

Ad Veritatem

Volume 14 Issue 4

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

APRIL 2009

St. Thomas More pointed out that pride that has been allowed to develop “carries with it a blindness almost incurable.”

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage

APRIL MEETING:

WEDNESDAY APRIL 15, 2009 NOON

SPEAKER: TIM STAPLES

**TOPIC: “MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD:
WHAT’S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?”**

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“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

Don Hunsberger at (714) 663-8000 or email to dah@hunsbergerlaw.com, or

Judy Patno at (714) 871-6655 or email to jpatno@patnolaw.com.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE at www.stthomasmore.net

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AD VERITATEM EDITOR
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APRIL
MEETING

APOLOGIST TIM STAPLES
**“MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD:
WHAT’S ALL THE FUSS ABOUT?”**

WHEN:
NOON
Wed. April 15

WHERE:
First American
Trust Bldg.
5 First American
Way, Santa Ana

FOR DIRECTIONS
(714) 250-3000

COST:
Lunch: \$15
Donation: \$20

TIM: Tim Staples was raised a Southern Baptist. Though he got away from the faith of his childhood during his teen years, he came back to faith in Christ in his late teens through Christian television and some friends in the Assemblies of God. Tim decided to join the Marine Corps and during his four-year tour, he got involved in ministry in various Assembly of God communities. Immediately after his tour of duty, Tim would become a Youth Minister in an Assembly of God Community and later enroll in Jimmy Swaggart Bible College. During his final year in the Marines, Tim met a Marine who really knew his Faith and challenged Tim to study Catholicism from Catholic and historical sources. Having been challenged, Tim was determined to prove Catholicism wrong and ended up studying his way to the last place he thought he would ever end up... the Catholic Church. Since his conversion in 1988, Tim spent six years in formation for the priesthood earning a degree in Philosophy from St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Overbrook, PA. He then studied theology on a graduate level at Mt. St. Mary’s Seminary in Emmitsburg, Md. for two years. Deciding that his calling was not to the priesthood, Tim left the seminary in 1994 and has been working in Catholic Apologetics and Evangelization ever since.

TIM’S TALK: Using paragraph 89 of the CCC and paragraph 65 of *The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium*, Tim demonstrates this first and greatest dogma concerning Mary to be an exemplar of the truth that "there is an organic connection between our spiritual life and the dogmas" (CCC 89) and truly it can be said that Mary, "unites in her person and re-echoes the most important doctrines of the Faith" (LG 65). Tim brings to light the axiom, “No Mary, No Jesus; Know Mary, Know Jesus” as exemplified by this most ancient Marian dogma.

For questions, call Don Hunsberger (714) 663-8000 or Anne Lanphar at (714) 250-1453. †

STM MONTHLY MTGS:
3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:
MAY 20
JUNE 17
JULY 17
AUGUST 15 †

BISHOP
RECEPTION
APRIL 2 @ FIRST AMERICAN
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**A
MESSAGE
FROM
OUR
CHAPLAIN**

How Far Is Too Far?

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

QUESTION: I've read some amazing things about the penances performed by the saints. Sometimes they go beyond what seems reasonable; not just fasting or keeping silence, but flogging themselves, wearing hairshirts, spiked belts, and so on. How can such things be justified, especially in the light of St. Paul's teaching in 1 Cor 6:19 that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?

ANSWER: Further on in the same epistle St. Paul says, "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection, lest perhaps when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway" (1 Cor, 9:27). Our Lord Himself fasted and kept vigils, even though He was sinless. His penances merited for us the grace to do penance for our sins, as He reminds: "Those whom I love, I rebuke and chastise. Be zealous, therefore and do penance" (Rev. 3:19).

The saints longed for the coming of the kingdom, and by their sometimes severe penances they tried to hasten its appearance in themselves and in others. The trouble is not that some saints may have exaggerated this penitential spirit, but that we, with all our sins, do so little penance. We may not have to perform the hair-raising feats of some of the saints, but all of us can show that we share in a Christ-like love by chastising and mastering our bodies through penances compatible with our duties and station in life.

