


Ad Veritatem

Volume 12 Issue 5

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

MAY 2007

A detailed portrait of Thomas More, the English philosopher, lawyer, diplomat, and statesman. He is depicted from the chest up, wearing a dark cap and a voluminous, fur-lined brown robe. A gold chain with a large, ornate pendant hangs around his neck. He is looking slightly to the right of the viewer with a serious expression. The background consists of a green, draped fabric.

*“More points out, however,
prosperity is not necessarily a
sign of favor. Prosperity hinders
conversion and causes
vices to increase.”*

Thomas More:
A Portrait of Courage

MAY MEETING:

WEDNESDAY MAY 16, 2007 NOON

SPEAKER: FR. ROBERT SCHOLLA, S.J., PH.D.

TOPIC: CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE - A JESUIT PERSPECTIVE

“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. ☩

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AD VERITATEM EDITOR
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MAY
MEETING

FR ROBERT SCHOLLA, S.J., PH.D.
**“CATHOLIC SOCIAL JUSTICE-
A JESUIT PERSPECTIVE”**

WHEN:
NOON
Wed. May 16th

WHERE:
First American
Title Ins. Co.
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FOR DIRECTIONS
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COST:
\$10 for lunch

Father Robert Scholla is currently the Chaplain at Loyola Law School as well as a Professor of Theology at Loyola Marymount University and Rector for the LMU Jesuit Community in Los Angeles. Father was a well-respected, admired and loved teacher at the University of Santa Clara from 1988 to 1996. Upon leaving Santa Clara, Father became the assistant rector at the Weston School of Theology in Cambridge, Massachusetts where he served to encourage 105 Jesuits, 70-80 of whom were preparing for ordination. Father Scholla has been a popular speaker at the St Thomas More Society annual MCLE classes in January of each year.

Father Scholla recently authored a law review article entitled “Fides Quaerens Iustitiam Socialem: A Jesuit Law School Perspective” which was published in the Spring 2004 edition of the Loyola of Los Angeles Law Review (37 Loy. L.A. L. Rev. 1209). Father’s presentation will center on his published article, copies of which will be distributed at the meeting.

For more information, please contact either
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STM MONTHLY MTGS:
3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:

JUNE 20
JULY 18
AUGUST 15
SEPTEMBER 19
OCTOBER 17 †

HOLD THE DATE:
Friday evening, August 31, 2007
SPECIAL DINNER MEETING
SPEAKER: RON RYCHLEK
THE DEFENSE OF POPE PIUS XI †

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HOW CAN I TRUST THE CLAIMS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH?

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

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAPLAIN



THE THRONE
OF ST PETER

Gian Lorenzo Bernini
(1657)

QUESTION: How can I trust the claims of the Catholic Church without knowing all her theology and without being able to justify some of the dark chapters in her history? How can I have an assurance that the Catholic Church is Christ's Church when there are so many facts and details I cannot know?

ANSWER: The question you ask has deep roots in a wider cultural problem that must be overcome. Many modern theologians, such as Karl Rahner, assert that no one can really master theology any more because the information to be digested is too great for one person, and that the Church can no longer make universal creeds or catechisms because of the complexity and diversity of both the world and academic disciplines. This assertion, however, is not true.

Since the time of the Protestant Reformation, many in the West have been afflicted by what the Holy Father calls "philosophies of suspicion." This means that the first question many people ask is not "What is this?" or "Is it true?" but, rather, "How can I know for sure?" Protestantism was born out of this attitude, a modernist and un-biblical approach to divinely revealed Truth. The whole thrust of Protestantism is to establish an unassailable personal authority to determine truth and to give the individual an absolute assurance of his salvation.

We've all heard the standard Evangelical Protestant questions: "Have you been saved?" and "If you died tonight, do you know if you would go to heaven?"

The problem is, these are the wrong questions to be asking. They are certainly not the questions Jesus and St. Paul and the other Apostles asked their hearers. The more crucial question is: "How do you know that what you believe is true?"

The normal, serene approach appropriate for human nature is to assume that knowledge, and knowledge of the truth, will lead to happiness and salvation. If one examines the Sacred Scriptures, those who have faith accept God's word in simplicity because they are used to accepting what is presented in a reasonable and authoritative way. They ask questions: "How can this be since I know not man?" "Can a man return to his mother's womb?" "Then who can be saved?" They ask such questions because they are reasonable and want explanations, not because they are driven by anxiety about their salvation. The biblical man knows that the truth will make him free and will lead him to salvation, so he seeks truth first trusting that happiness and salvation will follow: "Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life," said St. Peter just after our Lord pronounced the most unprovable and mysterious words he ever uttered, in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, words which Protestants cannot accept on their clear meaning. St. Peter professed the truth in the hope of salvation. He did not say first, "I am a sinner in need of a savior," but "Depart from me, I am a sinful man." First came the objective fact, the holiness of God and His truth, and only then the gift of salvation. Protestantism "poisons the well" by beginning with a doubt as to whether man can know any truth at all, and then resolving it with a "leap of faith" which cannot and must not be explained rationally. Catholicism assumes man's orientation toward the truth as part of his nature and presumes that the evidence, the testimony of the prophets and saints, their miracles and teachings, is sufficient to justify accepting the gift of faith which is offered to all by "the light which enlighteneth every man coming

NO MORE EXCUSES - CHRIST WANTS US TO SERVE!

BY CHRISTOPHER STAFFORD, ESQ.

Christ wants our hands. Following Christ means serving Him. (Matthew 25:31-46) Jean-Baptiste Chautard, a monk that God used to bring spiritual renewal to thousands, often said that listening to Christ requires listening to the needs of people. The more a follower of Christ has been blessed, the more ambitious that person should be in getting involved in large projects to serve others. With Christ as our model, perhaps a true measure of greatness in a man is how much he is able to do for others. In serving others, Mother Teresa offered the advice, "Before going to Calcutta to bring love to those that are dying, start with bringing love to your own family." But, do not stop there. By all means, look to see who Christ might want you to help far and abroad.

Taking the time to shoulder the cross of another often brings out the best in a man. In contrast to how going through something like a divorce will drag a person down, reaching out to help others will raise a person up. Sometimes, when a friend is going through a dark moment and is caught in a downward spiral, getting him or her to take time out to serve the spiritual and physical needs of others is just what that person needs to snap out of their own gloom.

An example of this can be seen in the life of one of the world's greatest musical composers, George Frideric Handel. If a friend of his would not have asked him to get involved in helping out an orphanage, history might not have ever known him. Handel, to the chagrin of his father, dropped out of law school after his first year. In music, he experienced some early success in Italy and in other European courts. He eventually opened up a musical academy in England. The Italian pieces he composed eventually lost their flavor in London. His academy started losing business and became a source of ever-greater financial loss. His musical pieces started flopping one after another. Handel sank into a depression. His creativity took a nosedive. In pure misery, he closed himself in during the day and started wandering the streets at night. He tried going to a relaxation spa in France. But, that did not help him snap out of it.

