements in social structures that will simultaneously display greater charity toward both individuals and society at large.⁶ Those who recognize this have followed Aquinas who saw the connection between the virtue of prudence which directs people so that they relate their own good to the good of others (i.e., the common good) and justice.⁷

Both of these virtues, justice and prudence, provide necessary reassurance to citizens who are in disputes with one another and rely on the law and lawyers for assistance that they will be heard and that their respective concerns will be carefully and fairly evaluated. What

is essential to sustain this environment is the virtue of courage. Courage is the virtue that enables anyone—More is a good example—to meet the challenges and dangers that may arise when positions they hold may not be popular with or well received by the influential elements of the society.⁸

Underlying the virtues of justice (which helps us recognize appropriate goals), prudence (which provides the means for acting justly), and courage (which reinforces lawyers who take the action essential to reaching the objective), is the virtue of wisdom. Wisdom supplies the insight and the sagacity by which a person comes to understand corporate as well as individual goods and the nexus between them. Cultivation of this virtue opens the mind as well as the heart to matters which may escape recognition by others. Wisdom guided More in the quest for understanding.

If we now have a framework of the virtuous lawyer, let us proceed with the illustration of Sir and Saint Thomas More. I begin with the virtue of justice. As Professors Gerard Wegemer and Stephen Smith have pointed out, More's judicial background provided the catalyst for his diligence in expanding access to justice.⁹ In doing so, he stressed the role of equity in accessing and dispensing justice. The line attributed to More that he would even give the devil his due under the law likely has its source in More's son-in-law, Will Roper's *Life of Sir Thomas More*.

Roper took the occasion to contrast his father-in-law with Cardinal Wolsey, More's predecessor as Lord Chancellor.¹⁰ Wolsey had ambition for himself, but More ambitioned for the just cause wherever it may be found. More perfected this quest by making

himself available to the common citizen by frequently offering many of his afternoons sitting in his open hall thereby allowing whoever may have cause to approach the Lord Chancellor and receive that which was due under the law tempered with equity. For More law and justice need go hand-in-hand. It seemed that justice without the protection of the law could be easily forfeited; but, the law without justice

HARKENING BACK TO THOMAS AQUINAS, MORE VALUED THE PRINCIPLE THAT THERE EXISTED AN OBJECTIVE NATURAL LAW WHICH IS INSCRIBED ON THE HUMAN HEART AND KNOWN BY THE HUMAN MIND.

would be whatever the lawmaker or magistrate willed it to be—not in accord with the rich tradition of the natural law. Indeed, More was a thoughtful adherent to the natural law long espoused by his Church. Harkening back to Thomas Aquinas, More valued the principle that there existed an objective natural law which is inscribed on the human heart and known by the human mind.¹¹ He knew that that human law made by kings and parliaments should be molded by this natural law, for it would keep in check those human appetites that betray the common good and good public order when the subjectivity of “foolish fantasy” rather than the objectivity of

⁵ Aquinas, *supra* note 4, II-II, Q. 58, art. 1.

⁶ When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, He reminded them to “forgive us our debts, as we have also forgiven our debtors.” Matthew 6:12.

⁷ Aquinas, *supra* note 4, at IIa-IIae, Q. 50, art. 2.

⁸ See, MacIntyre, *supra* note 3, pp. 117-18.

⁹ Gerard B. Wegemer and Stephen W. Smith, *A Thomas More Source Book*, (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C.), p. xxvi

¹⁰ Will Roper, *The Life of Sir Thomas More*, (Center for Thomas More Studies: 2003), p. 24

¹¹ *Complete Works of St. Thomas More*, Dialogue Concerning Heresies, Volume 6, Part I, (New Haven: Yale University Press), p. 141.

right reason directs the course of law making.

Knowing that More linked the virtue of justice with other virtues, let me now turn to the virtue of prudence. Upon becoming Speaker of the House of Commons, More realized that he had to advance the protection of its members in speaking their minds without having to fear about reprisals from the king or the Lord Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey. More offered his counsel to King Henry on the subject in a way that would incline both the king and Wolsey to see that the ability of the Parliamentarians to speak freely would enhance rather than hinder the king and the chancellor in accomplishing their respective goals for the betterment of the realm.¹² It seemed that while this measure displeased Wolsey, the king found wisdom and talent in his friend More—at least for the time being.

