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ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

APRIL 2013

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 4

Juice Plus
and Holiness
GREGORY WEILER



Nobilis Forma
JOHN J. FLYNN III



April Lunch
Speaker
JAMES A. SONNE



JUICE PLUS AND HOLINESS

GREGORY N. WEILER

As I gobbled down my Juice Plus pills (Vitamin C and Omega 3 capsules) this morning, it occurred to me how silly I was. Not that being healthy is silly—obviously, we should be good stewards with our bodies. But what made me smile was that I was up early to attend daily Mass at Serra Chapel where I was going to be really fed.

I mean Juice Plus is fine, but we have the opportunity to partake of the Bread of Life, something supernatural, something that will lead us to eternal life. Not just a few more years of health during this our pilgrimage, but the real deal—the incarnate person of Christ Himself.

Just last week we celebrated the Annunciation, the incarnation of God Himself as man. Incarnation was the necessary precondition to the Cross and Resurrection, and the promise of ours. Every day we get to participate in something incredible, God becoming man, giving Himself to us on the Cross, and us participating in that grand adoption, becoming divinized, God’s adopted sons and daughters.

You want to talk about “empowerment”? You want to talk about “being all you can be”? We should think seriously, intentionally, about our real health, the health of our souls, and where we will spend eternity. But even keeping eternity in mind, we know that the “kingdom of God is at hand” and that we should carry that kingdom here and now into the legal profession. PAX - GNW



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The St. Thomas More Society of Orange County is an independent organization sponsored by lawyers and judges who are practicing members of the Roman Catholic Church.

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IDEALS OF ST. THOMAS MORE

The legal profession is a high calling with corresponding responsibilities to society. The principal objective of every lawyer is to promote and seek justice. Catholic Lawyers pursue the truth in both their spiritual and professional lives. The duty of a Catholic lawyer is to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, His Church and its teachings at all times despite the personal consequences.

THE OBJECTIVES OF STMS

- 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.

MEMBERSHIP IN STMS

- 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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NOBILIS FORMA

JOHN J. FLYNN III

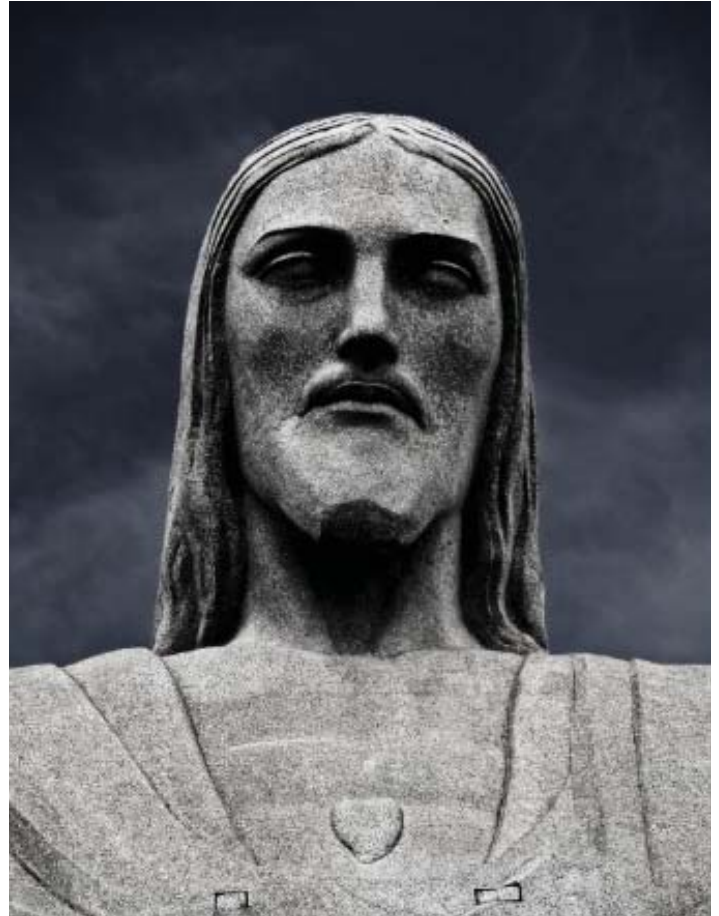
What do we mean by renewal? The word is at least somewhat suggestive of new things. Renewal is not about innovation, however, or merely about the externalities or mechanics of faith. Neither is renewal about the past. Renewal is about the Spirit, the new release of spiritual energies that have in some way perhaps been impeded, the uncovering of truths perhaps obscured.

Benedict XVI, while still writing as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, proposed a model for conceptualizing Church renewal that compares it to precisely this revelation of the obscure:

With the eye of the artist, Michelangelo already saw in the stone that lay before him the pure image that, hidden within, was simply waiting to be uncovered. The artist's only task—so it seemed to him—was to remove what covered the statue. Michelangelo considered the proper activity of the artist to be an act of uncovering, of releasing—not of making.

The same conception, applied to anthropology in general, is found in Saint Bonaventure, who explains the path by which man truly becomes himself with the help of the likeness of the sculptor. The sculptor, says the great Franciscan theologian, does not make anything, rather his work is “ablatio”—the removal of what is not really part of the sculpture. In this way, that is, by means of ablatio, the nobilis forma—the noble form—takes shape. In the same way, continues Bonaventure, man, in order that God's image may shine radiantly in him, must first and foremost receive the purification whereby the divine Sculptor frees him from that dross that conceals the authentic figure of his being, making him appear to be nothing more than a stone block, whereas the divine form dwells in him.