Christian penance is not an expression of a belief that the body or its pleasures are evil. Rather penance is a kind of "house cleaning" of the temple of the Holy Spirit. Sin, even when it has been forgiven, still has an effect on the soul, leaving a scar or residue, like the mess left behind after the storm is over and the sky has cleared. Theologians speak of a residue left by sins called "temporal punishment," the debt owed in justice to God who has been merciful in forgiving our sins and remitting (eliminating) the eternal punishment they deserve. Nothing we could do could repair for the debt of eternal punishment, so we can't do penance for that. Only Christ could do that. But being a wise Father, God wants His children to do what they can, and since we can perform penances for the remission of temporal punishment, He requires this of us. God is just as well as merciful. There is also the so-called "kindling" in our souls, left by past sins, that can easily ignite the passions and result in more sins. The Latin term for this used by theologians is the fomes peccati (think of the verb "to foment" something, and you'll have a feel for the force of the phrase). By practicing virtue, acts that go against our sinful inclinations, we can weaken sin's hold on us. If we're lazy, we can sleep a little less, if gluttonous, we can fast, if lustful, we can abstain for a time, with the consent of one's spouse. These actions are all types of fasting. It is precisely because our bodies are meant for God's service that we do penance, to make up for our abuse of the body which is really meant for His use and His dwelling. In doing penance we will also remind ourselves of the fact which Our Lord most often related to penance: We are not made for this world, but for the kingdom of heaven, as He said, "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

After telling us that we are the temples of God in whom the Holy Spirit dwells in 1 Corinthians 6:19, St. Paul says, "You are not your own. For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body." Performing acts of penance reminds us that we are not our own property, but God's, members of Christ's Body and citizens of the kingdom. †



**THE MARTYRDOM
OF ST PAUL**
Tintoretto
(1556)



THE FACE OF GOD

BISHOP NORMAN MCFARLAND

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN APRIL 1999

Recently in her “Ask Marilyn” column in Parade Magazine, the Sunday Newspaper supplement, Marilyn Von Savant answered the query “What’s your favorite poem?” by citing “High Flight,” composed over England in 1941 by John Gillespie Magee, Jr., killed soon after at the age of 19 while serving with the Royal Canadian Air Force:

*Oh, I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I’ve climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things
You have not dreamed of – wheeled and soared and swung
High in the sunlit silence. Hov’ring there
I’ve chased the shouting wind along, and flung
My eager craft through footless halls of air.
Up, up the long delirious, burning blue,
I’ve topped the windswept heights with easy grace
Where never lark, or even eagle flew –
And, while with silent lifting mind I’ve trod
The high untrespassed sanctity of space,
Put out my hand and touched the face of God.*

The poem is very special to me as well, and I have preserved a copy of it since March of 1944, not only for the craft of its sublime and joyous imagery that lifts one to share vicariously an exhilarating experience, but because it has personal import for me. My brother Alan, two years younger than I, was also killed at the age of 19 while serving with the U.S. Army Air Corps in 1944. He was in a fighter pilot training program for night combat, when one in the group broke formation and, in trying to return, clipped the tail of my brother’s plane which plummeted to earth. A few days later, my mother received the poem in the mail from a member of the squadron who wrote that, to him, it expressed perfectly Alan’s love of flying and his exuberant outlook on life.

Fifty five years have now passed, but my memory of Alan remains very vivid: an image of a handsome young man, 200 pounds, six feet two inches in height, blond hair, blue eyes, a good student, a joyous disposition, kind and generous. He had worked hard during summer vacations, in a railroad section gang laying track, to earn money for college, and when he had to leave for military service, he gave what remained to the pastor of our parish for a statue of Our Blessed Mother at her shrine. He loved life, loved good food, loved playing the trumpet in a band.

And he loved the Lord. His last letter home was written the day before he died and arrived two days after. He was very upbeat in the letter, describing his intensely focused days and nights and assuring us that he was well and fit – although



“But the direction for the Christian is that we are to believe in God, and in that luminous darkness to live out our faith. Touching the face of God is scheduled to come later.”

(Continued from page 5) *The Face of God*

he might be losing some weight, he wrote, since the only way he could get to daily Mass during Lent was to skip evening chow. I must presume that every father and mother who worries about the well-being of a child far from home would, even in like bereavement, find comfort in the evidence of such an alive faith.

The perennial question remains, though: how does the untimely death of good and promising young people fit into the eternal plan of God? The answer continues to elude us, and we are enveloped in mystery, crying out with Saint Paul, “how inscrutable are his judgments, how undiscoverable are his ways.” I remember a father grieving over the loss of his young son in an automobile accident who asked in anguish, “Where was God when my son was killed?” I could only reply, “I suppose in the same place He was when His Son was killed.”