Of course, a growing test of More's prudence was King Henry's emerging plan to leave his wife Catherine and marry Anne Boleyn. Knowing the king had respect for scriptural authority,

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More initially took the course of relying on Biblical authority to demonstrate why the king could not put aside Queen Catherine for Anne Boleyn or, for that matter, any other woman. As Henry's sexual appetite for a woman not his wife increased, More found himself dealing with Master Secretary Thomas Cromwell, upon whom the king was demonstrating an expanded favor. After More's resignation from the chancellorship, Cromwell paid a visit to Sir Thomas at his home in Chelsea. It seems that the visit was prompted in part by Cromwell's desire to obtain advice on how to deal with the king. More offered his prudent counsel, and in doing so More argued that Cromwell should tell the king what he ought to do but never tell him what he is able to do. As Roper says of More: “for if a lion knew his own strength, hard were it for any man to rule him.”¹³

It seems unlikely that Cromwell followed More's advice. When the king finally put Queen Catherine aside and married Anne Boleyn, More kept his prudential distance and minded his prudential tongue. As More prudentially suggested to Roper, “God give grace, son, that these matters within a while be not confirmed with oaths.”¹⁴ Of course, it was an oath that would prove to be More's end.

Earlier in his career long before his persecution was on the horizon, More acknowledged that prudence and discretion were not excuses to avoid the responsibilities of citizenship. As he said in *Utopia*, “You must not abandon the ship in a storm because you cannot control the winds...¹⁵ What you cannot turn to good, you must at least make as little as bad as you can.”¹⁶ More did not abandon the ship as the storm's turbulence increased.

One more illustration of his prudential nature must be offered here. In May of 1535, just weeks before his execution, he wrote to his beloved daughter Margaret from his cell in the Tower relaying to her the account of one of his last interrogations.¹⁷ When pressed once again about his conscience and silence regarding the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn, More offered these prudential thoughts:

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¹² Roper, *supra* note 13, pp. 8-10.

¹³ *Id.*, pp. 32-33.

¹⁴ *Id.*, p. 33.

¹⁵ Complete Works of St. Thomas More, *supra* note 14, *Utopia*, Volume 4, p. 99.

¹⁶ *Id.*, p. 101.

¹⁷ Thomas More: Selected Letters, (New Haven: Yale University Press), pp. 246-8.

THE TREE OF LIFE

JOHN J. FLYNN III

My wife, Susanne, and I were in France in May of 2009, when we made a pilgrimage side-trip to Lisieux, where our favorite saint, Therese, lived from the time she was four to the time of her death of tuberculosis at a Carmelite monastery, at the age of 24.

On our way out of the great basilica built in her honor, a salesperson suggested that we take the time to visit the local cemetery, where Therese was first buried (her remains are now kept for devotional purposes in a room adjacent to the sanctuary of the monastery chapel), and where her aunt and uncle are buried still, along

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THE NEXT DAY I REALIZED THAT I HAD ENCOUNTERED THERE ANOTHER DEATH ... THE DEAD CHRIST.

with a number of Carmelite sisters. This unplanned detour, I realized later, may have been the whole point of our trip.

The cemetery is built on a hillside, terraced and very large. If you do not know where the Carmelite burial plot is located, there is little or no hope of finding it. We found the plot only because we had a photograph to guide us. In fact, we discovered later that there is a sign near the entrance

that identifies the location of the plot, but the sign is so obscurely located that a map is needed to find the sign.

The presence of death (as it were) at the Lisieux cemetery is overwhelming. It is not only the “residents” who are dead; the cemetery itself has died, and died a long time ago, from the look of it. There appear to be caretaker’s quarters, but they are long since unoccupied, or seemed so at the time of our visit. The tombs and markers of the cemetery are broken, crooked and dilapidated. The ground is dry, and all the vegetation dead. At one point during our visit it struck me that only a power beyond all understanding could overcome the power laid before our eyes, the power of death.

We visited the Carmelite plot, said some prayers there, and then made our way back to our hotel. We both seemed a bit dazed by the experience.



It was not until the next day I realized that I had encountered there another death, of which I was not then fully aware: the dead Christ. He too had died, and had entered fully the world of death, in all of its totality and finality, with all of its power.

But during my reflection on the reality of the crucified and dead Christ, a word came to mind. The word, I was surprised, was not “death,” but “life,” and the cemetery where I had stood, at least in this meditation, was termed “the garden,” a word that persisted no matter how strange it seemed to me in that context.

