

Ad Veritatem

Volume 13 Issue 6

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

JUNE 2008

"In believing the Church, we put not our trust in the men whom we believe, but we put our trust in God, for whom and by whom we believe the men."

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

JUNE MEETING:

WEDNESDAY JUNE 18, 2008 NOON

SPEAKER: ATTORNEY JOHN FLYNN

**TOPIC: "ST. JOAN AND THE ARC OF MY LIFE:
WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC AGAIN"**



DETAILS ON PAGE 3

"Ad Veritatem" is Latin for "Toward the truth."



WHO WE ARE

In 1966, the movie *A Man For All Seasons* inspired the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences to recognize this film as the Picture of the Year. This was one of the few occasions in the history of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences where the life of a religious figure won the hearts of the motion picture industry's elite. The central figure portrayed in *Man For All Seasons* was, of course, St. Thomas More, the great lawyer, statesman, apologist, husband, father and faithful Catholic. In 2000, St. Thomas was honored as the Lawyer of the Millennium by a secular panel of historians for the British Commonwealth. Shortly thereafter, John Paul II declared St. Thomas as the Patron Saint of Statesmen.

Inspired by a homily given by Bishop Norman McFarland at the 1995 Red Mass of Orange County, five "fearless" members of the Orange County bar met shortly thereafter at the law offices of Rutan and Tucker in Costa Mesa. These lawyers all shared the realization that the legal practice takes a severe toll on the personal and spiritual lives of those involved in it and that many in the legal profession had become too focused on the material life with the natural consequence being the de-emphasis on their spiritual life. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the formation of a new organization for lawyers and judges in the County of Orange with its mission being to publicly support and encourage the spiritual development of its members in their Catholic faith. The group chose as its patron St. Thomas More, the greatest lawyer of his time, who was a dedicated husband and father with a deep and profound commitment to his Catholic faith, his profession and his fellow man. Thus the St. Thomas More Society of Orange County was born.

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

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

St. Thomas More, please pray for us. ☩

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.stthomasmore.net

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St. Michael's Abbey

AD VERITATEM EDITOR
ANNE LANPHAR

JUNE
MEETING

ATTORNEY JOHN FLYNN
**“ST JOAN & THE ARC OF MY LIFE:
WHY I BECAME A CATHOLIC AGAIN”**



WHEN:

NOON
Wed. June 18

WHERE:

**First American
Trust Bldg.
5 First American
Way, Santa Ana**

FOR DIRECTIONS

(714) 250-3000

COST:

Lunch: \$15

John Flynn is a partner at the Nossaman law firm and a graduate of UCLA and Boalt Hall. He has been practicing law for more than 30 years, and specializes in land use, environmental and telecommunications litigation. John left the Catholic Church at the age of 16, resolving never to return. During his years at UCLA and Berkeley, he began asking questions about ultimate right and wrong, and studying the great western moral philosophers, which he found both profound but ultimately unconvincing. As a result of his later exposure to the moral philosophy of John Noonan, then a Boalt Hall law professor, and now a Ninth Circuit Judge, he began to look for answers in Catholic theology. Nevertheless, though he was powerfully drawn to, and persuaded by, the thinking of several Catholic theologians, he continued to resist re-joining the Church, satisfied that intellectual assent was all that was necessary. Years later, John had an unexpected encounter with the transcripts of the trial of St. Joan of Arc, the originals of which are still maintained in the National Archives of France. A review of the transcripts, and a growing familiarity with the life of Joan of Arc, ultimately succeeded where theology had not: on May 30, 1992 (Joan of Arc’s feast day), after almost a quarter century, John “re-joined” the Catholic Church and received communion and tries to attend daily Mass since that day. Find out why, and what it is in the life of an illiterate French peasant girl that achieved what theology alone could not—faith, perhaps, is an affair of the heart. John has been married for 31 years to his wife, Susanne, and is the father of two sons, Jack, 29, and Bobby, 27 **For more information, please contact either Don Hunsberger (714) 663-8000 or Anne Lanphar at (714) 250-8605 alanphar@firstam.com †**

STM MONTHLY MTGS:
3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:

JULY 16
AUGUST 20
SEPTEMBER 17
OCTOBER 15
NOVEMBER 19 †

RESERVE THE DATE!
RED MASS

MONDAY OCTOBER 6, 2008
HOLY FAMILY CATHEDRAL
6:00 PM MASS

RECEPTION & DINNER FOLLOWING †

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*Reasons to Believe: How to Understand,
Explain & Defend the Catholic Faith*

Is Ecumenism Still Valid?

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

**A
MESSAGE
FROM
OUR
CHAPLAIN**



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

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

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

Even Christ at times dealt with doctrinal error in what seemed to be a contradictory way (though it was not really contradictory). For example, in speaking to the Pharisees, He warned, “He who is not with me is against me” (Matt.12:30; Luke 11:23). In speaking of those who invoke His name without being His followers, He said, “He who is not against us is for us” (Mark 9:40). Some who profess errors are like the Pharisees, hard-hearted, stubborn, deliberate heretics who deserve eternal damnation; they do not belong to Christ. Others, who unwittingly profess errors, through no fault of their own, and so are not “of our following” (i.e. in full communion with us), are nonetheless on the road to heaven, calling on the Holy Name of Christ our Savior. Christ, and His Church, treat these two groups differently. The question of whether it was wise to change the approach so quickly and dramatically from the strict and objective, to the pastoral and personal is another matter. We shouldn’t be surprised if the approach changes, at least in regard to certain groups or circumstances, nor is it wrong for the faithful to suggest that

Ecumenism (Continued on page 22)

RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

BY JOHN FLYNN

One occasionally encounters apologetical writing that seems unnecessarily derisive and scornful. What is the point, after all, of apologetics? To defend, which is its proper purpose, or to ridicule and humiliate? Unfortunately, we often use the same rhetorical “techniques” in the apologetics of everyday life, with little or no regard for the demands of the Gospel, which asks that we deny ourselves the low pleasures of momentary conquest for the sake of charity; charity, after all, is the guarantor of our credibility as Christians (1 John 4:20). Putting aside the moral obligation, therefore, to offend against charity is actually to undermine one’s apologetical effectiveness.

There is profound meaning in the Catholic concept of dialogue, correctly understood, providing guideposts for conscience. More fundamentally, perhaps, the Church’s call to dialogue is a call to suffer, an idea discussed below, with particular emphasis on the writings of John Paul II.

CONVERSION AND DIALOGUE

First, it must be acknowledged that dialogue does not permit us to seek “unity” at the cost of what is true and essential.¹ There is nothing to be gained by denying truth for the sake of mere silence. Silence is not the same as peace; authentic peace is grounded in truth. The longer we suppress truth for the sake of maintaining a counterfeit peace, the more unstable the condition of the Church.²

At the same time, we cannot offend love in defending the truth, because love and truth comprise a unity, a reality implicitly affirmed by John Paul II at the canonization of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein):

“Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross says to us all: Don’t accept anything as truth if it is without love. And don’t accept anything as love if it is without truth! One without the other is a harmful lie.”³

The unity of love and truth, grounded ultimately in the oneness of God, imposes specific demands upon the character of dialogue.⁴ The Church struggles to find the right modes of expression, guided by certain fundamental realities that make way for dialogue: the harmonious demands of truth and dialogue, the capacity of intellect and language to express the same truth in different forms, and the variable relationship of the tenets of Catholicism to the foundation of Christian faith.⁵ A new “style” of thinking and perceiving emerged from Vatican II:

“[T]he Second Vatican Council differed from earlier councils *because of its particular style*. It was not a defensive style. Not once in the Council documents did the words *anathema sit* appear. It was an *ecumenical style* characterized by great openness to dialogue, a dialogue described by Pope Paul VI as a ‘dialogue of salvation.’”⁶

This “style” refers to the Church’s inner life, just as words reveal the inner life of the one who speaks them: “A good person out of the store of goodness in his heart produces good, but an evil person out of a store of evil produces evil; for from the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks.” “Dialogue,” therefore, refers not only to the externalities of dialogue, but to a fundamental change in the orientation of one’s faith⁷, involving “the human subject in his or her entirety”⁸: “*There must be charity towards one’s partner in dialogue* and humility with regard to the truth which comes to light *and which might require a review of assertions and attitudes*”.⁹ In other words, there is a specific



Second Vatican Council
1962-1965

There is nothing to be gained by denying truth for the sake of mere silence. Silence is not the same as peace; authentic peace is grounded in truth. The longer we suppress truth for the sake of maintaining a counterfeit peace, the more unstable the condition of the Church.