But then came Easter morning! Christ is risen! And in the risen Christ we see – Saint Paul says it – what we shall be. As the Easter hymn has it: “Now death is done to death.” What the Resurrection means, first for Christ and then for the believer in Christ, is total, final triumph. The unrestrained joy and hope that permeate the Liturgy of the Easter Season are a celebration of our faith and confidence that because Christ has risen, we too shall rise. Or in the words of Saint Augustine, “Let us believe and let us hope that what happened to Christ will also happen to us. For God who makes a promise does not deceive.”

In the post-resurrection appearances of the Lord, the incident involving “doubting Thomas” is especially telling. The skeptical Apostle averred that he would not believe what the others had reported to him until he personally and physically experienced Christ (“unless I can see the holes that the nails made in his hands and can put my finger into the holes they made, and unless I can put my hand into his side”). In confronting Thomas, Jesus gently admonished: “Blessed are those who have *not* seen and yet believe.” It is a critical point: ***authentic Christianity is essentially a faith; it may or may not be an experience.*** Anyone who wishes may seek to experience God, and more power to him. But the direction for the Christian is that we are to *believe* in God, and in that luminous darkness to live out our faith. Touching the face of God is scheduled to come later.

A concluding note: my brother Alan died on February 28, 1944; the poem “High Flight” appeared in Marilyn Von Savant’s column on the fifty-fifth anniversary of his death, February 28, 1999. †



ST AUGUSTINE
Sandro Botticelli
(1480)

**I would not believe the Gospel
unless moved thereto
by the Church.**

St. Augustine

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& ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY
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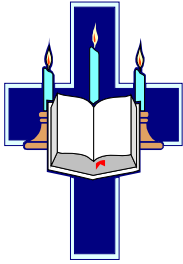
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1 Corinthians 9:24-27



SCRIPTURAL CORNER



APOSTLE ST PAUL

El Greco
(1610-14)

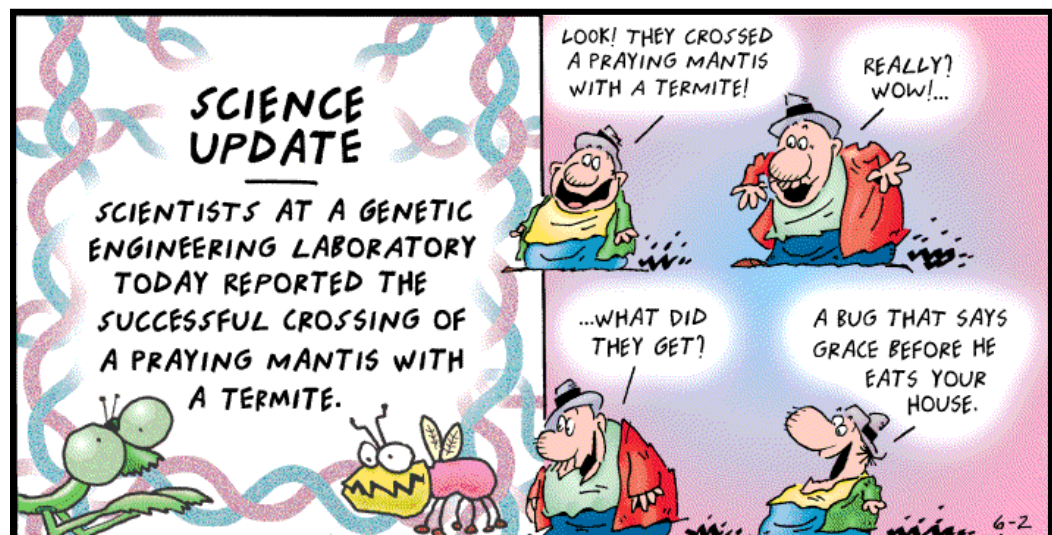
²⁴Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. ²⁵Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. ²⁶Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; ²⁷but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

Comment from the Navarre Bible:*

These similes taken from athletics would have been appropriate for the Corinthians, for their city hosted the biennial Isthmus games. Often, when speaking about the Christian life, the Apostle uses metaphors taken from sport-races, (cf. Gal 5:7; Phil 3:12; 2 Tim 4:7), combats (1 Tim 6:12, 2 Tim 4:7) and laurel crowns (2 Tim 4:8).