That Jesus is life is an idea neither strange nor new, but the equation of the cemetery with a garden made no sense whatever to me. These ideas and images persisted for several days during later reflections and meditations on the experience; the logic of the “garden” soon became clear: the cemetery was the Garden because of the presence of the crucified Christ, who is, as many others have noted before, the Tree of Life, the very tree referred to in the creation story. Now, however, the way to the Tree is barred by neither a cherubim nor a sword of fire.

The death of Christ, unlike any other death in human history, was a life-bearing death, to which we give witness with the apostles at Easter, and the price paid thereby has cleared the way for us to approach at Communion the Tree of Life, and eat of its fruit. ♦

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

I give no man occasion to hold any one point or the other, nor never gave any man advise or counsel therein one way or other. And for conclusion I could no further go, whatsoever pain should come thereof. I am, said I, the king's true faithful subject and daily bedesman and pray for his Highness and all his and all the realm. I do nobody harm, I think none harm, but wish everybody good. And if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith, I long not to live... And therefore my poor body is at the King's pleasure; would God my death might do him good.¹⁸

Courage enabled More to confide these matters, and this virtue prepared him to deal with false accusations that would accelerate his encounter with God. As Will Roper recognized, his father-in-law anticipated problems with the king and other officers of the state, yet, More would not be “deflowered” and compromised on his principles—he would be prudent, but he would not concede his foundational principles.¹⁹ If need be, he would resign from office quietly rather than contribute to state decisions that he could neither support nor justify.²⁰ And this is precisely what Thomas More did. After his resignation and retirement from public life, More encountered pressure from those with whom he had worked in the past and who now wished to please the king by molding the minds of all Englishmen, including Thomas More, in a manner that would reflect unanimity of opinion regarding the king's divorce and remarriage. Henry's England had become a totalitarian state—a place dangerous to all but especially to the virtuous. A well-formed conscience, as

the product of virtue, prepared him for what followed.

When it was suggested to More by his former associates that he was responsible for the text authored by the king, *The Assertion of the Seven Sacraments*, for which the king received the title Defender of the Faith, More would not be manipulated or intimidated. As he said, “these terrors be arguments for children, and not for me.”²¹ When these fabrications were intensified, More remained a bulwark retorting with sound judgment and fact. This is where the Duke of Norfolk came to test Thomas More, his virtue, and his conscience.

The duke impressed upon More in a meeting between old friends that it was unwise to displease the king for *indignatio principis mors est*—the indignation of the prince is death.²² Soon many high ranking clerics and officials were called to Westminster to swear the oath required by the Act of Supremacy. At the same time, More was summoned to Lambeth Palace to do the same. It became apparent that pressure was being placed on highly visible members of the commonwealth to accede to the king's demands—or else. More related these tactics in his letters to his daughter Margaret that he wrote from prison. Knowing that these letters could have been easily intercepted, More remained tactful but also steadfast—it took an extraordinary measure of virtue and conscience to say what others might not. More knew the danger involved in proceeding with the course he charted because he was aware that he was one of the very few, with the exception of Bishop John Fisher who also died on the scaffold, to refuse to concede and swear by the oath.

In spite of the pressure, the suggestions, and the outright threats, More was resolved and did not concede that which he could not. When the

last few steps were made and the final breaths were taken, it was virtue and conscience that enabled More to tell the lieutenant of the Tower as they approach the scaffold, “I pray you, Master Lieutenant, see me safe up, and for my coming down, let me shift for myself.” It was virtue and conscience that enabled him to stand fast in his principled opposition to the totalitarian movement overwhelming England. It was this same synthesis that enabled More to muster words knowing that his mortal life had but a few moments left. But the virtue and well-formed conscience he exercised and displayed could not have been possible without a comprehensive understanding of the nature and dignity of the human person and his relation to society and to the state and to the king.

The wisdom he sought and received from God cultivated his soul. More saw that a serene disposition contributed

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to the nurturing of the clear-sighted mind, which in turn made a person disposed to spiritual pleasure.²³ Indeed, this cultivation would do things for More in his final months. First it would provide a sense of calm in the political and social tempest consuming More's contemporaries. Second, it enabled him to meet those who challenged him

¹⁸ *Id.*, pp. 247-8.

¹⁹ Roper, *supra* note 13, pp. 33-34.

²⁰ *Id.*, p. 34.

²¹ *Id.*, p. 38.