Then, one day his life changed when his friend told him about some orphans in Dublin that desperately needed help. They needed him. The orphans prayed to God. Surely, God looked to great people like Handel, who had immense talents and resources that could be used to help them out. Handel's friend asked him if he could get involved in a fundraiser. Handel was to write a piece and have it performed for the benefit of the orphans. His friend encouraged him to put his whole heart into it, and his friend suggested that he abandon Italian music and put this piece in English. Handel accepted Christ's call to help the orphans and, at that point, he became inspired. His music reached new heights. Handel himself returned to happiness. This piece, Handel's *Messiah*, became an instant success that did unspeakable good for the orphans through the money that it raised for them. It also landed Handel's name among the world's greatest musical composers.

This life is short, before eternity. We only have one life and we only have one chance to live it. As lawyers living in Southern California, we have been blessed tremendously. And, at the same time, we have been blessed with tremendous resources to help others. At the end of the movie *Schindler's List*, Oskar Schindler looked at his car and realized that he could have used its value to save many Jews. Then, do you remember how he looked at his Nazi pin made of gold and thought that he could have used it to spare the lives of maybe two Jews or at least one? Well, what about you? What about



**CHRIST CARRYING
THE CROSS**

El Greco

(1580s)

***If a friend of
Handel would
not have
asked him to
get involved in
helping out an
orphanage,
history might
not have ever
known him.***

**ALMS TO THE POOR***Martin Drolling*

(Date Unknown)

*(Continued from page 5) **No More Excuses***

your time? When you are in Heaven for eternity, do you want to be remembering a long history of your own failed opportunities to spare the lives of others, perhaps opportunities that you never even thought about? Or do you want to proudly be able to look back at your life on earth and see multitudes of lives that were changed for the better, perhaps who later touched others in the same way, due to you first responding to Christ's grace to sacrifice for them?

Coming back down to earth, you do not need to be a mystic to see ways to serve God through serving the spiritual and physical needs of others. You do not need to be a theologian to understand that God is calling you to serve others. And hopefully, you do not need to be enlightened from on high to understand that God is calling you, lawyer, personally to embark on projects as big if not bigger than you are worth.

If through God's grace you discover untapped potential to reach out to those that are praying to God for help, and you are looking to get involved right now before your mind wanders on, here are two possibilities among many. The St. Thomas More Society adopted the orphanage and seminary in Osogbo, Nigeria. To see what you can do to get involved contact Michael White at mjwhite@hfflp.com. Also, a group out of Our Lady Queen of Angels in Newport Beach, led by Lauren Peterson, Esq., have fully launched the building of an orphanage outside of Nairobi, Kenya. They also have clear ideas of what they are doing and how people can help. Please contact either lpeterson@metropolitanfin.com or go to www.acfusaonline.org. They have needs. Christ wants you! †



**THE
WRITINGS
OF
THOMAS
MORE**

MORE ON HELPING THE POOR

More quickly made himself at home in the village of Chelsea and its surrounding area. Never one to put on airs, he "very often...invited his poorer neighbors to his table." Before becoming Lord Chancellor, he often personally visited the poor, "helping them not with small gifts, but...as their need required." When his position made this impossible to continue, he sent "some of his household who would dispense his gifts faithfully to needy families, and especially to the sick and aged." Eventually, as we have seen, he rented a building to care for these villages, "providing for them at his own expense" and entrusting their care to his own children.....

The harvest that year (1529) was the first good one in quite some time, In fact, such a famine had developed that More had fed one hundred people a day, at his home, during the winter of 1528. Food had become so scare and, therefore, theft so prevalent that the government had resorted to punishment by hanging.

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

Gerard Wegemer

Pg 114-6 †

*(Continued from page 4) **Trusting the Catholic Church***

into the world." For those who need proof of the Christian faith by miracles, or insist on proof without miracles, St. Thomas Aquinas has this masterful, serene, and very Catholic advice:

"It is a well-known fact, related in pagan histories, that the whole world worshipped idols and persecuted the faith of Christ; yet now behold . . . the wise, the noble, the rich and the powerful have been converted at the words of a few simple poor men who preached Christ. Now was this a miracle or was it not? If it was, then you have what you asked for, a miracle. If you say that it was not a miracle, then I say you could not have a greater miracle than the conversion of the whole world without miracles, and we need to seek no further."

This miracle happens every day, all over the world. Ultimately, that is all any of us needs to know about the Catholic Church. †

FOLLOWING THE GOOD CONDUCTOR: *JESUS*

BY DWIGHT SMITH
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, ISAIAH HOUSE

There is a story that we have all heard about a mother who picks up an impossibly heavy car to free her child trapped beneath. We assure ourselves of the miraculous nature of this event, first, by asserting that such a thing is impossible, or at least we admit we can't explain how it was possible. We recall the frailty of human bone and tendon, and we compare them against the immense weight of a car. Impossible or not, however, we all believe it can happen. Although those of us who have been hoodwinked by "urban legends" are nevertheless positive that this is no legend - it's a fact: mothers have picked up cars up off their trapped kids. That miracle may or may not happen very often but miracles do happen when we respond to the Holy Spirit.

I want to tell you about a man who started not by lifting a car but merely lifting his car's trunk and ended up saving, by God's grace, the life of a little girl. The surprising fact is that this story of heroism actually happened!

Ron Wakefield heard about Isaiah House run by OC Catholic Worker at a retreat for Secular Franciscans in Malibu at which Leia and I gave a talk on "embracing the leper." Since we have so many homeless friends, I presumed that they intended that our talk would be about the homeless since they naturally fall into society's "leper" category. Leia, however, is a much better spiritual director and convinced me to divide the group among the eight-person tables with an alphabetical seating chart that prevented them from sitting with their friends. Then, since the average Secular Franciscan is on Medicare, she was able to get half of them to describe how tough it was to choose between medicine and meals, and the other half to allow as how they either would not or could not help with this very real problem within their own fraternity. Leia knows that true faith always begins with an admission of frailty...need....submission...

After the retreat, Ron decided Leia and I were the lepers and embraced us. And, believe it or not, that simple embrace led to charming thousands of admirers at Disneyland, opened up the possibility of a new life for one child and gave a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for several other children at Carnegie Hall. But, as Ron will tell you, the real story is not about him....

After the retreat, the first question Ron asked was if the children at Isaiah House received birthday presents, which, of course, was a rare occurrence. "How about if I bring some kids to the House to give presents?" was his answer. From then on, each month Leia would prepare a list of birthdays for both adults and children, and Ron's students would buy presents with their own money and then travel to Isaiah House to present them in a ceremony that involved all the standard singing and cake-cutting.

Later, when Ron asked if he could bring a band to play for Christmas, Leia had no way of knowing she had just said "yes" to a full middle-school marching band production, complete with risers and a van and more band members than we had ever seen. The concert was phenomenal: North Park Middle School is the only middle-school band in the world to ever play at Disneyland!! For the last twelve years, they have won national championships and numerous other awards and competitions. The music was incredible and the little kids tried to climb onto the laps of the band members.