A Christian's life on earth must involve interior striving; he should approach this with a competitive, sportive spirit, facing up to any sacrifices that prove necessary, and not letting obstacles, failures or personal limitations get him down: "We should not be surprised to find, in our body and soul, the needle of pride, sensuality, envy, laziness and the desire to dominate others. This is a fact of life, proven by our personal experience, It is the point of departure and the normal context for winning in this intimate sport, this race toward our Father's house. St Paul says: "I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified" (1 Cor 9:26) [...]. In this adventure of love we should not be depressed by our falls, not even by serious falls, if we go to God in the sacrament of Penance contrite and resolved to improve. A Christian is not a neurotic collector of good behavior reports. Jesus Christ our Lord was moved as much by Peter's repentance after his fall as by John's innocence and faithfulness. Jesus understands our weakness and draws us to himself on an inclined plane. He wants us to make an effort to climb a little each day" (*Christ is passing by*, 75) †

*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.



HOW TO PRAY

FATHER JOHN MCCLOSKEY

"There is only one thing necessary and Mary has chosen the better part."
- JESUS (LUKE 10:38-42)

"All the misfortunes of men derive from one single thing, which is their inability to be at ease in a room." - PASCAL, PENSEES (SECT, NO. 134)

The highest aspiration of man is to pray: to converse with our God: Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, Three Persons in one. To know that He is listening always and that He also responds in this life prepares us for the eternal life of prayer that is the possession of God in heaven.

Learning to pray, to grow in the interior life (the spiritual life within our soul), is more important than food or sleep, and certainly more important than worldly pleasures and ambitions. This is not a question of "either/or."

It's fully possible for the ordinary layperson to have an intense life of prayer, indeed even being a mystic, while at the same faithfully fulfilling their obligations in the world. This life of prayer is essential so they can make holy their everyday occupations thus giving glory to God and spreading the Gospel to their neighbors.

Prayer is our primary means of service to others, our family, friends, and fellow workers. In addition, it is indispensable in the great challenge that we and our descendants have before us: the "new evangelization" and the building of "civilization of love and truth."

Satan's greatest work on earth as he seeks to devour souls that are called to heaven is to keep us from praying and getting them to stop that journey. When we look at three disastrous and diabolical revolutions that have taken place over the last five hundred years-the Protestant, the French, and Communist-we find that what they all have in common is the dissolution of monasteries.

People who dedicate themselves to prayer are seen as enemies of the State and must be eliminated. They are not considered to be as useful to the State. The Holy Father knows this well and has placed personal prayer at the heart of his message as he looks ahead to the building of a civilization based on true personhood and authentic love. In *Novo Millennio Inuente*, the encyclical letter released at the end of the Jubilee Year, the Holy Father makes this point crystal clear:

"For this pedagogy of holiness there has to be a Christianity that is distinguished above in the art of prayer.... It is necessary above all to learn how to pray, as if learning again from the lips of the divine master, like the first disciples: Lord, teach us how to pray (Lk 11:1). In this plea is developed that dialogue with Christ that converts us into his intimate friends: "Remain in me, as I do in you." (Jn 15:4). This reciprocity is the same foundation, the soul of the Christian life and a condition for all of the authentic pastoral life. Made real by the Holy Spirit, it opens, through Christ and in Christ, to the contemplation of the face of the Father. To learn this Trinitarian logic of Christian prayer, living it fully above all in the liturgy, the apex and source of the ecclesial life, but also from personal experience, is the secret of a truly vital Christianity, that does not have motives to fear the future, because it continually returns to the sources and is regenerated

How To Pray (Continued on page 10)



**CHRIST PRAYING
IN THE GARDEN**

Marco Basaiti
(1510)

*Joanna Bogle, a contributing editor of *This Rock*, is a freelance journalist, author, broadcaster, and lecturer. She is a frequent defender of Christian ideas on British television and radio. She is author most recently of *The Pope Benedict Code* (Gracewing 2006).

(Continued from page 9) *How To Pray*
in them" (par. 32)

Pope John Paul II has also insisted that the most important project for the Christian in this new millennium is to "contemplate the face of Christ." This can be done in many ways: in meditation on Sacred Scripture, in living the sacramental life (particularly in those sacraments, Penance and the Eucharist, which we can frequent often), in the spiritual and corporal works of mercy directed towards our neighbor, in the sanctification of our professional work, and in our family life. Such contemplation will lead to personal apostolate, an invitation to our family and friends, to our co-workers, and the people we come into contact with every day "to pick up the Cross of Christ and follow Him."