(Continued from page 5) *Rules of Engagement*

relationship between conversion, on the one hand, and the style and attitudes we bring to dialogue, on the other. Indeed, the relationship of conversion to ecumenical dialogue is so close that Vatican II equated them:

“This change of heart and holiness of life, along with public and private prayer for the unity of Christians, should be regarded as the soul of the whole ecumenical movement, and can rightly be called ‘spiritual ecumenism.’

We proceed along the road leading to the conversion of hearts guided by love which is directed to God and, at the same time, to all our brothers and sisters, including those not in full communion with us.”¹⁰

In every encounter, we must be mindful of our debt to the Cross. We are, as John Paul II said, “all equally indebted to our Redeemer,”¹¹ an equality that overshadows all other differences, providing new ways of perceiving our partners in dialogue. Conversely, the lack of charity dialogue in a certain sense implies a repudiation of one’s debt, a presumption, not always fully appreciated, that one has risen above the need for the Cross. It is precisely this radical awareness of indebtedness, an awareness always in need of renewal, which promotes the cultivation of the styles, attitudes and mentalities essential to dialogue:

“Dialogue cannot take place merely on a horizontal level, being restricted to meetings, exchanges of points of view or even the sharing of gifts proper to each Community. It has also a primarily vertical thrust, directed towards the One who, as the Redeemer of the world and the Lord of history, is himself our Reconciliation. *This vertical aspect of dialogue lies in our acknowledgment, jointly and to each other, that we are men and women who have sinned. It is precisely this acknowledgment which creates in brothers and sisters living in Communities not in full communion with one another that interior space where Christ, the source of the Church’s unity, can effectively act, with all the power of his Spirit, the Paraclete.*”¹²

DIALOGUE AND SUFFERING

The relationship of dialogue to suffering might not be immediately apparent, but John Paul II seems to have concluded that dialogue produces interior effects not unlike those of suffering. As if to echo his own words on the fruits of dialogue, i.e., creation of the “interior space where Christ, the source of the Church’s unity can effectively act with all the power of his Spirit,” John Paul also observed, on the effects of suffering:

“It is suffering, more than anything else, which clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls.”¹³

In the same vein, in *Salvifici Doloris*, his apostolic letter on the meaning of suffering, John Paul II wrote:

“And at the same time, during the holy year of the redemption we recall the truth expressed in the encyclical *Redemptor Hominis* (Redeemer of Man): In Christ ‘every man becomes the way for the Church’. *It can be said that man in a special fashion becomes the way for the Church when suffering enters his life.*”¹⁴

Suffering, in other words, produces a kind of “hollowing out” that makes way for



POPE JOHN PAUL II
(1920—2005)

(Continued from page 6) **Rules of Engagement**

the inflow of grace; it is the price of sin,¹⁵ but in the divine plan it also exists to promote conversion and re-build charity:

“This is an extremely important aspect of suffering. It is profoundly rooted in the entire Revelation of the Old and above all the New Covenant. Suffering must serve *for conversion* that is, *for the rebuilding of goodness* in the subject, who can recognize the divine mercy in this call to repentance. The purpose of penance is to overcome evil, which under different forms lies dormant in man. Its purpose is also to strengthen goodness both in man himself and in his relationships with others and especially with God.”¹⁶

Suffering also reveals and “unleashes” love:

“Following the parable of the Gospel, we could say that suffering, which is present under so many different forms in our human world, is also present in order *to unleash love in the human person*, that unselfish gift of one’s ‘I’ on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer. The world of human suffering unceasingly calls for, so to speak, another world: the world of human love; *and in a certain sense man owes to suffering that unselfish love which stirs in his heart and actions.*”¹⁷

“Especially those who suffer...” But whose suffering is it that we seek to relieve by denying ourselves the dubious joys of the moment? It is the Church that suffers from rhetorical tactics that offend charity, since they have the unavoidable effect of disfiguring the face of Christ, thereby impeding the Church’s evangelical mission. We complain, and rightly so, about the spiritually corrosive effects of secularism on the Church, but think nothing whatever of employing thoroughly secular styles of argumentation, with consequences equally destructive. It is not just any other institution we represent in those moments of encounter; the Church is the crucified Christ, living in the world, seeking souls for the Father. If that is the institution for which we labor, we are bound in every context by the rules of the Gospel.

Suffering is therefore deeply embedded in the reality of dialogue; dialogue presents, in a sense, a decisive crucible for all Christians, a passage of suffering intended by the Holy Spirit, it seems, for the building up of the Church. It is precisely at moments of clear opposition that we are faced with a challenge to faith, with a crossroads, where we must choose ourselves, or choose Christ. Are we unwilling to deny ourselves the perverse satisfactions of the lacerating word or phrase for the sake of the Gospel? It is a fateful moment in the life of faith, the importance of which we overlook at our peril.¹⁸ We can, at those moments, choose the way of self-vindication, masquerading as zeal for the Church, or we can choose the way of the Cross. Our response to the challenge of dialogue, no matter the context, reveals the depth of our conversion.

ENDNOTES:

1. Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II), *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1980), 31, quoting Vatican II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, § 11.
2. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (“UUS”) (1995), § 36.
3. Vatican Information Service [web site], October 11, 1998.
4. Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 31-32.
5. UUS, §§ 36, 19, 37; Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 31-32.
6. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 162, emphasis in original.
7. Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 29-32; UUS, §§ 28-29.
8. UUS, § 28.
9. Ibid., § 36, emphasis added.
10. Ibid., § 21, quoting Vatican II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, § 8, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
11. John Paul II, Letter, *Dominicae Cenaе* (1980), § 13.
12. UUS, § 35.
13. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris* (1984), (“SD”), § 27.
14. SD, § 3, emphasis added.
15. SD, § 15.
16. Ibid., § 12, emphasis in original.
17. SD, § 29, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
18. Mt 5:21-22, 12:34-37. †

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*



*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

CATHOLIC DEFINITIONS

AMEN: The only part of a prayer that everyone knows.

BULLETIN: 1. Parish information, read only during the homily. 2. Catholic air conditioning. 3. Our receipt for attending Mass.

CHOIR: A group of people whose singing allows the rest of the congregation to lip-sync.

HYMN: A song of praise, usually sung in a key three octaves higher than that of the congregation's range.

RECESSIONAL HYMN: The last song at Mass, often sung a little more quietly, since most of the people have already left.

INCENSE: Holy Smoke!

JESUITS: An order of priests known for their ability to found colleges with good basketball teams.

JONAH: The original "Jaws" story.

JUSTICE: When kids have kids of their own.

KYRIE ELEISON: The only Greek words that most Catholics can recognize besides gyros and baklava.

MAGI: The most famous trio to attend a baby shower.

MANGER: 1. Where Mary gave birth to Jesus because Joseph wasn't covered by an HMO. 2. The Bible's way of showing us that holiday travel has always been rough.

PEW: A medieval torture device still found in Catholic Churches.

PROCESSION: The ceremonial formation at the beginning of Mass, consisting of altar servers, the celebrant, and late parishioners looking for seats.

RECESSIONAL: The ceremonial procession at the conclusion of Mass led by parishioners trying to beat the crowd to the parking lot.

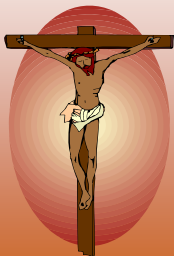
RELICS: People who have been going to Mass for so long, they actually know when to sit, kneel, and stand.

TEN COMMANDMENTS: The most important "Top Ten List" not given by David Letterman.