²² *Id.*, p. 41.

²³ Complete Works of St. Thomas More, *supra* note 14, The Last Things, Volume 1, pp. 132.

in carefully chosen words that would deflect the parry of those who wished ill of him.

And what does Thomas More have to offer us in the early twenty-first century? The qualities Thomas More possessed can be duplicated in our lives. This last point raises the question about the role of morality in human life. Another way of framing the issue is to determine the extent to which legal reasoning exercised is only a technical function that is pursued the same ways by the non-virtuous lawyer as well as the virtuous. Another set of questions surfaces: is it important to consider the role which moral evaluation plays in the search and implementation of justice? Must moral considerations play a role in the reasoning process of the lawyer as he or she seeks justice? The question takes on further significance as one ponders the statement made by Robert George: “Laws cannot make men moral. Only men can do that; and they can do it only by freely choosing to do the morally right thing for the right reason.”²⁴

As a conscientious person, the virtuous lawyer considers that he or she must be called to participate in difficult cases—like Thomas More—which defy easy solution. The virtuous lawyer is convinced that it is precisely in the hard cases where moral reasoning is often necessary to reach justice. Thomas More understood this well. The search for objective moral truth is vital to deciding hard cases—even those cases which may decide one’s own fate—because it is constitutive of ascertaining what is the good to be achieved and what is the evil to be avoided, to borrow from Thomas Aquinas’s first principle of the law. This connection between legal and moral reasoning becomes evident when the virtuous lawyer discovers that identification of the moral is rationally determined.

This nexus is manifested in those

legal systems which aspire to just decisions. The virtuous lawyer searches for a clearer presentation of just how the moral and the legal come together in the legal reasoning that must be the necessary backbone of the exercise of the legal and judicial processes. This distinction suggests that morality is a background consideration which lawyers should resort to as a function of being rational agents. As one thinks about resolution of a legal dispute, human reflection will engage a variety of values, some of which are moral.

But the skeptic—such as Oliver Wendell Holmes—may raise objections to the argument that there is a nexus between legal and moral reasoning. If one questions the nexus and argues that the law is independent from moral reasoning, can the argument be expanded to demonstrate that most legal cases involving disputes between people can be decided without any need for moral reasoning? The virtuous person answers this question in the negative. The technical considerations which insulate some aspects of legal reasoning from moral evaluation cannot be applied to the substantive issues of human conflict which emerge in the disputes that are at the core of legal cases. Otherwise, this would lead to a mechanical jurisprudence which is ill-suited for resolving these difficult issues where moral reasoning is essential. In these cases, the facts, the equity of the parties’ positions, and

other relevant considerations would be overshadowed and perhaps even eliminated by this mechanical approach to legal reasoning. The conflict about the meaning of the law in each case is usually not a disagreement between illogical or irrational persons, but rather is between rational and logical ones.

The virtuous lawyer who possesses and exercises the well-formed conscience sees that the law itself

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does not contain an internal mechanism that automatically resolves the disagreement between these rational agents. But the law has been established by people as the body

of general rules to guide and regulate how they live together. Consequently, the virtuous person must expand the reasoning about the meaning of the law in such cases, and reliance on background moral considerations essential to how these people can restore the ability to live in right relationship with one another may be necessary for just resolution of interpersonal disputes.

²⁴ Robert George, *Making Men Moral: Civil Liberties and Public Morality*, p. 1 (1993).

This was Thomas More’s method of proceeding.

Ultimately, the virtuous lawyer sees that legal and moral reasoning are not separate enterprises. While some legal reasoning is not based on moral considerations (particularly when the pertinent issues focus on technical matters such as general procedure), this does not automatically lead to the conclusion that legal reasoning is impervious to moral reasoning. Even rules of procedure and their application trigger moral considerations—e.g., should a lawyer use the discovery process to wear the other litigant down? Although moral reasoning need not permeate the entire process of legal reasoning, neither is it completely absent from the process. A strict separation of law and morals is a doctrine which has little bearing on the virtuous lawyer’s contribution to the legal process. Especially in those difficult cases where reasonable people credibly argue conflicting understandings about the meaning of the law, the virtuous lawyer concludes that what clarifies the meaning of the law in such a context is the background consideration of its moral justification.