This article is intended to help the reader to learn to pray and particularly to learn how to pray in silence. Silent prayer is the science of the saints and it is accessible without exception to everyone who is willing to collaborate with their will to God's grace. We are called to be contemplatives, whether in the midst of the world (like the overwhelming majority of us) or in the monastery where those relatively few are called to follow a religious vocation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church, after its extensive exposition of the Creed, The Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments, presents to us an equally large section on prayer. Quoting St. John Damascene, a Father of the Church, the Catechism states: "Prayer is the raising of one's mind and heart to or the requesting of good things from God" (CCC 2590). And after recounting the salvation history of prayer throughout the Old Testament and citing the example of the patriarchs and prophets, it says, "Jesus' filial prayer is the perfect model of prayer in the New Testament. Often done in solitude and in secret, the prayer of Jesus' involves a loving adherence to the will of the Father even to the Cross and an absolute confidence in being heard... In his teaching, Jesus teaches his disciples to pray with a purified heart, with lively and persevering faith, with filial boldness. He calls them to vigilance and invites them to present their petitions to God in his name. Jesus Christ himself answers prayers addressed to him" (CCC 2620-1).

In a post-synodal document, "The Church in America," we are told: "Jesus Christ, the good news of the Father, tells us that without Him we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5) He himself in the decisive moments of his life, before acting, withdraws to a solitary place to dedicate himself to prayer and contemplation, and asked the Apostles to do the same. Enter into your room, and after shutting the door, pray, alone, to your Father who is there (Matt: 6:6) This intense life of prayer has to adapt itself to the capacity and condition of each Christian, in such a way that in the diverse situations of his life he can always return to the source of his encounter with Christ to drink from the only Spirit (1 Cor 12:13). In this sense, the contemplative dimension is not a privilege of just a few in the Church; to the contrary, in parishes in communities, and in the movements, there has to be promoted an open spirituality oriented towards the contemplation of the fundamental truths of the Trinity, the Incarnation of the Word, the Redemption of men, and the great salvific works of God."

To begin to acquire the good habit of silent prayer (or what we call mental prayer) is not easy for a variety of reasons. After all, when you see people walking down the street talking loudly to nobody might you not conclude they are mentally unbalanced (unless they have hidden their cell phone)? However, if they told you they were talking out loud (what we call vocal prayer) to God, Mary, St. Joseph, and the saints, you as a Christian would find it more understandable even though perhaps a bit unseemly. To sit alone in your room, however, or in a church before the Blessed Sacrament and talk to God requires fortitude, patience, and a variety of other virtues, the most important of which are faith, hope, and charity. Faith that He is really here and everywhere, Hope that you will

How To Pray (Continued on page 11)



APOSTLE ST PAUL

El Greco
(1610-14)

(Continued from page 10) **How To Pray**

receive what you ask for and that prayer really is of benefit for your soul, and Charity-you pray because you love God above all things and you want to share yourself with Him and you want Him to envelop you with His love. This is no easy task, but well worth the effort.

In the developed countries, many of us lead a frenetic life full of noise that does not lead us to contemplation, but rather to exhaustion. We are surrounded by noise in our daily setting (unless you live in the wilderness): planes, trains, automobiles, radios, television, videos, air conditioning, appliances, cell-phones, and so much more. This is not medieval Europe. A person brought into our world through time travel from those centuries would probably be driven insane by the cacophony of strange sound within a few days, and rightly so. We find all of this normal, but it is not. So to pray silently, we ideally should choose the most silent place we can, either a church (hopefully there is no piped in music!) or another quiet place of our choosing, perhaps a room in our residence where we can block out noise and exterior distraction, or even our office, if we can make it clear we are not to be disturbed. So to begin and continue our daily habit of mental prayer, we must have a customary place.

I want to make it clear that it is possible and indeed recommendable to pray silently everywhere as we are always in God's presence. But we must have a specific time and place for our silent prayer. Since I am addressing primarily the laity, I understand well that there has to be flexibility. You travel, your schedule changes, you fall ill-all of those things that happen to us in the world. That means, however, that you have to adjust accordingly, but never give up. The two most important practices of piety for us are the Eucharist and daily mental prayer. The real test of how deeply these habits are ingrained in us is when they are put to the test in less than ideal circumstances, such as a business trip, vacation, or a family crisis.