USHERS: The only people in the parish who don't know the seating capacity of a pew. ☩



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*

*If you have a special need for
prayer, please let us know so by
emailing your request to
alanphar@firstam.com*

- ◆ Bill Allard (special intention)
 - ◆ Carol Flynn (illness)
- ◆ Brandon Jackson (Iraq)
 - ◆ Carli Whittemore
 - ◆ Mike Quigley (illness)
 - ◆ Jean Howard
- ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention)
- ◆ Heather Flynn USAFA (special intention)
- ◆ John Flynn IV USNA (special intention)
- ◆ Kathy Todd (cancer)
- ◆ Ellie Shonafelt & Her Children
 - ◆ David Macdonald (illness)
 - ◆ Eric & Marie Bessem
- ◆ Julia Nelson (serious illness)
 - ◆ Sean Nelson (illness)
 - ◆ Scott Smith (illness)
- ◆ Ron Gable (special intention)
- ◆ Anne Lanphar (special intention) ☩

FINALLY CATHOLIC! MY CONVERSION TO THE CATHOLIC CHURCH*

BY DAVID BENNETT

It was a bright late-spring day, and my brother Jonathan and I were running outside at a Southern Ohio state park. We had been kept in by the spring rain, and now that May was in full-swing, we could run on mostly solid ground. I remember exactly where we were: the clearing to the plain, where the forest ends temporarily, and the sunlight shines through, beaming onto the colorful brush. We often stop there to get our breath, since it is about the middle of the three mile or so run. Usually we discuss theology or life while we run, and this time was no exception. This day I told him that I was seriously considering becoming Catholic. I had finally tired of fighting for an Anglican church that didn't - and never did - exist, growing wearier and more confused by the day. I needed a real spiritual home, a Catholic home, where I could grow, rather than fight. I had just plain had enough. Jonathan was pretty shocked, which was surprising, because being twins, we were often on the same page.

He probably thought one of my initial reasons was silly, but nonetheless, he admitted it was true. We had gone to an "All-County Choir Festival," about a month earlier where choirs from area churches came to showcase their talent. The Catholic and Episcopal churches are across the street from each other, so they decided to pair up for the evening of singing. Having once attended that particular Episcopal church, I knew who in the mixed choir were Episcopalian (plus their robes told who was who). I noticed that of the 40 or so people in the choir, only about 8 were Episcopalian. They were all over 50, whereas the Catholic choir had people of all ages. It was telling to me. Immediately I began to think "boy the Catholic Church *is* universal." Now, don't get me wrong, I did not make that appraisal simply on account of this one anecdotal case, but it certainly served as an illustration to what I had been thinking for quite awhile, but had not been expressing.

Jonathan was initially bothered. I guess he thought that my statement was a whim or thinking out loud. He soon realized I was serious, much more serious than when I said in January 2004 at the local American Anglican Council meeting that in a year I would probably be Orthodox or Catholic. Of course, about a week later he had a copy of a book about former Protestant Catholic converts, so obviously he agreed with me, although perhaps it took some meditation. Anyway, I am getting ahead of myself. I should likely start at the beginning.

I grew up evangelical Christian, the son of a Methodist pastor and schoolteacher mother. I was raised to value my faith, and I do not ever remember a time I was not Christian. I was baptized as a baby, and grew up with Bible stories, prayers, and lots of love. I remember accepting Jesus "into my heart" when I was around four. My parents were the best examples I had of Christ-like behavior. However, even since I was a child I was always drawn to the more liturgical elements of Christianity. Advent and Christmas were my favorite times of the year, and I always found these more solemn seasons meaningful and rewarding. My faith was simple, but a big part of my life.

As a teen, I became a fundamentalist Christian. I was pretty dangerous: an 8th grader who had just been "saved." Even though I had been Christian my whole life, and was baptized as a baby, I still felt a lot of pressure from the youth group to "get saved." As a recently-saved adolescent I knew just about everything there was to know about the faith, or so I thought, and it upset me that nobody else was ever as "on fire" as I was. I feel sorry for the poor Jehovah's Witness girls I used to bug constantly. Holly and Amber



THE CHAIR OF
ST PETER

Gian Lorenzo Bernini
(1657)

*While I admit
that there will
be ups-and-
downs as a
Catholic, I
know I have
found my true
spiritual
home.*

* From website "Ancient and Future Catholics" at www.ancient-future.net

Finally Catholic! (Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9) ***Finally Catholic!***

were far more charitable in our discussions than I was, yet they were the brainwashed ones, so I often opined. My parents even had to tell me to cool-it a little, since I was behaving embarrassingly I am sure, especially toward anybody who disagreed with me, or who wasn't as excited to be Christian as I was (which was just about everybody).

One day I met Jessica C. standing on the basketball court in our little town. I thought she was pretty and we struck up a conversation, which was entirely her doing, since I was relatively clueless, even at 14. I was there hanging out, and I was surprised I met up with a girl, since it wasn't really on my mind. Before I knew it, we were hanging out more and more, taking walks, and even going places together. Jessica was not much of a Christian even though her grandpa was a United Methodist minister. All I could talk about was my faith. She humored me for awhile, but eventually became kind of sick of my always bringing everything back to my faith. I kind of got sick of myself at this point. She wanted to kiss me one night, and on account of a mix of cluelessness and moral puritanism, I pretended to not know what she was getting at. Eventually she started seeing me as more of a friend, although I had feelings for her. Soon we stopped seeing each other, and I was upset when I found out she cussed and hung out with "the wrong crowd." Nonetheless, the whole experience did serve to break me of my fundamentalism. I kind of liked the attention from girls, and since I couldn't reconcile having a relationship (even harmless) with a female and my strong faith, I chose women. I stopped reading my Bible regularly, and would only pray to cover myself, praying every night that God would forgive me my sins, "past, present, and future," a formula I had developed just in case. Talk about minimalism!



I started weight-lifting, getting in shape, taking vitamins, and was going to play football in the autumn. I was slowly abandoning any faith I had. Youth group became a burden. I started listening to oldies, and I wanted to leave youth group to go home and listen to Bob Dylan instead of Christian singer Carman. Even though my friends at this time weren't really Christian, I still held onto a basically Christian moral outlook. I wasn't very wild or rebellious. I just didn't want to be involved in the Christianity I knew, which I thought was hyper-emotional, hypocritical, and pretty boring. Plus, I wanted to "do my own thing," and that meant dating girls who I liked, who happened to not be Christian.

I pretty much had this agnostic outlook until the summer of 1998, when I turned twenty. In the meantime, from 1996 through spring of 1998 I had gone to College and pretty much began to forge my "own way," majoring in Psychology, and practically making a religion of that. I had dated quite a few women in there, none of them Christian. My friends weren't Christian, and the things we did were not always Christian either. By the summer of 1998 when I was working as an intern at a drug and alcohol treatment facility I was at a personal low. I was depressed and felt very unfulfilled. All the fun, all the education, and all the coping mechanisms did little for me. On the way home from a trip to town one day, I was complaining about my life as usual, and my dad said maybe I should consider Jesus again. That got me pretty upset and I didn't talk to him that night, mainly because of his strict tone. However, it did make me think. Maybe I *did* need Jesus. That night I decided that I would give following Jesus a try again. What could it hurt? I couldn't get any lower, and praying for the first time in years was like getting reacquainted with an old friend.

The next morning I woke up with more peace than I had in a long time. The general lassitude I had felt for the last few months began to abate. Dad apologized for the night before, and I did too. I was ready to give Christianity a try again, albeit on different terms. I wasn't going to rush back into the fundamentalism of my younger days. I had learned too much along the way for that. I did get back to reading the Bible and praying regularly. Strangely, this evangelical guy was not praying extemporaneously, but *writing out* form prayers, psalms, confessions, and more. I bought various prayer books and lit plenty of candles. It just seemed right and natural as a mood

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for prayer. I started collecting Bibles again, and for some reason K-Mart had a copy of the New American Bible, a Catholic translation. Just to be complete, I picked one up, and became fascinated with what I saw. The New Jerusalem Bible soon followed. Around that time, my brother and I had a strange urge, one that had come out of nowhere, to attend Midnight Mass. I am sure my dad and mom were highly perplexed by two Methodist guys heading out to midnight Catholic mass like it was a revered family tradition. While we were somewhat confused, and squeezed into the pews, I remember feeling connected to something larger than myself, something almost mystical, although I never seriously considered becoming Catholic at that point.