**ST FRANCIS
RECEIVING
THE STIGMATA**

El Greco

(1585-90)

Following the Good Conductor (Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7) *Following the Good Conductor*

At Easter, the band returned with great anticipation and excitement from the kids at Isaiah House. One little girl, Tiffany, went from the front row into a band chair immediately after the concert ended. "It's one of my dreams that my child could play an instrument," said Tiffany's mother. Ron heard the statement and after prayer was led to agree to pay for music lessons for Tiffany.

That summer, Ron and a few middle-school band "alumni members" began to teach Tiffany as well as other families on our front porch. The children were each given an instrument and were stunned to learn that the instruments were for them to keep, gifts from their teachers.

At the beginning of the school year, some of Ron's students started the Isaiah House Music Club, first with five students and two parents, then ten students and five parents, and then over twenty students --- all who traveled twice each week in their family cars from Norwalk to Santa Ana to teach our kids to play. North Park Middle School is a typical East LA school with one exception: their band. I think the reason was revealed in the way the students shared their gifts with our kids. They drove a long way giving up a lot of time. They were infinitely patient even when our kids flaked out on their practicing, or broke their instruments in frustration and despair. The students simply patiently persisted. Maybe being from East LA teaches you how to deal lovingly with unruly younger siblings.

But amazingly, last year the world took notice when our kids were allowed to lead the Marshall's Day Parade at Disneyland!

Then, just before Tiffany's family had to leave Isaiah House with her mentally-challenged father, Tiffany realized that her Dad would make it impossible for her to stay in the band. Tiffany assembled her clarinet one last time and asked to play one more song -- for Mr. Wakefield. She told him it was one last song for God. Later that night Ron asked me what would happen to Tiffany. After her Dad broke the downstairs mirror with his fist and then threatened to kill us, I am afraid I delivered an incautious and cynical prediction: I told him before long she would be pregnant...or worse.

At that moment, a whole life dedicated to being a Secular Franciscan, a daily communicant, and being one of the most humble and patient people -- blossomed to a deeper level of Christian love. Ron decided that attending a Catholic school could make a life-saving difference for Tiffany and, out of his own pocket, enrolled Tiffany in St. Joseph Catholic School. Moreover, he promised Tiffany's mother that if Tiffany did well this year, next year he would send her brother as well. The spark God entrusted to Tiffany began to catch afire in Ron Wakefield orchestrated by the Holy Spirit.

On this last Good Friday, Tiffany, Ron Wakefield and five other children from Isaiah House played on stage at Carnegie Hall in New York City in a celebration of a creative commitment to a common goal.

Although we may not be able to single-handedly pick up a car, we certainly can change the world if we respond to the Holy Spirit. Christ deserves no less than that we follow the example of Ron and his students who taught homeless children to play music.

God, make me your instrument and play me, Lord, play your song of love to the world. †



A STARFISH NAMED FIALOA

BY ANNE NELSON LANPHAR, ESQ.

The Orange County Bar Association annually sponsors a special event: a visit to Orangewood Children's Home, the County's facility for abused and neglected children.

The Home is located by the County facilities on The City Drive in Orange. It is a small unassuming building that looks remarkably small from the front. This impression is reinforced by the extremely limited number of parking spaces. I assumed that the number of children housed at the facility had to be relatively limited. Unfortunately I was wrong – it normally holds over 300 children.

I have been very blessed in my life having never suffered abuse. Quite honestly, I was a little apprehensive since I had virtually no knowledge of this area of life and wondered if I would be able to help at all, able to relate to the children. I said a small prayer for courage and guidance.

When I arrived there was a significant number of volunteers gathered in the front. I was pleasantly surprised at the number of legal professionals who had decided to participate in this special event.

The director of Orangewood came out and gave us a few words of thanks and then took us through the facility. Passing through the front building, we came out the back onto a beautiful courtyard with incredible landscaping providing a wonderful effect. There were a number of large Spanish-style houses – the children were separated into these bungalows by age and sex. The area was remarkably beautiful with a pool, a gymnasium and a rear play area with a grass field and a basketball court. The developers of Orange County had built and donated this peaceful and beautiful facility hidden away in this remote corner so as to provide privacy for these children. The facility looks like a resort. Unfortunately, it is not.

As we came into the back area, we could see the children, boys and girls ages 6 to 16, playing. The head counselor told us not to ask the children questions as to why they were at Orangewood and that if we recognized any of the children we were obligated to keep the information confidential. I had assumed that a counselor or psychologist would “teach” us how to handle these children. I was wrong. The simple direction to us was: *“Go play with the children. Try to get into a one-on-one relationship and just play with them.”*

Having three sons and having been a den mother and around Scouts for a number of years, my initial reaction to this advice was that it was naïve – the children were not going to want to play with a bunch of strange adults. Kids normally want to play with other children. But I was willing to give it a try but quite honestly, I didn't think this would be easy or very successful.

I spotted some junior high age girls chatting on a bleacher so I went over and sat down and started a conversation. As I was talking with these girls, answering questions as to who all the adults were who had just invaded the area, suddenly my left hand was grabbed. Startled I turned and found a little girl, about 5 years old, crying and hanging onto my hand tightly. I asked her name but she wouldn't speak – she just cried so I held her tightly, caressing her head. After a long time, gradually she started to talk – her name was Fialoa and she wanted to call home. I later learned that she had two older sisters who were with her at the facility.

For the first hour, this beautiful little girl virtually cried constantly clinging to me



(Continued from page 9) *A Starfish Named Fialoa*

tightly. I could only wonder what had happened to this little innocent child that could have created such an emotional need in her that she would reach out to strangers so desperately. As I held her and comforted her, I watched the other adults playing with the children. I had been *so wrong* – these children were delighted to have adults paying attention to them. The adults were playing all sorts of games with them – basketball, kickball, soccer, catch, swinging, handball against a small portion of wall, and so many other games. The children were truly enjoying themselves and were genuinely enjoying the attention of these adults, these strangers.

The child gradually stopped crying. Gradually she started to trust me that I wouldn't leave her. I convinced her to play soccer with me. She loved kicking the ball. But every once in awhile she would suddenly fade out, her look far away. She would stop playing, bend down and start pulling the grass. I called to her, wrapped my arms around her and pulled her back into playing. My heart ached to even imagine what this child may have gone through, what she was reliving in her mind. Even if there had been no abuse specifically, the very fact that her family had been torn asunder sufficiently to have her and her siblings in this facility, the terror of having her security, her world, shattered would cut the heart of any child.

For a few hours, I played with this child, offering her nothing but unconditional love. All the money in the world, all the material possessions available, meant absolutely nothing to her. She needed love, just love and a little attention from an adult. Our greatest needs can *never* be satisfied by money. The half-day I spent with this beautiful child was deeply moving and I will never forget it. It made me appreciate the simple blessings God has given me but that I had never really thought about much less appreciated: knowing I am loved and safe! I had to wonder why God has blessed me with so much? I think God wants us to not just appreciate His gifts, but to share with those who suffer, to open our hearts to those who are less fortunate, to become His instrument. Helping that child was one of the times in my life I have felt closest to God. I felt like a conduit of His love: I just needed to be open to His grace and serve Him. It was not me who was holding that child, it was Him.