Our goal is to begin with fifteen minutes or so of mental prayer each day in a fixed place. So we must think about the right time of day. We can start by simply saying that we should give the best part of the day to God. How could we give Him anything less? We should be awake, alert as we can be, and ready to direct ourselves to the Holy Trinity and/or to the angels and the saints surrounding God in heaven. Remember, prayer can be exhilarating, and at times joyful and easy, but normally it is a form of work. Many of you know-and writers can certainly testify-that often times mental exertion is much more tiring than physical labor. Therefore you must know yourself. Is your best time of the day early in the morning, at midday, or after dinner or following family time? Don't decide the best time for your mental prayer is between halves of a football game or when you slip under the bed sheets at night. You must be honest with yourself and see that our relationship with God is paramount each day. So we should not think in terms of "squeezing in" our time of prayer or daily Eucharist, but rather see how we can schedule in our family and work responsibilities around our life of piety.

Remember, our prayer life is the best form of service. We live to serve and cannot defraud those around us. I am sure Blessed Mother Theresa, St. Pio, and St. Josemaria would agree with me. We can and should pray while we work, but we must have substantial "face time" with Our Lord and His friends. After all, we spend this life "seeking His face...seeing through glass darkly" until He calls us to the definitive and permanent encounter with Him. I have never met any person who was faithful to his daily time of mental prayer who complained that he had lost time or was wasting energy. On the contrary, a person who takes the time, whether it is fifteen minutes or an hour, to spend time with



**ST DOMINIC
IN PRAYER**

El Greco

(1586-90)

How To Pray (Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11) **How To Pray**

Our Lord, always comes back saying that his time has been multiplied, as Our Lord did with those fishes and loaves of bread.

What do we pray about? We know to Whom we pray. We address Him as we will, or are moved, to the Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, although normally we will pray to Jesus as the Way to the Father, moved by the Holy Spirit. Remember, the Lord does converse with us. He is listening and will respond when and how he wants, although not necessarily during the time of prayer itself. We should try always to prepare material for our time of prayer. We may choose to dedicate our time to one theme or to several. As children of God, we should pray as we like. From time to time, even though we have prepared for our time of prayer, we may find that we put that plan aside and simply contemplate our Lord. Or perhaps the Holy Spirit will suggest other paths to follow. We may unburden ourselves of a current problem or difficulty, or share a great joy that has come into our life. In any case, some of the four aspects of prayer-Adoration, Contrition, Thanksgiving, and Supplication (ACTS)-will likely come into play. As Saint Josemaria Escriva, a great man of prayer and teacher of prayer put it in *The Way*, "You wrote to me: 'to pray is to talk with God. But about what?' About what? About him, about yourself: joys, sorrows, successes, and failures, great ambitions, daily worries-even your weaknesses! And acts of thanksgiving and petitions-and love and reparation. In short, to get to know him and yourself-'to get acquainted.'" (no. 91).

St. Teresa of Avila tells us that she never went to her time of silent prayer without carrying a book along with her. We should try to imitate her even though we may have no need of it on any given day. Some days we may find our prayer dry or full of distractions, internal or external, that threaten to overwhelm us. That is when we reach for that book for some written words of inspiration to help us to return to our conversation with God. There are thousands of books that may help us, but I would recommend having a few favorites that you can count on. The New Testament, the sacred liturgy, and the readings of the day are appropriate. The monthly Magnificat and the excellent seven-volume series "In Conversation with God," with its commentaries on sacred Scripture drawn from the saints and spiritual authors, may also be helpful. There is always the spiritual classic, *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis, or the little books of points of meditation by St. Josemaria Escriva.

I am sure you will discover many others that may fit your needs or spirituality. What is important here is that these books are a help to prayer and do not become our prayer. In prayer we talk and listen, and read briefly only for inspiration. Spiritual reading should be an important part of our day at another time, but it is not a substitute for our time of mental prayer. Also, don't forget another help that gives continuity to your prayer is a regular prayer journal or notebook. Always have it with you as you pray so you can jot down those resolutions, affections, and inspirations that the Holy Spirit may send you.