Upon returning to college, I immediately jumped into evangelical groups, mainly because that is all I knew. I started going to Campus Crusade and Navigators meetings, and attended a "contemporary" United Methodist Church. Initially I liked them, and the people were great, but after awhile I began to see some weaknesses. It seemed like every meeting was centered around getting new people into the fold. While new people would come in, old people would leave. There was high turnover rate in these groups outside a core few. In addition, I was getting tired of the contemporary worship and the emphasis on individual "quiet times." The leaders of the Navigators became concerned with my lack of daily quiet times, as if Jesus had said "unless ye have quiet times ye cannot see the kingdom of heaven." I was also tiring of what I perceived as self-help Christianity, where the Christian faith was designed to relieve every earthly problem, rendering one blissfully happy-go-lucky. These campus groups also took a weird view on relationships, almost Gnostic in tone, when they criticized any physical contact in relationships before marriage, including holding hands. Furthermore I saw some inconsistent theology out of the leaders, and when a prominent leader in one of these groups told hundreds of students that John 1:1-18 ("The Word was God," etc) referred to the Bible, I nearly lost it. Hadn't he read down to verse 14? In general, I was seeing some of the same excesses I saw when I essentially left the Christian faith in 1994. A change was coming though...

1999 saw me taking two important classes: Early Christianity and Old Testament. Both of these classes challenged my thinking, and gave me ways to put my objections to contemporary evangelicalism into words. The Early Christianity course, taught by an Orthodox Christian, showed me a Church that had weekly Eucharist, liturgical services, an episcopal structure, among other foreign elements. The Old Testament class looked at the Bible critically and challenged me to actually read what the Bible was saying, instead of assuming I knew. I had to face the fact that the Bible was not the inerrant-to-the-letter handbook I had once assumed, and I found this out, well, by actually reading it. I was intrigued primarily by the Early Christian writers at this point. I bought a set of the earliest Church Fathers (AD 100-330), followed by the later ones (AD 330-800). I began reading them faithfully (while continuing to read the Bible). I just could not square what I was doing with what they were saying. Being a historian, I could not dismiss what they were saying, because they did live immediately after the apostles. One of the major issues I had to face was my view of salvation, which did not jive with the Church Fathers. The early Church Fathers darn-near unanimously read "you must be born again" in John 3:3 to mean "you must receive the sacrament of baptism within the Church" yet I was raised to believe you were born again when you accepted Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior. The Eucharist, the Episcopacy, and worship were other important areas where what I believed and did hardly resembled what the Church Fathers believed and did.



I slowly began to become more Catholic, changing my prayer life and gradually shifting my beliefs. My prayer life became enriched as I began facing East when praying, and I plastered icons and photos of them on my walls. Needless to say, the evangelical spirituality of the Navigators and Campus Crusade lost its appeal. I *tried* to share what I learned with everyone, but usually it was met with blank stares, a lack of interest, or even mild con-

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demnation. For example, at one Bible study, I brought up the early Church and the martyrs, and what powerful witnesses they were to the faith. Immediately another student pulled the conversation back to how the passage (in Philippians I believe) related to his recent quiet time. I began to wonder where I could go now. I really had no spiritual home. I could either be a kind of Catholic exile in a Protestant church, or go it alone, neither good Catholic options. Then my brother discovered the Episcopal church one Ash Wednesday.

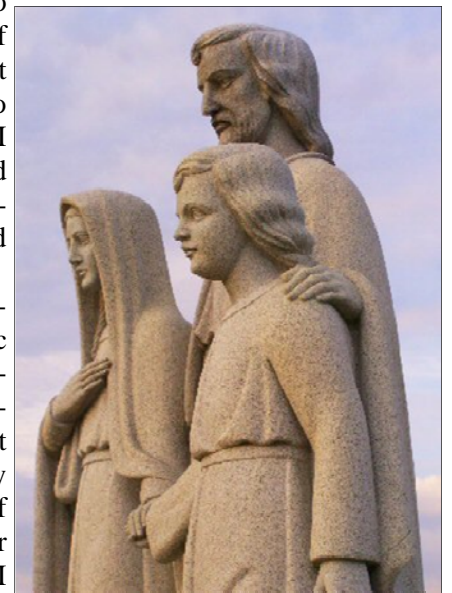
The Methodist churches locally didn't have Ash Wednesday services, so he called around, and the Episcopal church had one, and since it was about a block away, he went (I was studying that night). He came back saying "this is it! This is what we have been looking for!" It was just like our private prayer services (which now had become very form-based, modeled after the Book of Common Prayer and other prayer books). I visited the Sunday after, and loved the service, feeling right at home.

We were both confirmed in the Episcopal church by April, as the priest was more than willing to get us in quickly since the parish had few students. Our confirmation was a surprise to our family and friends, all of whom did not know the full extent of either of our struggle with historical Christianity. Sometimes mild fights would erupt in the house about church issues, but gradually things cooled off. I used to joke that some college students sneak out to use drugs; my brother and I sneaked out to go attend Vespers. I continued studying the early Church and attending Episcopal services. I was very uncomfortable with some of the liberal elements of Episcopalism I encountered, but I put on the rose-colored glasses and continued on.

After graduating from college, I went to Emory University for my Master's Degree. When I arrived, my brother and I attended an Anglo-Catholic Anglican church in Atlanta that was known around town as pretty conservative. I was also studying a wider period of Church History, which now included the Middle Ages. I used to think the Medieval church became corrupt and had little to offer in the way of spirituality or theology. Thanks to my Anglo-Catholic parish and some great professors, I discovered the riches of the Medieval Church. I also discovered the rosary, confession, and other prayers and sacraments I was unfamiliar with. While this was happening, I began to encounter the liberalism of the wider Episcopal church, and the Anglican religion I knew in my mind did not come close to matching up with the Anglican church I encountered in reality. The Episcopal seminarians at Emory accepted almost every progressive secular idea that came around. Atlanta Episcopalism was a hotbed for gay activism. However, I really tried hard to learn a thing or two from people I disagreed with, and always treated those with whom I disagreed charitably, but I was still one of the most conservative Episcopalians at the school.

In 2002 I began to feel a call to something more spiritually. Was it the ordained ministry? I seemed to think it was at the time, but now I have my doubts. I began to engage in conversations with my former priest in Ohio about exploring the process there. I graduated from Emory in May 2002 and began the "discernment process" for the priesthood in Ohio that summer. I felt uncomfortable with a lot of the process. The questions seemed to focus more on personality or vague spirituality rather than whether or not I was willing to serve in a priestly capacity for the Church of Jesus Christ. Nobody ever asked me if I even believed in Jesus. Perhaps some of the clergy on the committee may not have been able to answer "yes" to that question, so they didn't bother to ask. I reluctantly proceeded, but a comment by a priest that I "shouldn't reveal too much" about myself because that's not how the system works, should have set me straight about as to what I was entering, but it didn't.

At this point I was dating a Baptist girl, who reluctantly accepted my possible future as an Episcopal priest. We just didn't talk about our faith, which was difficult, because my faith had been the most important part of my life since I returned to the Christian faith. I proceeded with Diocesan requirements, spending a lot of my own



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money on flaky psychological evaluations, like drawing pictures of myself and my future. The Psychologist asked why I drew my future family and I without faces, asking what I thought it meant, suggesting maybe it had something to do with lack of commitment or something. I replied, "because I can't draw faces." That was the truth. I still can't draw faces. I think I paid 300 dollars for that piece of news. Anyway, by 2003 I had jumped through the Diocesan hoops and was scheduled to go to seminary, which I did in the Fall of 2003. However, in July something unexpected happened: Gene Robinson, a gay man in a non-celibate homosexual relationship, was elected the Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire. While I had no problem with a gay "orientation," and had (and have) gay friends, I knew that it was the universal testimony of the ancient Church, East and West, that practicing gay men are not to be ordained to the priesthood or the episcopacy. I was upset at the news, partially because New Hampshire was being activist at the expense of the future of the denomination, but I was going to "wait-and-see" as to the response from the Episcopal church. When I arrived at our seminary retreat, immediately after Robinson was elected, almost everybody spoke positively of the news, except my brother and I and a handful of others. One future priest responded to my objection with, "well you know that our Suffragan Bishop would marry gay people today if he were allowed," implying that we had better get used to it. Had I been feeling sarcastic, perhaps I would have asked "if our Suffragan bishop jumped off a bridge..." but I held my tongue. Another future priest at the retreat angrily dismissed certain Episcopalians who were "radically pro-life." I began to doubt my calling at this point, but I decided I would see it through.