When I had to leave, I held Fialoa tightly and whispered to her that God loved her and would be with her always. I told her also that Mary, His mother, loved her and so did I. Although I would probably not see her again, I would always keep her in my prayers. I promised to plant a rose bush in her honor in my rose garden which is dedicated to Mary and that every time I saw it, I would think of her and say a prayer.

I only spent 5 hours with this child but she will always be in my heart. In a small way, she is now my responsibility, entrusted to me by God. Did I make any difference? Was this time spent really that important? There is obviously no way to measure or know the importance of those few hours on her life. Although there is an answer since God has a plan, obviously I am not privileged to know the answer. As lawyers we like to be in control, to know and understand what is going on. It is hard to sit back and blindly trust God, to not be in control, to not understand the whole plan. We have to let go and trust God. Just because we can not see or understand His whole plan or our role in it, doesn't mean that there is no plan or that the small little role we may have is unimportant.

Will these few hours make a difference in this child's life? Did I really do anything to really help solve any of the mammoth societal problems of abuse or neglect? Did I make the slightest bit of difference? There is a simple story that helps put this question into perspective:

Once there was a great storm that hit the coastline. After the storm passed, a young man went for a walk on the cliffs above the beach. The beach was covered with thousands of starfish that had been washed onto the shore and stranded there. Having no way to return to the ocean, it was inevitable that all these creatures would die. The young man felt bad as he looked over this devastating sight. Suddenly he noticed an old man down on the beach. He was old and frail, walking slowly. He would stop and slowly bend over, pick up a starfish and toss it back into the ocean. Then slowly and deliberately he moved on, slowly bending down, picking up a starfish and tossing it back into the ocean. The young man watched this for awhile and then overcome, made his way down to the beach. He walked up to the old man and asked him why he was doing this. What possible difference could he make in the midst of these thousands of dying starfish? Slowly the old man bent down, picked up a starfish and showing it to the young man said, "It makes a difference to this one." Then he turned and tossed it into the ocean.

Please consider volunteering at Orangewood. (For information, call 714 935-7584.) If you do not feel called by God for this work, *please* keep these children in your prayers as well as those who work with them. ☩

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions

REFLECTIONS OF THE U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: MAJOR THEMES

The Church's social teaching is a rich treasure of wisdom about building a just society and living lives of holiness amidst the challenges of modern society. It offers moral principles and coherent values that are badly needed in our time. In this time of widespread violence and diminished respect for human life and dignity in our country and around the world, the Gospel of life and the biblical call to justice need to be proclaimed and shared with new clarity, urgency, and energy.

Modern Catholic social teaching has been articulated through a tradition of papal, conciliar, and episcopal documents that explore and express the social demands of our faith. The depth and richness of this tradition can be understood best through a direct reading of these documents, many of which are cited in the Report of the Content Subgroup (pp. xx-xx). In these brief reflections, we wish to highlight several of the key themes that are at the heart of our Catholic social tradition. We hope they will serve as a starting point for those interested in exploring the Catholic social tradition more fully.

LIFE AND DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN PERSON

In a world warped by materialism and declining respect for human life, the Catholic Church proclaims that human life is sacred and that the dignity of the human person is the foundation of a moral vision for society. Our belief in the sanctity of human life and the inherent dignity of the human person is the foundation of all the principles of our social teaching. In our society, human life is under direct attack from abortion and assisted suicide. The value of human life is being threatened by increasing use of the death penalty. The dignity of life is undermined when the creation of human life is reduced to the manufacture of a product, as in human cloning or proposals for genetic engineering to create "perfect" human beings. We believe that every person is precious, that people are more important than things, and that the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of the human person.

CALL TO FAMILY, COMMUNITY, AND PARTICIPATION

In a global culture driven by excessive individualism, our tradition proclaims that the person is not only sacred but also social. How we organize our society—in economics and politics, in law and policy—directly affects human dignity and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. The family is the central social institution that must be supported and strengthened, not undermined. While our society often exalts individualism, the Catholic tradition teaches that human beings grow and achieve fulfillment in community. We believe people have a right and a duty to participate in society, seeking together the common good and well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable. Our Church teaches that the role of government and other institutions is to protect human life and human dignity and promote the common good.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In a world where some speak mostly of "rights" and others mostly of "responsibilities," the Catholic tradition teaches that human dignity can be protected and a healthy community can be achieved only if human rights are protected and re-

Sharing Catholic Social Teaching (Continued on page 12)



**ST MARTIN AND
THE BEGGAR**

El Greco
(1597-99)

(Continued from page 11) *Sharing Catholic Social Teaching*

sponsibilities are met. Therefore, every person has a fundamental right to life and a right to those things required for human decency. Corresponding to these rights are duties and responsibilities—to one another, to our families, and to the larger society. While public debate in our nation is often divided between those who focus on personal responsibility and those who focus on social responsibilities, our tradition insists that both are necessary.

OPTION FOR THE POOR AND VULNERABLE

In a world characterized by growing prosperity for some and pervasive poverty for others, Catholic teaching proclaims that a basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first.

THE DIGNITY OF WORK AND THE RIGHTS OF WORKERS

In a marketplace where too often the quarterly bottom line takes precedence over the rights of workers, we believe that the economy must serve people, not the other way around. Work is more than a way to make a living; it is a form of continuing participation in God's creation. If the dignity of work is to be protected, then the basic rights of workers must be respected—the right to productive work, to decent and fair wages, to organize and join unions, to private property, and to economic initiative. Respecting these rights promotes an economy that protects human life, defends human rights, and advances the well-being of all.

SOLIDARITY

Our culture is tempted to turn inward, becoming indifferent and sometimes isolationist in the face of international responsibilities. Catholic social teaching proclaims that we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers, wherever they live. We are one human family, whatever our national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. Learning to practice the virtue of solidarity means learning that "loving our neighbor" has global dimensions in an interdependent world. This virtue is described by John Paul II as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all" (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 38).

CARE FOR GOD'S CREATION

On a planet conflicted over environmental issues, the Catholic tradition insists that we show our respect for the Creator by our stewardship of creation. Care for the earth is not just an Earth Day slogan, it is a requirement of our faith. We are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation. This environmental challenge has fundamental moral and ethical dimensions that cannot be ignored.

This teaching is a complex and nuanced tradition with many other important elements. Principles like "subsidiarity" and the "common good" outline the advantages and limitations of markets, the responsibilities and limits of government, and the essential roles of voluntary associations. These and other key principles are outlined in greater detail in the Catechism and in the attached Report of the Content Subgroup (see pp. xx-xx). These principles build on the foundation of Catholic social teaching: the dignity of human life. This central Catholic principle requires that we measure every policy, every institution, and every action by whether it protects human life and enhances human dignity, especially for the poor and vulnerable.

