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ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

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Wrestling with
God During Lent
GREGORY WEILER



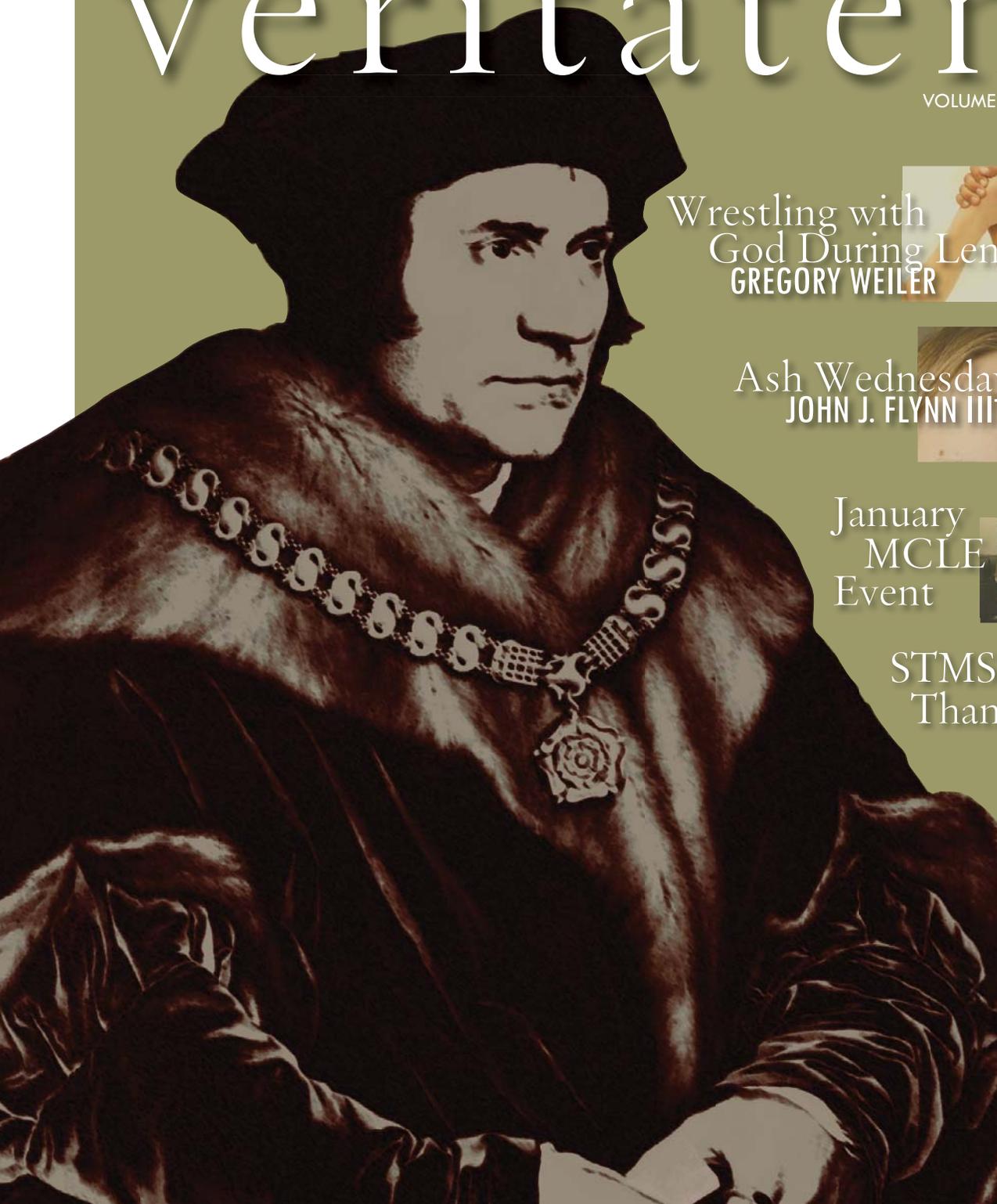
Ash Wednesday
JOHN J. FLYNN III



January
MCLE
Event



STMS
Thanks B16



WRESTLING WITH GOD DURING LENT

GREGORY N. WEILER

Me: "Take my will Lord. Take it. I'm done with it—I choose you, okay? You are my God, I say yes. Done. Finished."