I enjoyed my time at seminary to a great degree. I met some great friends I still see regularly, whose insights and friendships I value highly. However, as time marched on, Gene Robinson's election was affirmed by the Episcopal Church and he was consecrated against the wishes of the wider Anglican communion, despite some strong objections by worldwide Anglican leaders. I finally broke down and joined the conservative American Anglican Council. I did this secretly, because had word gotten to the diocese it wouldn't have gone over very well. Reactions at this "high-church" seminary were almost universally supportive of the consecration. For the record, "high church" in this instance, as is often the case anymore, refers more to embracing medieval aesthetics than holding the theology or ethics of the Church in high regard. I asked the professor in charge of assigning seminarians to parishes to consider an orthodox assignment for me. I guess what is "orthodox" has changed over the years, because I was assigned to a church whose clergy were active members of the local pro-abortion "Clergy for Choice" chapter, not to mention supporters of Gene Robinson's consecration. I dreaded traveling there, simply because I felt so out-of-place. I also had to play almost every role in the parish, because even though the parish could hold 400 or more people a service, the attendance was about 70 at this service. Nobody wanted to get involved it seemed. As an Episcopalian, I was becoming accustomed to empty parishes. The rector later described this parish as a "thriving downtown parish." I guess the meaning of "thriving" has also changed.

I decided I could not return to seminary for the winter quarter, and I let the diocese know that I could not be ordained into the Episcopal church in good conscience knowing that it had consecrated Gene Robinson as bishop against the wishes of the wider Anglican Communion, acting in a congregationalist fashion. Gene Robinson's consecration, I told my bishop, was also contrary to the teachings of Scripture and Catholic Tradition, East and West and resigned from the seminary. I was still holding out hope for a place in Anglicanism, so I joined the conservative Anglican Communion Network, and inquired about their ordination process. I also met up with a priest friend of mine, and he offered to help my brother and me with getting the ordination process started. We began attending his church and things were working out relatively well, although the parish was tiny, declining, and gray, and had no Anglo-Catholic identity whatsoever. It was during this time also that I was reading [The Pontifical](#), an Anglican at this time, regularly. As of this update (5-19-2005) he has renounced his Anglican orders and is soon to become Catholic.

Eventually, the diocese found out that we were officially affiliating the Anglican Communion Network *as a parish*, which the diocese rightly perceived as a threat against its authority. Some members of the parish began plotting against my priest friend, and the diocese began pressing harder. Also at this point, financial aid for any future ministerial endeavors was looking to be non-existent, and my brother and I decided firmly that if God was

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calling us to be Anglican priests, then the money would have to come and back it up. No money was ever promised.

I was despairing. I began to question women's ordination, which I accepted while in graduate school, because I began to see that the arguments in favor of women's ordination were the same arguments used to justify all sorts of other innovations. I could hardly consider myself "catholic" and be in a Church that so clearly contradicted Catholic and Orthodox Teaching on the sacrament of holy orders. I also began to see that the Anglican church was *not* Catholic. Who told me this? Scores of Anglicans themselves! Worldwide most Anglicans are firmly committed reformed Protestants, who perhaps tolerate the views of Anglo-Catholic Anglicans, but when push comes to shove, have no real love of Anglo-Catholicism. I soon realized that the majestic Catholic Anglican church I loved never even existed, and never will. It existed only on paper, and in the minds of those few fellow Anglicans who happened to agree with me as to the definition of Anglicanism. Perhaps this is the beauty, or absurdity, of Anglicanism, that both John Spong and Peter Akinola can both think they represent "true Anglicanism." I also looked into the Charismatic Episcopal Church. While it is beyond the scope of this essay to get into the exact details, I decided not to join the Charismatic Episcopal Church because it had the same problem as the Anglican Church: what it was and what it stood for depended on whom you asked.



Now we arrive to the day we were running outside. A few days after this incident, as I have stated, my brother bought a book on Catholic converts. I began to look into the Catholic Church as well, seriously considering the idea. My relationship with my long-term Baptist girlfriend had been deteriorating for awhile, and around this time we broke up, part of it because of religious differences. We just could not sustain our relationship, because it was not based on faith. How I, a future Anglican priest and proud Anglo-Catholic, could sustain a relationship for three years without putting faith at the center of it still mystifies me. At any rate, this break-up left me free to consider the Catholic Church even more fully. My brother and I now began praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament at a local Catholic parish. I bought quite a few books on the topic, including Catholicism for Dummies, The Christian Faith: In the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church, and I read the Catechism (which I had owned since 1999) all the way through. I began using the Catholic version of the Liturgy of the Hours instead of the Book of Common Prayer at this point as well, and exploring Catholic custom and spirituality.

By June, my local Episcopal parish was in turmoil, and the priest resigned and was going to start an Anglican Mission in America parish. While I supported him as a friend, I could not become AMIA, nor could I remain Episcopalian. The AMIA is clearly a part of the "Protestant" wing of Anglicanism. After deciding this, I scheduled a meeting with a Catholic priest, and was going to visit a Catholic Mass soon. Jonathan was visiting Australia at this point, and was anxiously awaiting the results of my meeting. The meeting went very well, and Fr. Black was willing to welcome Jonathan and me into the Catholic Church rather soon, seeing as how we were practically Catholic in our beliefs and practices as Anglo-Catholic Anglicans. He also gave us copies of Handbook for Today's Catholics.

When Jonathan returned to the states we had another meeting with Fr. Black, and set the date for confirmation at August 14th, which was the vigil of the Assumption of Mary. It is quite an interesting time to be confirmed, seeing as how the Assumption of Mary was one of the more difficult doctrines for me to accept coming from a Protestant background. By this time, after much study and prayer, I had fully submitted to the Teachings of the Catholic Church, and there was no going back. We had to tell mom, dad, and grandma, the prospect of which made submitting to the Magisterium seem rather easy. Their reactions were very mild. They were somewhat surprised, but not hostile, and very encouraging, although they probably still don't understand fully why a 26

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-year old would choose to become Catholic.

The day my brother and I were confirmed was amazing. My relationship with the Risen Lord had deepened further than I could ever had imagined. We began the day with confession, which took about 30 minutes each. It was quite scary to recount all of my sins since birth, and to tell them to a priest, but when it was over, it was quite liberating. I even joked, "can we do this again, father?" First communion was very powerful as well. I took the name "Hilary" at confirmation, after St. Hilary of Poitiers, one of the Church Fathers I had read back in 1999. I finally felt at home and at peace. I was glad to leave the wars of Anglicanism, and the emphasis on individualism and private judgment that led to them, behind. Even though I have always had a strong sense of right and wrong, I have never been much of a fighter. I had become sick and tired of always getting outraged at the most recent headline about the Anglican Church. I had grown weary of being embarrassed of my own denomination. Most of all though, I was glad to be in the arms of the Holy Catholic Church, where my relationship with the Lord could reach its fullest potential. After all, I had always gone to the Catholic Church for guidance anyway. It sounds strange, but since 1999, whenever I wanted a real answer to any moral or theological question, I went to a Catholic (or often Orthodox) source instead of those from my own denomination. That should have been telling I guess, but we humans can be slow learners. So after 6 years of being so close, finally I am Catholic! While I admit that there will be ups-and-downs as a Catholic, I know I have found my true spiritual home.

As I reflect back on my becoming Catholic, I think I need to clarify that I never have doubted the goodness of my past Christian experiences. I don't view myself as going from evil to good. I have no need to "renounce" my Protestant past. I believe that I have gone from something great to something even greater. I haven't "converted" in the sense that I came to believe in Jesus for the first time. I came to know Jesus as a Protestant, and I am getting to know him better as a Catholic. I have gone from having a deep, although minimalist, relationship with Christ to an even deeper, but more full, relationship with Him. I value my Protestant past, and while I have found my spiritual home, I have many kind words for those who have nurtured me in a Protestant setting. After all, it was my Protestant upbringing that helped lead me where I am today. However, I still have to say it is wonderful to be in the Holy Catholic Church! ✚

GOD WILL NEVER....