These moral values and others outlined in various papal and episcopal documents are part of a systematic moral framework and a precious intellectual heritage that we call Catholic social teaching. The Scriptures say, "Without a vision the people perish" (Prv 29:18). As Catholics, we have an inspiring vision in our social teaching. In a world that hungers for a sense of meaning and moral direction, this teaching offers ethical criteria for action. In a society of rapid change and often confused moral values, this teaching offers consistent moral guidance for the future. For Catholics, this social teaching is a central part of our identity. In the words of John Paul II, it is "genuine doctrine" (*Centesimus Annus*, no. 5).

There will be legitimate differences and debate over how these challenging moral principles are applied in concrete situations. Differing prudential judgments on specifics cannot be allowed, however, to obscure the need for every Catholic to know and apply these principles in family, economic, and community life. †

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*



*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

AN AMISH STORY

An Amish boy and his father were in a shopping mall. They were amazed by almost everything they saw--but especially by two shiny silver walls that could move apart and slide back together again. The boy asked, "What is this, Father?" The father (never having seen an elevator) responded, "Son, I have never seen anything like this in my life. I don't know what it is." While the boy and his father were watching in amazement, a fat old lady in a wheelchair rolled her way up to the moving walls and pressed a button. The walls opened, and the lady rolled between them into a small chamber. The walls closed, and the boy and his father watched the small circular numbers above the walls light up sequentially. They continued to watch until the last number was reached; then the numbers began to light in reverse order. Finally the walls opened again, and a gorgeous 24-year-old blonde stepped out. The father, not taking his eyes off the young woman, said quietly to his son...



"Go get your mother." †

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"What is conscience? Conscience is a judgment of our reason telling us that we ought to do good and avoid evil. That brings up the question: What makes anything 'good?' A thing is good if it attains the end and the highest purpose for which it is made. A pencil is good if it writes, for that is the purpose of the pencil. But the pencil is 'not' good to open a can with, for it was not made to open cans. If we use a pencil to open a can, not only do we not open it, but we break the pencil. If we use our lives for other purposes than those given by God, not only do we miss happiness, but we actually hurt ourselves and beget in us queer little 'kinks...'

Apply that to man. When is man 'good?' A man is good when he attains the highest purpose for which he was made. This supreme goal cannot be to get the maximum pleasure out of life, because those who concentrate on having a good time rarely have it. Pleasure is only a bonus or a by-product of a duty. One does not eat ice cream to have pleasure; one has pleasure because one eats ice cream. If we set our affections not, say, on the family but on the pleasure a man hopes to have from having a family, the pleasure vanishes. Furthermore, our experience proves that we are most happy when we do not seek our own pleasure at all; the gluttoned, the jaded, the satiated are more miserable than the man who lives to serve his neighbor.

Fame, reputation, a full safety-deposit vault cannot be the supreme goal of life either, because all these things are extrinsic to man; it matters little how much one has on the *outside* if he is not happy on the *inside*." †

MATTHEW 25: 31-46



SCRIPTURAL CORNER



THE LAST JUDGMENT

Peter Paul Rubens

(1617)

**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.*

³¹When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. ³²Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and ³³he will place the sheep at this right hand, but the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the King will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink?' ³⁸And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee?' ³⁹And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?' ⁴⁰And the King will answer them, 'Truly I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at this left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food; I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' ⁴⁴Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee.' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' ⁴⁶And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

³⁵⁻⁴⁶All the various things mentioned in this passage (giving people food and drink, clothing them, visiting them) become works of Christian charity when the person doing them sees Christ in these "least" of his brethren.

Here we can see the seriousness of sins of omission. Failure to do something which one should do means leaving Christ unattended.

"We must learn to recognize Christ when he comes out to meet us in our brothers, the people around us. No human life is ever isolated. It is bound up with other lives. No man or woman is a single verse; we all make up one divine poem which God writes with the cooperation of our freedom" (Bl. J Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, 111).

We will be judges on the degree and quality of our love (cf. St John of the Cross, *Spiritual Sentences and Maxims*, 57). Our Lord will ask us to account not only for the evil we have done but also for the good we have omitted. We can see that the sins of omission are a very serious matter and that the basis of love of neighbor is Christ's presence in the least of our brothers and sisters.

St. Teresa of Avila writes: "Here the Lord asks only two things of us: love for his Majesty and love for our neighbor. It is for these two virtues that we must strive, and if we attain them perfectly we are doing his will [...]. The surest sign that we are keeping these two commandments is, I think, that we should really be loving our neighbor; for we cannot be sure if we are loving God, although we may have good reasons for believing that we are, but we can know quite well if we are loving our neighbor. And be certain that, the farther advanced you find you are in this, the greater the love you will have for God; for so dearly does his Majesty love us that he will reward our love for our neighbor by increasing the love which we bear to himself, and that in a thousand ways, this I cannot doubt" (*Interior Castle*, V, 3).

This parable clearly shows that Christianity cannot be reduced to a kind of agency for "doing good." Service of our neighbor acquires supernatural value when it is done out of love for Christ, when we see Christ in the person in need. This is why St Paul asserts that "if I give away all I have...but have not love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:3). Any interpretation of Jesus' teaching on the Last Judgment would be wide of the mark if it gave it a materialistic meaning or confused mere philanthropy with genuine Christian charity. †

MAKE MUSIC WITH WHAT YOU HAVE*

On Nov. 18, 1995, Itzhak Perlman, the violinist, came on stage to give a concert at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center in New York City. If you have ever been to a Perlman concert, you know that getting on stage is no small achievement for him. He was stricken with polio as a child, and so he has braces on both legs and walks with the aid of two crutches.

To see him walk across the stage one step at a time, painfully and slowly, is an unforgettable sight. He walks painfully, yet majestically, until he reaches his chair. Then he sits down, slowly, puts his crutches on the floor, undoes the locks on his legs, tucks one foot back and extends the other foot forward. Then he bends down and picks up the violin, puts it under his chin, nods to the conductor and proceeds to play.

By now, the audience is used to this ritual. They sit quietly while he makes his way across the stage to his chair. They remain reverently silent while he undoes the locks on his legs. They wait until he is ready to play.

But this time, something went wrong. Just as he finished the first few bars, one of the strings on his violin broke. You could hear it snap--it went off like gunfire across the room. There was no mistaking what that sound meant.

There was no mistaking what he had to do. People who were there that night thought to themselves: "We figured that he would have to get up, put on the locks again, pick up the crutches and limp his way off stage - to either find another violin or else find another string for this one."

But he didn't. Instead, he waited a moment, closed his eyes and then signaled the conductor to begin again. The orchestra began, and he played from where he had left off. And he played with such passion and such power and such purity as they had never heard before. Of course, anyone knows that it is impossible to play a symphonic work with just three strings. I know that, and you know that, but that night Itzhak Perlman refused to know that.

You could see him modulating, changing, recomposing the piece in his head. At one point, it sounded like he was de-tuning the strings to get new sounds from them that they had never made before. When he finished, there was an awesome silence in the room. And then people rose and cheered. There was an extraordinary outburst of applause from every corner of the auditorium. We were all on our feet, screaming and cheering, doing everything we could to show how much we appreciated what he had done.