I would recommend that you seek out a spiritual advisor who can guide you in your life of prayer. All the saints were, without exception, whether rich or poor, simple or smart, people of deep interior life and received spiritual direction. You may follow their example by searching for a priest, religious, or layperson who has experience in the practice of mental prayer. He or she will guide you along the steps of the "interior castle." Your director may introduce you to various spiritualities: Franciscan, Benedictine, Ignatian, or Teresian. Or perhaps you will embrace one of the newer ones, flowing from the newer ecclesial institutions that are energizing the Church today. In one of these spiritualities you may find not only direction, but also a home and specific vocation.

I would also recommend that from time to time you use books on prayer and the interior life for your spiritual reading. These can be of great help as you advance over time, with God's grace, through the purgative, illuminative, and unitive ways. I can recommend several that are in print: *In Conversation with Christ* by Father Peter Rohrbach, *Difficulties in Mental Prayer* by Fr. Eugene Boylan, *Progress in Mental Prayer* by Fr. Edward Leen, and *The Soul of the Apostolate* by Dom Chautard. There are many other fine books on prayer for the more advanced, written by Romano Guardini, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Garrigou-Lagrange, and others. For a larger picture, pick up Father Jordan Aumann's masterful book, *Spiritual Theology* .

To sum up, at the heart of the Christian vocation is the call to holiness that comes to each of us through baptism. In turn this call is confirmed and fed by the other sacraments of initiation: confirmation and the Holy Eucha-

How To Pray (Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12) How To Pray

rist. The remaining sacraments help us to grow in God's grace as we ascertain our state in life, regain our state of grace if we have lost it, and prepare us for the moment when we face God's judgment. We take advantage of them in gratitude as means of growing in and staying in friendship with Christ. Prayer, however, is necessary for salvation. We are called to become a personal friend of Our Lord-and we all know that it is impossible to establish a lasting friendship with someone unless we spend a considerable amount of time with him. For a Christian this means dedicating time each day for conversation with Our Lord and, if at all possible, doing so before the Blessed Sacrament where Our Lord Himself awaits us. We must remember that Holy Communion and silent prayer are the greatest preparations for heaven, for heaven is nothing other than the possession and union with Our Lord. That is why the holy Cure of Ars said, "Our one great happiness on earth is prayer." Because, as St. Teresa of Avila said, "We are dealing alone with Him whom we know loves us."

This happiness may not be evident to us in the beginning. But if we persevere, over time, and grow in the contemplative life, we will find that many things and activities that we used to find alluringly attractive now bore us. We will find them repugnant in comparison with the simple joys of the Christian life and the delight in bringing persons to Christ and his Church. Indeed, our appreciation of those many good things in nature, and for that matter in music, art, history, and literature, will be heightened as we see the divine in them. This, in turn may help us to be an evangelizer of culture, to help build "the civilization of love and truth."

Finally, remember to invoke the intercession of Our Lady, conceived without sin and full of grace, who from childhood was perfect in her prayer. And don't forget St. Joseph, "the master of the interior life." They will help to make you small so you can approach Jesus, talk to Him, listen to him, and then "do whatever He tells you." †

Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem*



**Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"*

SQUIRRELS IN CHURCH

There were five country churches in a small Texas town: a Presbyterian Church, a Baptist Church, a Methodist Church, a Catholic Church and a Jewish Synagogue.

Each church and Synagogue was overrun with pesky squirrels.

One day, the Presbyterian Church called a meeting to decide what to do about the squirrels. After much prayer and consideration they determined that the squirrels were predestined to be there and they shouldn't interfere with God's divine will.

In the Baptist Church the squirrels had taken up habitation in the baptistery. The deacons met and decided to put a cover on the baptistery and drown the squirrels in it. The squirrels escaped somehow and there were twice as many there the next week.

The Methodist Church got together and decided that they were not in a position to harm any of God's creation. So, they humanely trapped the Squirrels and set them free a few miles outside of town. Three days later, the squirrels were back.

But the Catholic Church came up with the best and most effective solution. They baptized the squirrels and registered them as members of the church. Now they only see them on Christmas, Ash Wednesday, Palm Sunday and Easter.

Not much was heard about the Jewish Synagogue. They had taken one squirrel and had a short service with him called circumcision and they haven't seen a squirrel on the property since. †



WHAT WE LEARN THROUGH THE AGES...