Rightly understood, this image contains the prototypical model of Church reform. The Church will constantly have need of human constructions to help her speak and act in the era in which she finds herself. Ecclesiastical institutions and juridical organizations are not intrinsically evil; on the contrary, to a certain degree they are simply necessary and indispensable. But they become obsolete; they risk setting themselves up as the essence of the Church and thus prevent us from seeing through to what is truly essential. This is why they must always be dismantled



again, like scaffolding that has outlived its necessity. Reform is ever-renewed ablatio—removal, whose purpose is to allow the nobilis forma, the countenance of the bride, and with it the Bridegroom himself, the living Lord, to appear.

(Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1996), 140-142, footnotes omitted, emphasis in original.)

But applied to the progress of the individual soul, the logic of Benedict's conceptual model suggests an entirely new set of daunting considerations:

Jesus' summons to the rich young man was calling him to die, because only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact every command of Jesus is a call to die, with all our affections and lusts. But we do not want to die and therefore Jesus Christ and his call are necessarily our death as well as our life. The call to discipleship, the baptism in the name of Jesus Christ means both death and life. The call of Christ, his baptism, sets the Christian in the middle of the daily arena against sin and the devil. Every day he encounters new temptations, and every day he must

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

NOBILIS FORMA

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

suffer anew for Jesus Christ's sake. The wounds and scars he receives in the fray are living tokens of this participation in the cross of his Lord. But there is another kind of suffering and shame which the Christian is not spared. While it is true that only the sufferings of Christ are a means of atonement, yet since he has suffered for and borne the sins of the whole world and shares with his disciples the fruits of his passion, the Christian also has to undergo temptation, he too has to bear the sins of others; he too must bear their shame and be driven like a scapegoat from the gate of the city. But he would certainly break down under this burden, but for the support of him who bore the sins of all. The passion of Christ strengthens him to overcome the sins of others by forgiving them. He becomes the bearer of other men's burdens—"Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6.2). As Christ bears our burdens, so ought we to bear the burdens of our fellow-men. The law of Christ, which it is our duty to fulfil, is the bearing of the cross. My brother's burden which I must bear is not only his outward lot,

his natural characteristics and gifts, but quite literally his sin. And the only way to bear that sin is by forgiving it in the power of the cross of Christ in which I now share. Thus the call to follow Christ always means a call to share the work of forgiving men their sins. Forgiveness is the Christlike suffering which it is the Christian's duty to bear.

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship* (New York:Touchstone, 1995), 88-91.)

The key to renewal is conversion, rightly understood, a kind of crucifixion: of the will, of the flesh, of the emotional and ideological predilections, habits and comforts that can obscure the face of Christ, the revelation of divine love. Conversion is a dark night, so-called, paradoxically, because the influx of divine light is perceived by the soul as pain, as the flesh and emotions rebel against the influx of light, like eyes accustomed to darkness blinded by the sun. We experience conversion as a kind of death, but a death that bears and reveals life anew (John 12:24).

There is nothing in the content of the faith, down to the smallest detail, in need of the slightest alteration. What we need are new mentalities, vocabularies and strategies for the propagation of the faith, for evangelization, for the fulfillment of our missionary vocation. Our attachment to old ways of living the faith, the ways of comfort, self-

congratulations and scorn for the secular world, can only obscure the intrinsic beauty of the faith, which, when fully revealed, cannot fail to attract souls who seek truth. Only the pain of conversion can destroy the attachments that in various ways conceal the face of the Lord.

The Nobilis Forma is Christ. Our vocation as Christians is to love the world with his heart, not with our

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own, and to present to the world, unobscured, his face. We move neither backward nor forward, into the past nor into the future, but Christward, the only measure of our progress, and the object of true renewal. ♦

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
April	Wed., April 17, 12:00 p.m.	Lunch meeting featuring James A. Sonne, Esq., speaking on “Dignitatis Humanae in Contemporary American Law.”	Jilio Ryan 14661 Franklin, #150 Tustin, California jilioryan.com
	Sun., April 28, 8:30-11:30 a.m.	Come to help cook and serve breakfast to the homeless of the community at Isaiah House. www.occatholicworker.org	Isaiah House 316 S. Cypress Avenue Santa Ana, CA 92701 (714) 835-6304

APRIL LUNCH MEETING

JAMES A. SONNE: DIGNITATIS HUMANAE IN CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN LAW

Almost a half-century ago, the Second Vatican Council observed that religious liberty is a natural and universal human right belonging to all people. James A. Sonne, director of the nation’s only religious liberty clinic at Stanford Law School, will explore whether American law reflects the vision set forth in *Dignitatis Humanae* and what challenges presently face believers and the lawyers who represent them.

Jim Sonne joined Stanford Law School in 2012 to direct the new Religious Liberty Clinic of the Mills Legal Clinic, the only one of its kind in the country. Sonne is an experienced teacher and practitioner, with expertise in law and religion issues—particularly in the workplace. He previously served as an associate professor of law at Ave Maria School of Law, as a



labor and employment lawyer for McGuireWoods LLP, and as an appellate lawyer for Horvitz & Levy LLP. Sonne received his BA with honors from Duke University and his JD with honors from Harvard Law School. He is a former law clerk to Judge Edith Brown Clement of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.