He smiled, wiped the sweat from this brow, raised his bow to quiet us, and then he said, not boastfully, but in a quiet, pensive, reverent tone, "You know, sometimes it is the artist's task to find out how much music you can still make with what you have left."

What a powerful line that is. It has stayed in my mind ever since I heard it. And who knows? Perhaps that is the way of life - not just for artists but for all of us. So, perhaps our task in this shaky, fast-changing, bewildering world in which we live is to make music, at first with all that we have, and then, when that is no longer possible, to make music with what we have left. †



THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



** Jack Riemer of the
Houston Chronicle
November 1995*

NEED PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP?

DR. AARON KHERIATY

UCI Department of Psychiatry

Director, Psychiatry and Spiritual Forum

Member of Opus Dei & St Edwards Parish (Dana Point)

101 The City Drive, Orange, CA 92868

(714) 456-8774 Voicemail

akheriat@uci.edu †

CATHOLIC PSYCHIATRIST



Duc in Altum

“Put out into the deep” (Luke 5:4)

Guidance and Discernment for Future Priests

Are you called to the Catholic priesthood? How do you prepare? Where do you go?

The Norbertine Fathers of St. Michael's are holding a series of vocational conferences for men ages 18 – 28 interested in the priesthood. *'Come and see'* if Christ is calling you.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Topic</u>
Tuesday, April 17, 2007	Misconceptions about the Priesthood Rev. Justin Ramos, O.Praem.
Tuesday, April 24, 2007	The Priest: Alter Christus Rev. Augustine Puchner, O.Praem.
Tuesday, May 1, 2007	Marian Devotion & the Priesthood Rev. Gregory Dick, O.Praem.
Tuesday, May 8, 2007	Soul of the Apostolate Rev. fr. Juan Diego Emerson, O.Praem.
Tuesday, May 15, 2007	Spiritual Life of the Priest Rev. Thomas Nelson, O.Praem.
Tuesday, May 22, 2007	Formation of the Priestly Mind Rev. Sebastian Walshe, O.Praem.
Tuesday, June 5, 2007	Consecrated Celibacy & the Priesthood Very Rev. Hugh Barbour, O.Praem.
Tuesday, June 12, 2007	The Priest & the Holy Eucharist Rev. Charbel Grbavac, O.Praem.
Tuesday, June 19, 2007	Religious Vocation & the Priesthood Rev. Charles Willingham, O.Praem.

7:00 p.m.	Meeting / Social
7:15 p.m.	Conference begins
7:45 p.m.	Conference ends with Questions & Answers
8:00 p.m.	Night Prayer, Eucharistic Holy Hour, confession & vocational direction
9:05 p.m.	Benediction

For more information: St. Michael's Abbey
19292 El Toro Road, Silverado 92676
(949) 858-0222 x333
www.abbeynews.com
vocationdirector333@yahoo.com

BLESSED DAMIEN, THE LEPER PRIEST

*Missionary priest, born at Tremeloo, Belgium, 3 January 1840;
died at Molokai, Hawaii, 15 April 1889.*

His father, a small farmer, sent him to a college at Braine-le-Comte, to prepare for a commercial profession; but as a result of a mission given by the Redemptorists in 1858, Joseph decided to become a religious. He entered the novitiate of the Fathers of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Mary at Louvain, and took in religion the name of Damien. He was admitted to the religious profession, 7 Oct. 1860. Three years later, though still in minor orders, he was sent to the mission of the Hawaiian Islands, where he arrived, 19 March, 1864. Ordained priest at Honolulu 24 May of the same year, he was later given charge of various districts on the island of Hawaii, and, animated with a burning zeal, his robust constitution allowed him to give full play to the impulses of his heart. He was not only the missionary of the natives, but also constructed several chapels with his own hands, both in Hawaii and in Molokai.

On the latter island there had grown up a leper settlement where the Government kept segregated all persons afflicted with the loathsome disease. The board of health supplied the unfortunates with food and clothing, but was unable in the beginning to provide them with either resident physicians or nurses. On 10 May, 1873, Father Damien, at his own request and with the sanction of his bishop, arrived at the settlement as its resident priest. There were then 600 lepers. "As long as the lepers can care for themselves", wrote the superintendent of the board of health to Bishop Maigret, "they are comparatively comfortable, but as soon as the dreadful disease renders them helpless, it would seem that even demons themselves would pity their condition and hasten their death."

For a long time, however, Father Damien was the only one to bring them the succor they so greatly needed. He not only administered the consolations of religion, but also rendered them such little medical service and bodily comforts as were within his power. He dressed their ulcers, helped them erect their cottages, and went so far as to dig their graves and make their coffins. After twelve years of this heroic service he discovered in himself the first symptoms of the disease. This was in 1885. He nevertheless continued his charitable ministrations, being assisted at this period by two other priests and two lay brothers. On 28 March, 1889, Father Damien became helpless and passed away shortly after, closing his fifteenth year in the service of the lepers.

Certain utterances concerning his morality called forth Robert Louis Stevenson's well-known denunciation against the Rev. Dr. Hyde, wherein the memory of the Apostle of the Lepers is brilliantly vindicated. In addition a correspondence in the "Pacific Commercial Advertiser", 20 June, 1905, completely removes from the character of Father Damien every vestige of suspicion, proving beyond a doubt that Dr. Hyde's were invalid.

Father Damien was beatified by Pope John Paul II in June of 1995. †

SAINT STORIES



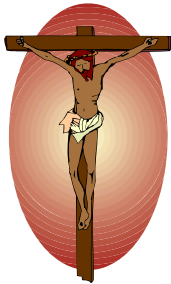
BLESSED DAMIAN
(1840-1889)

**Venerated by
Pope John Paul II
On June 1995**



*Father Damien
Memorial Church of
St Francis Kalaupapa
Molokai Hawaii*

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*

*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*

- ◆ Bishop Norma McFarland (illness)
- ◆ Christopher Shonafelt (injury)
 - ◆ Sam Inlow (deceased)
- ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention)
- ◆ Heather Flynn USAFA (special intention)
- ◆ John Flynn IV USNA (special intention)
 - ◆ Hon. Jenny Latta (serious illness)
 - ◆ Kathy Todd (cancer)
 - ◆ Susan Keenan (serious illness)
 - ◆ Melissa DiFelice (serious illness)
 - ◆ Ellie Shonefelt & Her Children
 - ◆ Janet Prahll (illness)
 - ◆ Lindsay Stevens (illness)
 - ◆ Douglas Kniec (illness)
 - ◆ Eleanor Kott & Family (illness)
 - ◆ David Macdonald (illness)
 - ◆ Eric & Marie Bessem
 - ◆ Charles Godwin (serious illness)
 - ◆ Kevin Guice (serious illness)
- ◆ Julia Nelson (serious illness)
 - ◆ Sean Nelson (illness)
- ◆ Kallie Townsend-3yr old (illness)
 - ◆ Mary Keelan (illness)
- ◆ Lauri B Kalinowski (serious illness)
 - ◆ 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) †



SOCIAL JUSTICE CORNER

“WHEN I WAS HUNGRY, YOU FED ME”

**VOLUNTEER WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LEGAL
COMMUNITY TO HELP SERVE BREAKFAST**



† **FOURTH SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH**
BREAKFAST 8:30-10:30 AM
FOLLOWED BY MASS

For more information, contact
Greg Weiler (949) 851-7238 or gweiler@ptwww.com or
Leia or Dwight Smith (714) 558-7478

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



HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS POPE BENEDICT XVI

VISIT TO ROME'S PRISON FOR MINORS, "CASAL DEL MARMO"

*Fourth Sunday in Lent
March 18, 2007*

*Dear Brothers and Sisters,
Dear Boys and Girls,*

I have willingly come to pay you a Visit, and the most important moment of our meeting is Holy Mass, where the gift of God's love is renewed: a love that comforts us and gives us peace, especially in life's difficult moments.