The will of God will never take you,
Where the grace of God cannot keep you,
Where the arms of God cannot support you,
Where the riches of God cannot supply your needs,
Where the power of God cannot endow you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the spirit of God cannot work through you,
Where the wisdom of God cannot teach you,
Where the army of God cannot protect you,
Where the hands of God cannot mold you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the love of God cannot enfold you,
Where the mercies of God cannot sustain you,
Where the peace of God cannot calm your fears,
Where the authority of God cannot overrule for you.

The will of God will never take you,
Where the comfort of God cannot dry your tears,
Where the Word of God cannot feed you,
Where the miracles of God cannot be done for you,
Where the omnipresence of God cannot find you. ✚



THOUGHT
FOR
THE
DAY

JOHN 8: 32

SCRIPTURAL
CORNERCHRIST BEFORE PI-
LATE

Nicolaes Maes
(1649)

**The Navarre Bible, a renowned 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.*

³²“...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

The knowledge of the truth which Christ is speaking about is not just intellectual knowledge; it is rather the maturing in the soul of the seed of divine Revelation. That Revelation's climax is to be found in Christ's teaching, and it constitutes a genuine communication of supernatural life (cf. Jn 5:24): he who believes in Jesus, and through him in the Father, receives the wonderful gifts of eternal life. Knowing the truth is, in the last analysis, knowing Christ himself, God became man to save us; it means realizing that the inaccessible God has become man, our Friend, our Life.

This is the only kind of knowledge which really sets us free, because it removes us from a position of alienation from God—the state of sin and therefore of slavery to the devil and to all the attachments of our fallen nature—and puts us on the path of friendship with God, the path of grace, of the Kingdom of God. Therefore, the liberation we obtain is not just light which shows us the way; it is grace, which empowers us to keep to that way despite our limitations.

“Jesus Christ meets the man of every age, including our own, with the same words: ‘You will know the truth, and the truth will make you free’ (Jn 8:32). These words contain both a fundamental requirement and a warning: the requirement of an honest relationship with regard to truth as a condition for authentic freedom, and the warning to avoid every kind of illusory freedom, every superficial unilateral freedom, every freedom that fails to enter into the whole truth about man and the world. Today also, even after two thousand years, we see Christ as the one who brings man freedom based on truth, frees man from what curtails, diminishes and as it were breaks off this freedom at its root, in man's should, his heart and his conscience. What a stupendous confirmation of this has been given and is still being given by those who, thanks to Christ and in Christ, have reached true freedom and have manifested it even in situations of external constraint!” (John Paul II, *Redemptor hominis*, 12).

“Christ himself links liberation particularly with knowledge of the truth; ‘You will know the truth and the truth will make you free’ (Jn 8:32). This sentence testifies above all to the intimate significance of the freedom for which Christ liberates us. Liberation means man's inner transformation, which is a consequence of the knowledge of truth. The transformation is, therefore, a spiritual process, in which man matures, ‘in true righteousness and holiness’ (Eph 4:24). [...] Truth is important not only for the growth of human knowledge, deepening man's interior life in this way; truth has also a prophetic significance and power. It constitutes the content of testimony and it calls for testimony. We find this prophetic power of truth in the teaching of Christ. As a prophet, as a witness to truth, Christ repeatedly opposes non-truth; he does so with great forcefulness and decision an often he does not hesitate to condemn falsehood” (John Paul II, General Audience, 21 February 1979).

St Thomas Aquinas explains the meaning of these words of our Lord in this way: “In this passage, being made free does not refer to being freed of every type of wrong [...]; it means being freed in the proper sense of the word, in three ways: first, the truth of his teaching will free us from the error of untruth [...]; second, the truth of grace will liberate us from the slavery of sin: ‘the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set me free from the law of sin and death’ (Rom 8:2); third, the truth of eternity in Christ Jesus will free us from decay (cf. Rom 8:21)” (*Commentary on St John*, in loc.)

“The truth will set you free. How great a truth is this, which opens the way to freedom and gives it meaning throughout our lives. I will sum it up for you, with the joy and certainty which flow from knowing there is a close relationship between God and his creature. It is the knowledge that we have come from the hands of God, that the Blessed Trinity look upon us with predilections, that we are children of so wonderful a Father. I ask my Lord to help us decide to take this truth to hear, to dwell upon it day by day; only then will we be acting as free men. Do not forget: anyone who does not realize that he is a child of God is unaware of the deepest truth about himself. When he acts he lacks the dominion and self-mastery we find in those who love our Lord above all else. (J. Escriva, *Friends of God*, 26). †

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

Submission is one of the deepest needs of the human heart. After a century and a half of false liberalism, in which it was denied that anything is true, and that it makes no difference what you believe, the world reacted to totalitarianism. It grew tired of its freedom, just as children in progressive schools grow tired of their license to do whatever they please. Freedom fatigues those who want to shirk responsibility. Then it is they look for some false god into whose hands they can throw themselves, so they will never have to think or make decisions for themselves. Nazism, Fascism, and Communism came into being during the twentieth century, as a reaction against false liberalism.

Self-will always repudiates a truth which challenges it. However successful self-will may be, it is never satisfied; that is why the egotist is always critical. The "head that wears the crown is uneasy," not because he is tired of the crown, but because he is tired of himself. He has it within his power to do anything he pleases, and this living without boundaries and limitations becomes as dull and stagnant as a swamp. A river must be happier than a swamp because it has banks and boundaries; a swamp is a valley of liberty that lost its shores and became "liberal."

The only ones who are truly free from the bondage and the burden of self are those who hold to a truth. *"The truth will make you free,"* said Our Divine Lord (John 8: 32). Only the boxer who knows the truth about fighting is free to stay on his feet. Only the one who knows the truths of engineering is free to build a bridge that will stand. The lover of truth is under an eternal law of rectitude; as he submits to it, he enjoys peace. Truth is not something that we invent; if we do, it is a lie; rather truth is something we discover, like love. In that great book of C.S. Lewis called *Screwtape Letters*, there is a series of correspondence between an uncle devil in hell and a young nephew devil on earth. The young devil is trying to win souls over to himself by talking about the "Truth of Materialism." The old devil reprimands him saying that he must not talk about "truth"; that is the word that is used by our "enemy God." You might confuse minds; get them to inquire whether a thing is "liberal or reactionary," "right or left," "modern or behind the times." Evidently Screwtape, the old devil, has succeeded pretty well with politicians and others.

Truth does not challenge, but truth does develop. Two and two do not make four in the thirteenth century, and sixteen in the twentieth, but arithmetic does develop into geometry, and geometry into calculus. Nor is truth easy to discover, particularly when it affects our lives. There are two kinds of truth; speculative and practical. Speculative truth is the truth of knowing, such as comes to us from philosophy, mechanics, physics and chemistry. Practical truth, however, is concerned with doing and living, such as ethics and morals.

The first kind of truth is very easy to accept, e.g., London is the capital of England. The reason is because it does not in any way involve a change in our conduct. It makes no practical difference to our lives. But the truth of morality, such as purity, justice and prudence and charity are not so easy for acceptance, because they often demand a revolution in our behavior. That is why men are more willing to accept objections against a principle of morality than against a theory of science. Our Divine Lord referred to the difficulty of accepting practical truths when He said: *"You will not come to Me because your lives are evil"* (cf. John 5: 19-47).

Truth is a narrow path; either side is an abyss. It is easy to fall either to the right or the left; it was easy to be an idealist in the nineteenth century, as it is easy to be a materialist in the twentieth century; but to avoid both abysses and walk that narrow path of truth is as thrilling as a romance. Truth is like the veins of metal in the earth; it is often very thin and runs not in a continuous layer. If we lose it once, we may have to dig for miles to find it again. Grains of truth are like grains of gold that prospectors find; they can be discovered after a long search; they must be sifted from error with great patience; they must be buried with sacrifice to erase the dross and washed in the streams of honesty. Notice how often today men in public life accuse one another of "lying." Why is it they never speak of truth? May it not be that they studied in the same school as Pilate and asked "What is Truth?" (John 18: 38) and then turn their backs on it. IT takes a heap of virtuous living for any one of us to discover Truth. †

MORE ON HERESY



THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE

One source of public agreement which came under particular attack was law, both ecclesiastical and civil. Luther was convinced that the Roman Church had set up its own laws in opposition to the spirit and teaching of the Gospels. In his fervor, he made extravagant claims that he would later have to modify. He insisted, for example, that “neither pope, nor bishop, nor any individual has the right to impose a single syllable on a Christian person, unless this is done by the latter’s consent.” Any such imposition would constitute tyranny.