Please take over. This 'free will' you gave me is just too heavy a burden. I don't want it anymore, I don't have the strength, it is just too heavy for me."



God: "Greg - You have the power to become a child of God." (John 1)

Me: "But God, the power is too awesome, too terrible a responsibility for me. Can't you just let me exercise it once and for all? Accept my fiat now and take my free will from me for I can't be trusted with it—this power to NOT become your child."

God: "It's not a moment I want Greg."

Me: "A lifetime of choosing you? Really?"

God: "My grace is sufficient."

Grow up Greg. I made you for bigger things than whining about the power I grant you (the ETERNITY WITH ME I FREELY OFFER). Would you rather be a stone? No, I simply love you too much to make you a stone, a turnip.

And if I love you that much, will I let you go?"

Me: "But wait a minute. You tell us that we all 'have the power' to become your adopted children, then at the same time you tell us that 'without you we can do nothing.' Is it you or me? Lord, lawyers don't do well with paradoxes and mysteries which can't be put in logical boxes."

God: "Oy Vey!"

My Lenten journey, my lifetime journey, is summed up in the mystery of faith: "Father take this cup from me" ("I don't want the power"), but not my will but thine be done ("I will be a big boy and will exercise your gift, deny myself, take up my cross and follow").

Lent is a good season for wrestling with God, or better yet, resting in Him. ♦

ad.
veritatem

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

EDITOR@STTHOMASMORE.NET

ASH WEDNESDAY

JOHN J. FLYNN III

Graham Greene limned the interplay of sin and grace so skillfully in his novels that the great Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar reportedly said that Greene, a Catholic himself, had created a mystique of sin. But there was nothing venerable or attractive about sin in Greene's novels; all the sin is pitiable, and the acts and events overhung by a cloud of futility, however thinly lined the cloud with the silver of vague hope. Greene was a brilliant stylist, one of the best of the 20th Century, though his mastery of style is not often enough acknowledged. One of his contemporaries, another Catholic, the novelist Evelyn Waugh, said Greene really had no style at all, a somewhat ironic assessment given Greene's superiority, as between them, as a stylist. You can judge for yourself: Here is Greene's description of an Ash Wednesday in Havana, Cuba, many decades ago, the explicitly religious a single iron thread in the tapestry of the whole perfectly rendered scene:

He walked home. The long city lay spread along the open Atlantic; waves broke over the Avenida de Maceo and misted the windscreens of cars. The pink, grey, yellow pillars of what had once been the aristocratic quarter were eroded like rocks; an ancient coat of arms, smudged and featureless, was set over the doorway of a shabby hotel, and the shutters of a night-club were varnished in bright crude colours to protect them from the wet and salt of the sea. In the west the steel skyscrapers of the new town rose higher than lighthouses into the clear February sky. It was a city to visit, not a city to live in, but it was the city where Wormold had first fallen in love and he was held to it as though to the scene of a disaster. Time gives poetry



to a battlefield, and perhaps Milly resembled a little the flower on an old rampart where an attack had been repulsed with heavy loss many years ago. Women passed him in the street marked on the forehead with ashes as though they had come into the sunlight from underground. He remembered that it was Ash Wednesday. (*Our Man in Havana*, 1958.)