In this prayerful atmosphere I would like to address my greeting to each one of you: to the Hon. Mr Clemente Mastella, Minister of Justice, to whom I express a special "thank you"; to Mrs Melita Cavallo, Department Head of Justice for Minors, to the other Authorities who have spoken, to those in charge, to the operators, teachers and personnel of this juvenile penitentiary, to the volunteers, to your relatives and to everyone present.

I greet the Cardinal Vicar and Auxiliary Bishop Benedetto Tùzia.

I greet in particular, Mons. Giorgio Caniato, General Inspector of the Prisons Chaplaincy, and your Chaplain, whom I thank for expressing your sentiments at the beginning of Holy Mass.

In the Eucharistic celebration it is Christ himself who becomes present among us; indeed, even more: he comes to enlighten us with his teaching - in the Liturgy of the Word - and to nourish us with his Body and his Blood - in the Eucharistic Liturgy and in Communion.

Thus, he comes to teach us to love, to make us capable of loving and thereby capable of living.

But perhaps you will say, how difficult it is to love seriously and to live well! What is the secret of love, the secret of life? Let us return to the Gospel [of the Prodigal Son].

In this Gospel three persons appear: the father and two sons. But these people represent two rather different life projects. Both sons lived peacefully, they were fairly well-off farmers so they had enough to live on, selling their produce profitably, and life seemed good.

Yet little by little the younger son came to find this life boring and unsatisfying: "All of life can't be like this", he thought: rising every day, say at six o'clock, then according to Israel's traditions, there must have been a prayer, a reading from the Holy Bible, then they went to work and at the end of the day another prayer.

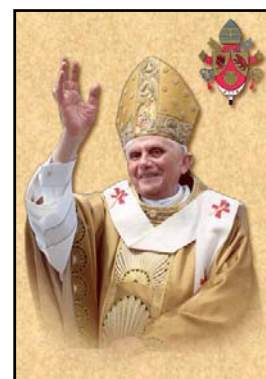
Thus, day after day he thought: "But no, life is something more. I must find another life where I am truly free, where I can do what I like; a life free from this discipline, from these norms of God's commandments, from my father's orders; I would like to be on my own and have life with all its beauties totally for myself. Now, instead, it is nothing but work...".

And so he decided to claim the whole of his share of his inheritance and leave. His father was very respectful and generous and respected the son's freedom: it was he who had to find his own life project. And he departed, as the Gospel says, to a far-away country. It was probably geographically distant because he wanted a change, but also inwardly distant because he wanted a completely different life.

So his idea was: freedom, doing what I want to do, not recognizing these laws of a God who is remote, not being in the prison of this domestic discipline, but rather doing what is beautiful, what I like, possessing life with all its beauty and fullness.



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



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

(Continued from page 19) *Papal Message*

And at first - we might imagine, perhaps for a few months - everything went smoothly: he found it beautiful to have attained life at last, he felt happy.

Then, however, little by little, he felt bored here, too; here too everything was always the same. And in the end, he was left with an emptiness that was even more disturbing: the feeling that this was still not life became ever more acute; indeed, going ahead with all these things, life drifted further and further away. Everything became empty: the slavery of doing the same things then also re-emerged. And in the end, his money ran out and the young man found that his standard of living was lower than that of swine.

It was then that he began to reflect and wondered if that really was the path to life: a freedom interpreted as doing what I want, living, having life only for me; or if instead it might be more of a life to live for others, to contribute to building the world, to the growth of the human community....

So it was that he set out on a new journey, an inner journey. The boy pondered and considered all these new aspects of the problem and began to see that he had been far freer at home, since he had also been a landowner contributing to building his home and society in communion with the Creator, knowing the purpose of his life and guessing the project that God had in store for him.

During this interior journey, during this development of a new life project and at the same time living the exterior journey, the younger son was motivated to return, to start his life anew because he now understood that he had taken the wrong track. I must start out afresh with a different concept, he said to himself; I must begin again.

And he arrived at the home of the father who had left him his freedom to give him the chance to understand inwardly what life is and what life is not. The father embraced him with all his love, he offered him a feast and life could start again beginning from this celebration.

The son realized that it is precisely work, humility and daily discipline that create the true feast and true freedom. So he returned home, inwardly matured and purified: he had understood what living is.

Of course, in the future his life would not be easy either, temptations would return, but he was henceforth fully aware that life without God does not work; it lacks the essential, it lacks light, it lacks reason, it lacks the great sense of being human. He understood that we can only know God on the basis of his Word.

We Christians can add that we know who God is from Jesus, in whom the face of God has been truly shown to us. The young man understood that God's Commandments are not obstacles to freedom and to a beautiful life, but signposts on the road on which to travel to find life.

He realized too that work and the discipline of being committed, not to oneself but to others, extends life. And precisely this effort of dedicating oneself through work gives depth to life, because one experiences the pleasure of having at last made a contribution to the growth of this world that becomes freer and more beautiful.

I do not wish at this point to speak of the other son who stayed at home, but in his reaction of envy we see that inwardly he too was dreaming that perhaps it would be far better to take all the freedoms for himself. He too in his heart was "returning home" and understanding once again what life is, understanding that it is truly possible to live only with God, with his Word, in the communion of one's own family, of work; in the communion of the great Family of God.

I do not wish to enter into these details now: let each one of us apply this Gospel to himself in his own way. Our situations are different and each one has his own world. Nonetheless, the fact remains that we are all moved and that we can all enter with our inner journey into the depths of the Gospel.

Only a few more remarks: the Gospel helps us understand who God truly is. He is the

Papal Message (Continued on page 21)



**THE SEVEN ACTS
OF MERCY**

Caravaggio

(1057)

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

Merciful Father who in Jesus loves us beyond all measure.

The errors we commit, even if they are serious, do not corrode the fidelity of his love. In the Sacrament of Confession we can always start out afresh in life. He welcomes us, he restores to us our dignity as his children.

Let us therefore rediscover this sacrament of forgiveness that makes joy well up in a heart reborn to true life.