While reasonable people, including

reasonable lawyers, may dispute what is the particular moral justification reinforcing the meaning of the law, there is considerably less disagreement that it is a moral justification which underlies our understanding of the law and the legal reasoning which supplies that understanding in hard cases. But when we get to the hardest of cases and the moral and virtuous lawyer seems to be boxed in by what the law demands, must the virtuous lawyer disobey the law in order to remain virtuous? This seems to have been the quandary of Thomas More.

The virtuous lawyer has a special task in working with the laws and legal institutions designed to protect the individual as well as the community from the evils which human beings direct toward one another. The work of the virtuous lawyer is especially relevant to safeguarding against such evils and to ensuring that the good prevails as Jacques Maritain exhorted in his *The Person and the Common Good*.²⁵

In this day when difficult issues confront and test the legal process, lawyers are faced with the vital task of helping reach decisions that resolve conflicts. This may well be the key to the role of the virtuous lawyer as the

life and death of Thomas More testify. By assessing what sort of lawyer the profession needs today, consideration of and appropriation from virtues help a good deal. If the lawyers who are crucial to the resolution of cases are not guided by achieving just ends but rather on some predictable political result, then the goal of justice is compromised. The virtues of justice, prudence, courage, and wisdom and the well-formed conscience that can follow tell us little about how a lawyer will contribute to the determination of a specific case. On the other hand, they do tell us a good deal about the kind of person the lawyer is and how we, as members of both the profession and society, get to the just end for individuals as well as the public good. Thomas More has shown us the way to do precisely this.

Some may say that his life in this world came to a premature end as a result. Indeed, there is truth in this claim. But we need to remind ourselves and those who assert this view that More’s life eternal is likely all the better for the virtue he lived and the well-formed conscience he practiced. ♦

²⁵ P. 103.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
April	Wed, April 20	Andrew Zepeda on “He Became a Curse for Me: Understanding the Temptation of Christ”	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen 14661 Franklin, #150 (entrance at rear of building) Tustin, California
May	Wed, May 18	Lila Rose, president of pro-life group Live Action, on our Blessed Mother	Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen (same as above)

Q&A: NEW MARIAN APPARITION?

HUGH BARBOUR, O. PRAEM

Question: I recently read that a bishop in Wisconsin gave church approval to some apparitions of the Blessed Mother which occurred in his diocese in the 19th century. What does this mean? I sometimes get mailings which claim that the Pope and the bishops have been disobedient to Our Lady's requests at Fatima. Now they approved those apparitions too, so why would they ignore them?

Answer: Bishop Ricken of Green Bay, Wisconsin did approve, after a two year historical inquiry the apparitions of Our Lady of Good Help which occurred in 1859 to a young woman named Adele Brise. You can visit the website of the shrine there and find the whole story along with the bishop's decree: www.shrineofourladyofgoodhelp.com.

This is the only apparition ever approved in the United States, and so its approval must be a source of joy for the Catholics of our land.



**Bishop David Ricken of
Green Bay, Wis.**

What this means is quite simply that the claims of the one who had the apparitions are worthy of human faith because they do not contradict any truth which we must believe by divine and Catholic faith, and in addition that the moral life and conduct of the seer was one of a truthful, credible witness, and not of a troubled or hysterical person or a fraud. Thus Catholics may laudably practice the devotion and attend to the messages of

the apparitions with the assurance that their shepherds have judged them to be helpful, orthodox, and credible.

Shrines where the faithful go on pilgrimage are great centers of witness to the Christian faith in the world, and are the occasions of many spiritual benefits, as the whole of Christian history can attest. Even today the place in Europe which has the largest number of visitors is by far the shrine of Our Lady



Looking north at the stations of the cross at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help in New Franken, Wis. More information about the shrine can be found by visiting www.shrineofourladyofgoodhelp.com.

at Lourdes, which far outstrips Paris or London or Rome as a destination.

Even so, when some complain that the Pope or the bishops are “not obeying” Our Lady because of something she has said in an apparition we have to be very skeptical indeed, since it is not the Pope and bishops who must obey apparitions, but rather the apparitions which must be submitted to the hierarchy for judgment. Our Lord told St. Faustina that she should obey her confessor and superiors rather than Him in an apparition, if what He told her to do was not what they told her to do.

Some apparitions are very popular, even though the bishop of the seer or seers has not approved or even has forbidden the devotion. Obedience to one's shepherds would be the best sign that the seers are moved by the Holy Spirit and not by another spirit.