The lawyer in More was quick to draw out the absurdity of this position. “Happy, therefore,” he retorted, “are thieves and murderers, who will never be so insane as to agree to a law according to which they will pay penalties. Indeed, this farsighted father does not see that according to this reasoning, should everyone unanimously agree, yet the law can have force only until a new citizen is born or someone else is enrolled as a citizen.”

More went on to show the extreme political danger of Luther’s position. Without the guidance of good law, he pointed out, a country “would rush forth into every kind of crime.” Indeed, if Luther’s teaching about law were to be widely accepted, it would result in “the utter and inescapable destruction of all peoples.”

Closely associated with this complete disregard for law was Luther’s position that the believing Christian “cannot lose his salvation by any sins, however great.” As More saw it, this teaching served to “invite the whole world to security in sinning.” It would “add spurs to those who rush toward all the worst actions” by “promising them impunity through faith alone...for the worst crimes.” It would also “destroy the possibility of all hum endeavor and all attempts at virtue.” By “raging against good works,” Luther would only “lure people to vice and unteach virtue.”

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage Gerard Wegemer

Pg 98-9 †

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CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST HOMILY OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*Yankee Stadium, Bronx, New York
Fifth Sunday of Easter, 20 April 2008*



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

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the Gospel we have just heard, Jesus tells his Apostles to put their faith in him, for he is “the way, and the truth and the life” (*Jn 14:6*). Christ is the way that leads to the Father, the truth which gives meaning to human existence, and the source of that life which is eternal joy with all the saints in his heavenly Kingdom. Let us take the Lord at his word! Let us renew our faith in him and put all our hope in his promises!

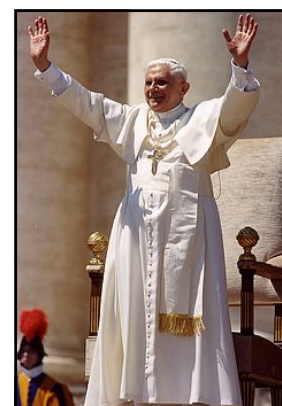
With this encouragement to persevere in the faith of Peter (cf. *Lk 22:32; Mt 16:17*), I greet all of you with great affection. I thank Cardinal Egan for his cordial words of welcome in your name. At this Mass, the Church in the United States celebrates the two hundredth anniversary of the creation of the Sees of New York, Boston, Philadelphia and Louisville from the mother See of Baltimore. The presence around this altar of the Successor of Peter, his brother bishops and priests, and deacons, men and women religious, and lay faithful from throughout the fifty states of the Union, eloquently manifests our communion in the Catholic faith which comes to us from the Apostles.

Our celebration today is also a sign of the impressive growth which God has given to the Church in your country in the past two hundred years. From a small flock like that described in the first reading, the Church in America has been built up in fidelity to the twin commandment of love of God and love of neighbor. In this land of freedom and opportunity, the Church has united a widely diverse flock in the profession of the faith and, through her many educational, charitable and social works, has also contributed significantly to the growth of American society as a whole.

This great accomplishment was not without its challenges. Today’s first reading, taken from the Acts of the Apostles, speaks of linguistic and cultural tensions already present within the earliest Church community. At the same time, it shows the power of the word of God, authoritatively proclaimed by the Apostles and received in faith, to create a unity which transcends the divisions arising from human limitations and weakness. Here we are reminded of a fundamental truth: that the Church’s unity has no other basis than the Word of God, made flesh in Christ Jesus our Lord. All external signs of identity, all structures, associations and programs, valuable or even essential as they may be, ultimately exist only to support and foster the deeper unity which, in Christ, is God’s indefectible gift to his Church.

The first reading also makes clear, as we see from the imposition of hands on the first deacons, that the Church’s unity is “apostolic”. It is a visible unity, grounded in the Apostles whom Christ chose and appointed as witnesses to his resurrection, and it is born of what the Scriptures call “the obedience of faith” (*Rom 1:5; cf. Acts 6:7*).

“Authority” ... “obedience”. To be frank, these are not easy words to speak nowadays. Words like these represent a “stumbling stone” for many of our contemporaries, especially in a society which rightly places a high value on personal freedom. Yet, in the



(Continued from page 19) **Papal Message**

light of our faith in Jesus Christ – “the way and the truth and the life” – we come to see the fullest meaning, value, and indeed beauty, of those words. The Gospel teaches us that true freedom, the freedom of the children of God, is found only in the self-surrender which is part of the mystery of love. Only by losing ourselves, the Lord tells us, do we truly find ourselves (cf. *Lk 17:33*). True freedom blossoms when we turn away from the burden of sin, which clouds our perceptions and weakens our resolve, and find the source of our ultimate happiness in him who is infinite love, infinite freedom, infinite life. “In his will is our peace”.

Real freedom, then, is God’s gracious gift, the fruit of conversion to his truth, the truth which makes us free (cf. *Jn 8:32*). And this freedom in truth brings in its wake a new and liberating way of seeing reality. When we put on “the mind of Christ” (cf. *Phil 2:5*), new horizons open before us! In the light of faith, within the communion of the Church, we also find the inspiration and strength to become a leaven of the Gospel in the world. We become the light of the world, the salt of the earth (cf. *Mt 5:13-14*), entrusted with the “apostolate” of making our own lives, and the world in which we live, conform ever more fully to God’s saving plan.

This magnificent vision of a world being transformed by the liberating truth of the Gospel is reflected in the description of the Church found in today’s second reading. The Apostle tells us that Christ, risen from the dead, is the keystone of a great temple which is even now rising in the Spirit. And we, the members of his body, through Baptism have become “living stones” in that temple, sharing in the life of God by grace, blessed with the freedom of the sons of God, and empowered to offer spiritual sacrifices pleasing to him (cf. *1 Pet 2:5*). And what is this offering which we are called to make, if not to direct our every thought, word and action to the truth of the Gospel and to harness all our energies in the service of God’s Kingdom? Only in this way can we build with God, on the one foundation which is Christ (cf. *1 Cor 3:11*). Only in this way can we build something that will truly endure. Only in this way can our lives find ultimate meaning and bear lasting fruit.

Today we recall the bicentennial of a watershed in the history of the Church in the United States: its first great chapter of growth. In these two hundred years, the face of the Catholic community in your country has changed greatly. We think of the successive waves of immigrants whose traditions have so enriched the Church in America. We think of the strong faith which built up the network of churches, educational, healthcare and social institutions which have long been the hallmark of the Church in this land. We think also of those countless fathers and mothers who passed on the faith to their children, the steady ministry of the many priests who devoted their lives to the care of souls, and the incalculable contribution made by so many men and women religious, who not only taught generations of children how to read and write, but also inspired in them a lifelong desire to know God, to love him and to serve him. How many “spiritual sacrifices pleasing to God” have been offered up in these two centuries! In this land of religious liberty, Catholics found freedom not only to practice their faith, but also to participate fully in civic life, bringing their deepest moral convictions to the public square and cooperating with their neighbors in shaping a vibrant, democratic society. Today’s celebration is more than an occasion of gratitude for graces received. It is also a summons to move forward with firm resolve to use wisely the blessings of freedom, in order to build a future of hope for coming generations.

“You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people he claims for his own, to proclaim his glorious works” (*1 Pet 2:9*). These words of the Apostle Peter do not simply remind us of the dignity which is ours by God’s grace; they also challenge us to an ever greater fidelity to the glorious inheritance which we have received in Christ (cf. *Eph 1:18*). They challenge us to examine our consciences, to purify our hearts, to renew our baptismal commitment to reject Satan and all his empty promises. They challenge us to be a people of joy, heralds of the unfailing hope (cf. *Rom 5:5*) born of faith in God’s word, and trust in his promises.