Furthermore, this parable helps us to understand who the human being is: he is not a "monad", an isolated being who lives only for himself and must have life for himself alone.

On the contrary, we live with others, we were created together with others and only in being with others, in giving ourselves to others, do we find life.

The human being is a creature in whom God has impressed his own image, a creature who is attracted to the horizon of his Grace, but he is also a frail creature exposed to evil but also capable of good. And lastly, the human being is a free person.

We must understand what freedom is and what is only the appearance of freedom.

Freedom, we can say, is a springboard from which to dive into the infinite sea of divine goodness, but it can also become a tilted plane on which to slide towards the abyss of sin and evil and thus also to lose freedom and our dignity.

Dear friends, we are in the Season of Lent, the 40 days before Easter. In this Season of Lent, the Church helps us to make this interior journey and invites us to conversion, which always, even before being an important effort to change our behavior, is an opportunity to decide to get up and set out again, to abandon sin and to choose to return to God.

Let us - this is the imperative of Lent - make this journey of inner liberation together.

Every time, such as today, that we participate in the Eucharist, the source and school of love, we become capable of living this love, of proclaiming it and witnessing to it with our life.

Nevertheless, we need to decide to walk towards Jesus as the Prodigal Son did, returning inwardly and outwardly to his father.

At the same time, we must abandon the selfish attitude of the older son who was sure of himself, quick to condemn others and closed in his heart to understanding, acceptance and forgiveness of his brother, and who forgot that he too was in need of forgiveness.

May the Virgin Mary and St Joseph, my Patron Saint whose Feast it will be tomorrow, obtain this gift for us; I now invoke him in a special way for each one of you and for your loved ones. †



**ST CATHERINE
APPEARS TO THE
PRISONERS**

Francisco de Herrera

(1629)

(Continued from page 22) **Catholic Catechism**

sin. This misery elicited the compassion of Christ the Savior, who willingly took it upon himself and identified himself with the least of his brethren. Hence, those who are oppressed by poverty are the object of a *preferential love* on the part of the Church which, since her origin and in spite of the failings of many of her members, has not ceased to work for their relief, defense, and liberation through numerous works of charity which remain indispensable always and everywhere." Beginning with the Old Testament, all kinds of juridical measures (the jubilee year of forgiveness of debts, prohibition of loans at interest and the keeping of collateral, the obligation to tithe, the daily payment of the day-laborer, the right to glean vines and fields) answer the exhortation of *Deuteronomy*: "For the poor will never cease out of the land; therefore I command you, 'You shall open wide your hand to your brother, to the needy and to the poor in the land.'" Jesus makes these words his own: "The poor you always have with you, but you do not always have me." In so doing he does not soften the vehemence of former oracles against "buying the poor for silver and the needy for a pair of sandals . . .," but invites us to recognize his own presence in the poor who are his brethren:

When her mother reproached her for caring for the poor and the sick at home, St. Rose of Lima said to her: "When we serve the poor and the sick, we serve Jesus. We must not fail to help our neighbors, because in them we serve Jesus. †

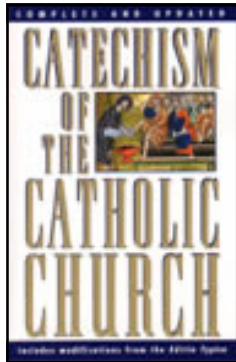
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST

SECTION TWO: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

CHAPTER TWO: "You Shall Love Your Neighbor As Yourself"

Article Seven: The Seventh Commandment



CATECHISM CORNER



THE MADONNA
OF CHARITY

El Greco
(1603-05)

VI. LOVE FOR THE POOR

2443 God blesses those who come to the aid of the poor and rebukes those who turn away from them: "Give to him who begs from you, do not refuse him who would borrow from you"; "you received without pay, give without pay." It is by what they have done for the poor that Jesus Christ will recognize his chosen ones. When "the poor have the good news preached to them," it is the sign of Christ's presence.

2444 "The Church's love for the poor . . . is a part of her constant tradition." This love is inspired by the Gospel of the Beatitudes, of the poverty of Jesus, and of his concern for the poor. Love for the poor is even one of the motives for the duty of working so as to "be able to give to those in need." It extends not only to material poverty but also to the many forms of cultural and religious poverty.

2445 Love for the poor is incompatible with immoderate love of riches or their selfish use:

Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days. Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out; and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned, you have killed the righteous man; he does not resist you.

2446 St. John Chrysostom vigorously recalls this: "Not to enable the poor to share in our goods is to steal from them and deprive them of life. The goods we possess are not ours, but theirs." "The demands of justice must be satisfied first of all; that which is already due in justice is not to be offered as a gift of charity":

When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.

2447 The works of mercy are charitable actions by which we come to the aid of our neighbor in his spiritual and bodily necessities. Instructing, advising, consoling, comforting are spiritual works of mercy, as are forgiving and bearing wrongs patiently. The corporal works of mercy consist especially in feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and imprisoned, and burying the dead. Among all these, giving alms to the poor is one of the chief witnesses to fraternal charity: it is also a work of justice pleasing to God:

He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food must do likewise. But give for alms those things which are within; and behold, everything is clean for you. If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled," without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit?

2448 "In its various forms - material deprivation, unjust oppression, physical and psychological illness and death - human misery is the obvious sign of the inherited condition of frailty and need for salvation in which man finds himself as a consequence of original

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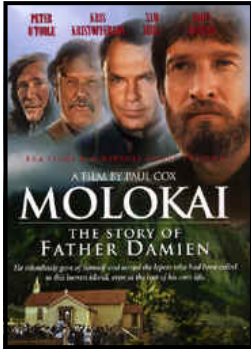
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**MOLOKAI:
THE STORY OF FATHER DAMIEN**



To deal with the leprosy problem in the Hawaiian Islands in 1872, sufferers were relentlessly exiled to Molokai, a barren isle off the coast. There they lived in miserable surroundings, abandoned by the outside world. To alleviate their fate, Father Damien was the first priest to go to Molokai. Little by little, Damien earned the trust of the lepers, and eventually, his appeals for nuns and supplies resonated throughout the world, much to the displeasure of his superiors and the government.

Even when Damien contracted leprosy, his energy did not abate, and he carried on working for the well-being of his "fellow lepers" to the end. When he crumbled during Mass, he was taken to his own hospital to die. All the residents gathered at the entrance to pray for their Father...

This biography of Father Damien, the Catholic priest who volunteered for service on the infamous Hawaiian leper colony, doesn't hesitate to idolize its subject, and why should it? For 15 years Damien ministered almost single-handedly to the quarantined community, supplying what medication he could procure while struggling against the red tape from organizations (religious and governmental) that would rather have forgotten all about the hundreds of people slowly dying in primitive conditions. He won some battles and lost others, finally succumbing to the disease himself in 1888.

Father Damien is played by David Wenham with a supporting cast which includes Sam Neill, Derek Jacobi, Peter O'Toole, Leo McKern and Kris Kristofferson. Directed by Paul Cox and screenplay by John Briley (Oscar winner for *Gandhi*).

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