Even in the case of some approved apparitions the Church has approved some of the seers' words, but not others, as in the case of the apparitions of Our Lady of La Salette. In short, the apparitions which God has sent to His Church are for confirming our faith in the things He has revealed in His Son and in the teaching of the Church found in the Sacred Scriptures and Tradition. Apparitions are never ends in themselves. ♦

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human toll? Human degradation continues unabated on a scale that now tallies tens of millions in the form of abortion, pornography, exploitative sexuality, the warehousing of the infirm and a smothering materialism which leaves little room for “non-productive” members of a society. Self-esteem is now the hollow substitute for intrinsic human dignity. For the new atheist, humanity must now be earned.

Absent the fragile protection noted by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration “that all men are created, equal, and endowed by their Creator, with certain inalienable rights,” what is to stop the strong and cold winds of utilitarianism from sweeping up the most helpless among us? That which Abraham Lincoln noted as a “proposition” at Gettysburg is being put to serious question in the world today. St. Thomas More might note that bulwark of our American freedom is on the verge of collapse, because the divine ideal of the Declaration is being replaced with a mediocre, insidious notion.

There can be little doubt that the New Atheism movement’s drive toward so-called secularism, notwithstanding its ostensibly benign motives, is rapidly leading to a brutal society. Our country’s founding ideals recognize

the principle that each person’s human dignity exists not by reason of consensus, but by fiat of an objective reality, which the founders embraced as axiomatic. We fought a bloody civil war in the ongoing pursuit of that Truth. The war continues. Our Founding Fathers pledged upon their belief that we are each created with dignity distinct from our utility, our beauty, and our eco-threatening CO₂ output. Such dignity has been until recently the object of our common, self-sacrificing defense.

But our society objects to this concept of human dignity because mainstream academia has determined that there cannot be God. He does not exist, and if He does exist, God is unworthy of attention because He presides over tsunamis, predators, catastrophes, disease, tyrants and religious strife, with banal equanimity. At worst, He is a mean God.

It occurs to me in noting this observation, that every human person—with a couple of notable exceptions—is destined to die.

One might even say that each such moment of existence is a gift, perhaps? Conversely, one might conclude from the mysterious craziness of the natural world which appears so arbitrary, that the Gift Giver is mean at times. But one might also conclude that he who gives

the gift might know best; that it might not be so important how or when or why one dies, but how one lives; how one used those precious seconds which seemed inexhaustible but which were in reality, so fleeting!

And so, it becomes a choice of perspective. Which choice infuses a human life with the greatest rationale for good, for dignity, for benevolent consequence, for compassionate courage?

We are blessed with the appreciation that each breath, each heart beat, each moment of our human experience is an incredible gift from a benevolent God. We are called upon to fill that portion of life allotted to us with love, love which is fulfilling and transcendent; a love which is illogical foolishness to those whose only God is themselves. It is a truly daunting—but also exciting—task to spread the good news of the eternal significance of our short physical lives to this 21st century culture (See Bede Jarrett OP, *No Abiding City*).

How do we explain to a hedonistic narcissist how to pour oneself out like a libation for others without prospect of any personal gain? We return full circle to the Cross.

God is not mean because we die. He is infinitely good because we don’t. ♦

APRIL MEETING

ANDREW ZEPEDA: “HE WAS MADE A CURSE FOR US”; SEEKING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE NARRATIVES OF THE TEMPTATION OF CHRIST

The early Fathers called the Temptation “the little passion.” This talk is an effort to make narrative sense of what Frank Sheed called “the duel in the desert” and to understand why the Temptation is essential to comprehending the depth of the saving condescension of the Son. Zepeda will offer hypotheses on why St. Matthew’s and St. Luke’s accounts of the three temptations follow a different order.

Andrew Zepeda is a Los Angeles lawyer who has returned to his business and real estate litigation career after a five-year “sabbatical” serving as general counsel for a California homebuilding and land development company. He is associated with The Alvarez Firm in Calabasas and is “of counsel” to Lurie, Zepeda, Schmalz & Hogan in Beverly Hills. Andy is very involved with Thomas Aquinas College from which he graduated in 1979. He presently serves on its Board of Governors and a number of his and his wife Anita’s 13 children have matriculated there. Sometime after graduating from Notre Dame Law School, he became entranced with the study of Scripture. He likes to think his years of lawyering give him some license to be an amateur exegete. He is also the President of the Board of Directors of St. Monica Academy, an independent Catholic grammar and high school in Pasadena. ♦