Each day, throughout this land, you and so many of your neighbors pray to the Father in the Lord’s own words: “Thy Kingdom come”. This prayer needs to shape the mind and heart of every Christian in this nation. It needs to bear fruit in the way you lead your lives and in the way you build up your families and your communities. It needs to create new “settings of hope” (cf. *Spe Salvi*, 32ff.) where God’s Kingdom becomes present in all its saving power.

Praying fervently for the coming of the Kingdom also means being constantly alert for the signs of its presence, and working for its growth in every sector of society. It means facing the challenges of present and future with

Papal Message (Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20) Papal Message

confidence in Christ's victory and a commitment to extending his reign. It means not losing heart in the face of resistance, adversity and scandal. It means overcoming every separation between faith and life, and countering false gospels of freedom and happiness. It also means rejecting a false dichotomy between faith and political life, since, as the Second Vatican Council put it, "there is no human activity – even in secular affairs – which can be withdrawn from God's dominion" (*Lumen Gentium*, 36). It means working to enrich American society and culture with the beauty and truth of the Gospel, and never losing sight of that great hope which gives meaning and value to all the other hopes which inspire our lives.

And this, dear friends, is the particular challenge which the Successor of Saint Peter sets before you today. As "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation", follow faithfully in the footsteps of those who have gone before you! Hasten the coming of God's Kingdom in this land! Past generations have left you an impressive legacy. In our day too, the Catholic community in this nation has been outstanding in its prophetic witness in the defense of life, in the education of the young, in care for the poor, the sick and the stranger in your midst. On these solid foundations, the future of the Church in America must even now begin to rise!

Yesterday, not far from here, I was moved by the joy, the hope and the generous love of Christ which I saw on the faces of the many young people assembled in Dunwoodie. They are the Church's future, and they deserve all the prayer and support that you can give them. And so I wish to close by adding a special word of encouragement to them. My dear young friends, like the seven men, "filled with the Spirit and wisdom" whom the Apostles charged with care for the young Church, may you step forward and take up the responsibility which your faith in Christ sets before you! May you find the courage to proclaim Christ, "the same, yesterday, and today and for ever" and the unchanging truths which have their foundation in him (cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, 10; *Heb* 13:8). These are the truths that set us free! They are the truths which alone can guarantee respect for the inalienable dignity and rights of each man, woman and child in our world – including the most defenseless of all human beings, the unborn child in the mother's womb. In a world where, as Pope John Paul II, speaking in this very place, reminded us, Lazarus continues to stand at our door (*Homily at Yankee Stadium*, October 2, 1979, No. 7), let your faith and love bear rich fruit in outreach to the poor, the needy and those without a voice. Young men and women of America, I urge you: open your hearts to the Lord's call to follow him in the priesthood and the religious life. Can there be any greater mark of love than this: to follow in the footsteps of Christ, who was willing to lay down his life for his friends (cf. *Jn* 15:13)?

In today's Gospel, the Lord promises his disciples that they will perform works even greater than his (cf. *Jn* 14:12). Dear friends, only God in his providence knows what works his grace has yet to bring forth in your lives and in the life of the Church in the United States. Yet Christ's promise fills us with sure hope. Let us now join our prayers to his, as living stones in that spiritual temple which is his one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. Let us lift our eyes to him, for even now he is preparing for us a place in his Father's house. And empowered by his Holy Spirit, let us work with renewed zeal for the spread of his Kingdom.

"Happy are you who believe!" (cf. *1 Pet* 2:7). Let us turn to Jesus! He alone is the way that leads to eternal happiness, the truth who satisfies the deepest longings of every heart, and the life who brings ever new joy and hope, to us and to our world. Amen. †



**FRANK
ERNEST**

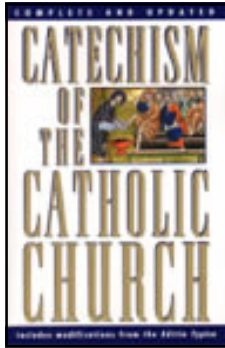
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART ONE: PROFESSION OF FAITH

SECTION ONE: "I BELIEVE" - "WE BELIEVE"

CHAPTER THREE: MAN'S RESPONSE TO GOD

ARTICLE 2: WE BELIEVE



CATECHISM CORNER

II. THE LANGUAGE OF FAITH

170 We do not believe in formulae, but in those realities they express, which faith allows us to touch. "The believer's act [of faith] does not terminate in the propositions, but in the realities [which they express]." All the same, we do approach these realities with the help of formulations of the faith which permit us to express the faith and to hand it on, to celebrate it in community, to assimilate and live on it more and more.

171 The Church, "the pillar and bulwark of the truth", faithfully guards "the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints". She guards the memory of Christ's words; it is she who from generation to generation hands on the apostles' confession of faith. As a mother who teaches her children to speak and so to understand and communicate, the Church our Mother teaches us the language of faith in order to introduce us to the understanding and the life of faith.

III. ONLY ONE FAITH

172 Through the centuries, in so many languages, cultures, peoples and nations, the Church has constantly confessed this one faith, received from the one Lord, transmitted by one Baptism, and grounded in the conviction that all people have only one God and Father. St. Irenaeus of Lyons, a witness of this faith, declared:

173 "Indeed, the Church, though scattered throughout the whole world, even to the ends of the earth, having received the faith from the apostles and their disciples. . . guards [this preaching and faith] with care, as dwelling in but a single house, and similarly believes as if having but one soul and a single heart, and preaches, teaches and hands on this faith with a unanimous voice, as if possessing only one mouth."

174 "For though languages differ throughout the world, the content of the Tradition is one and the same. The Churches established in Germany have no other faith or Tradition, nor do those of the Iberians, nor those of the Celts, nor those of the East, of Egypt, of Libya, nor those established at the centre of the world. . ." The Church's message "is true and solid, in which one and the same way of salvation appears throughout the whole world."

175 "We guard with care the faith that we have received from the Church, for without ceasing, under the action of God's Spirit, this deposit of great price, as if in an excellent vessel, is constantly being renewed and causes the very vessel that contains it to be renewed." †



**CHRIST GIVING THE
KEYS TO PETER**

Lorenzo Veneziano

(1369)

(Continued from page 4) *Ecumenism*

changes should be made if the current approach is not contributing effectively to the evangelization of the world. If the followers of the Society of St. Pius X had done only that, making use of the freedom proper to clergy and lay faithful, there would be no problem. Sadly, they have not done their duty as Catholics to seek to understand and obey respectfully, even if they have criticisms on the practical level. †

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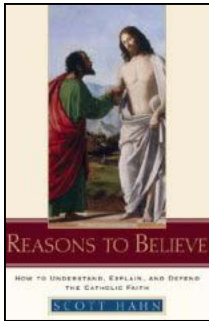
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**REASONS TO BELIEVE:
HOW TO UNDERSTAND, EXPLAIN AND
DEFEND THE CATHOLIC FAITH**

BY SCOTT HAHN

Bestselling author Scott Hahn, a convert to Catholicism, has experienced the doubts that so often drive discussions about God and the Church. In the years before his conversion, he was first a nonbeliever and then an anti-Catholic clergyman.

In REASONS TO BELIEVE, he explains the "how and why" of the Catholic faith—drawing from Scripture, his own struggles and those of other converts, as well as from everyday life and even natural science. Hahn shows that reason and revelation, nature and the supernatural, are not opposed to one another. Rather they offer complementary evidence that God exists. But He doesn't merely exist. He is someone, and He has a personality, a personal style, that is discernible and knowable. Hahn leads readers to see that God created the universe with a purpose and a form—a form that can be found in the Book of Genesis and is there when we view the natural world through a microscope, through a telescope, or through our contact lenses.

At the heart of the book is Hahn's examination of the ten "keys to the kingdom"—the characteristics of the Church clearly evident in the Scriptures. As the story of creation discloses, the world is a house that has a Father, a palace where the king is really present. God created the cosmos to be a kingdom, and that kingdom is the universal Church, fully revealed by Jesus Christ.

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