There is no complementarity of sin and grace. Sin is negation, a purely oppositional force, only to be overcome by grace, and neither harmonized nor synthesized with it. If Greene created a mystique of sin, have we not done something similar in the coining of such phrases as “felix culpa,” the idea that original sin is a “happy fault” because of the Redeemer it drew to earth? No, there is no mystique of sin in Greene's novels, inhabited by sinners half-blind, unable yet to find the One whose breath they breathe. Instead, the mystique, which undeniably fills the pages of his novels like an atmosphere, is the mystique of mercy, of compassion, and the hope of forgiveness. ♦

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
March	Wed., March 20, 12:00 p.m.	Board member Michael Altı will speak on Christian persecution.	Jilio Ryan 14661 Franklin, #150 Tustin, California jilioryan.com
	Sun., March 24, 8:30-11:30 a.m.	Come to help cook and serve breakfast to the homeless of the community at Isaiah House. www.ocatholicworker.org	Isaiah House 316 S. Cypress Avenue Santa Ana, CA 92701 (714) 835-6304

JANUARY MCLE EVENT



Thank You:
MCLE Provider: James L. Poth
 with Jones Day
Venue: Colleen Jilio with Jilio &
 Ryan Court Reporters
Organizing: Michael Alt
 and Lydia Duynstee
Speaker, and Set Up/Clean Up:
 Ron More
Speaker: Dave Belz
Speaker: Fr. Mata
Mass: Fr. Hugh
Venue Host: Colleen Jilio
Set Up/Clean Up: Bob Lamphar
Publicity, Set Up/Clean Up:
 Jim Doan

READING 12

... it is one's whole existence that becomes penitential ... (Blessed John Paul II)

The term and the very concept of penance are very complex. If we link penance with the metanoia which the Synoptics refer to, it means the inmost change of heart under the influence of the word of God and in the perspective of the Kingdom. But penance also means changing one's life in harmony with the change of heart, and in this sense doing penance is completed by bringing forth fruits worthy of penance: it is one's whole existence that becomes penitential, that is to say, directed towards a continuous striving for what is better. But doing penance is something authentic and

effective only if it is translated into deeds and acts of penance. In this sense, penance means, in the Christian theological and spiritual vocabulary, to lose his or her own life for Christ, as the only means of gaining it; an effort to put off the old man and put on the new; an effort to overcome in oneself what is of the flesh in order that what is spiritual may prevail; a continual effort to rise from the things of here below to the things of above, where Christ is. Penance is therefore a conversion that passes from the heart to deeds, and then to the Christian's whole life.

- John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, Reconciliatio et Paenitentia (1984), § 4.



THE ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY THANKS

POPE BENEDICT XVI

Remember John Wooden of UCLA? Who could follow? Well, we all thought the same of John Paul the great, didn't we? Who could follow the brilliance, vibrancy, holiness and charismatic discipleship of John Paul II? Would Benedict XVI be our Gene Bartow? The same Holy Spirit who will manage our upcoming conclave (a true reason to trust indeed) gave us the gift of Benedict the XVI. Certainly not the vibrant JP II of 1978, but our Holy Father B16 brought the same humble and prayerful holiness to us, the same theological genius, all that combined with the quiet courage of a lion. I can't imagine anyone else who could have assuaged our grief at losing John Paul II and taking the baton without losing a step in the New Evangelization. A pope who brought home the reality that the matrix, the indispensable condition of our Faith is our encounter, not with a philosophy, but with the person Jesus of Nazareth. Blessed are you, Lord, God of all creation, for through your goodness you gave us Benedict XVI.

GREGORY WEILER

"Pope John Paul II remained in office so that he might show us how to suffer and how to die. Pope Benedict XVI is leaving the Papal Office so that he might show us how to live in humble honesty." - Sister Mary Theresa ...

Dear Heavenly Father:

Thank you for the gracious and spiritual leadership of Pope Benedict XVI.

He has shown us theological brilliance at the same time he has exhibited great humility. May the whole world may be moved by his example.

Grant Your Servant Benedict and us the faithful Church, a perfect end, your holy presence, a blessed resurrection and life everlasting.

JULIE PALAFOX

Thank you for the very touching Sposi Novelli blessing you gave my husband and me on that sunny Wednesday in May 2012. You will always have a special place in our hearts.

ALMA MURRAY

Dear Holy Father:

Thank you so much for bringing my wife into the faith and for encouraging me to take mine seriously in large part due to Summorum Pontificum. We shall continue to pray for you always.

DONAL HANLEY