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



- I learned that I like my teacher because she cries when we sing "Silent Night"...Age 6
- I learned that when I wave to people in the country, they stop what they are doing and wave back...Age 9
- I learned that just when I get my room the way I like it, Mom makes me clean it up...Age 13
- I learned that if you want to cheer yourself up, you should try cheering someone else up...Age 14
- I learned that although it's hard to admit it, I'm secretly glad my parents are strict with me...Age 15
- I learned that silent company is often more healing than words of advice...Age 24
- I learned that brushing my child's hair is one of life's great pleasures...Age 26
- I learned that wherever I go, the world's worst drivers have followed me there...Age 29
- I learned that if someone says something unkind about me, I must live so that no one will believe it...Age 39
- I learned that there are people who love you dearly but just don't know how to show it...Age 41
- I learned that you can make someone's day by simply sending them a little card...Age 44
- I learned that the greater a person's sense of guilt, the greater his need to cast blame on others...Age 46
- I learned that children and grandparents are natural allies...Age 47
- I learned that singing "Amazing Grace" can lift my spirits for hours...Age 49
- I learned that motel mattresses are better on the side away from the phone....Age 50
- I learned that you can tell a lot about a person by the way they handles these three things: a rainy day, lost luggage, and tangled Christmas tree lights...Age 51
- I learned that keeping a vegetable garden is worth a medicine cabinet full of pills....Age 52
- I learned that regardless of your relationship with your parents, you miss them terribly after they die...Age 53
- I learned that making a living is not the same thing as making a life...Age 58
- I learned that if you want to do something positive for your children, try to improve your marriage...Age 61
- I learned that life sometimes gives you a second chance...Age 62
- I learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands. You need be able to throw something back...Age 64
- I learned that if you pursue happiness, it will elude you. But if you focus on your family, the needs of others, your work, meeting new people, and doing the very best you can, happiness will find you...Age 65
- I learned that whenever I decide something with kindness, I usually make the right decision...Age 66
- I learned that everyone can use a prayer...Age 72
- I learned that it pays to believe in miracles. And to tell the truth, I've seen several...Age 73
- I learned that even when I have pains, I don't have to be one...Age 82
- I learned that every day you should reach out and touch someone. People love that human touch - holding hands, a warm hug, or just a friendly pat on the back...Age 85
- I learned that I still have a lot to learn...Age 92 ✚

HE THREW IT ALL AWAY

ROBERT P. GEORGE*
MARCH 20, 2009

In the early 1970s, Lutheran pastor Richard John Neuhaus was poised to become the nation's next great liberal public intellectual—the Reinhold Niebuhr of his generation. He had going for him everything he needed to be not merely accepted but lionized by the liberal establishment. First, of course, there were his natural gifts as a thinker, writer, and speaker. Then there was a set of left-liberal credentials that were second to none. He had been an outspoken and prominent civil rights campaigner, indeed, someone who had marched literally arm-in-arm with his friend Martin Luther King. He had founded one of the most visible anti-Vietnam war organizations. He moved easily in elite circles and was regarded by everyone as a “right-thinking” (i.e., left-thinking) intellectual-activist operating within the world of mainline Protestant religion.

Then something happened: Abortion. It became something it had never been before, namely, a contentious issue in American culture and politics. Neuhaus opposed abortion for the same reasons he had fought for civil rights and against the Vietnam War. At the root of his thinking was the conviction that human beings, as creatures fashioned in the image and likeness of God, possess a profound, inherent, and equal dignity. This dignity must be respected by all and protected by law. That, so far as Neuhaus was concerned, was not only a biblical mandate but also the bedrock principle of the American constitutional order. Respect for the dignity of human beings meant, among other things, not subjecting them to a system of racial oppression; not wasting their lives in futile wars; not slaughtering them in the womb.

It is important to remember that in those days it was not yet clear whether support for “abortion rights” would be a litmus test for standing as a “liberal.” After all, the early movement for abortion included many conservatives, such as James J. Kilpatrick, who viewed abortion not only as a solution for the private difficulties of a “girl in trouble,” but also as a way of dealing with the public problem of impoverished (and often unmarried) women giving birth to children who would increase welfare costs to taxpayers.

At the same time, more than a few notable liberals were outspokenly pro-life. In the early 1970s, Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy, for example, replied to constituents' inquiries about his position on abortion by saying that it was a form of “violence” incompatible with his vision of an America generous enough to care for and protect all its children, born and unborn. Some of the most eloquent and passionate pro-life speeches of the time were given by the Rev. Jesse Jackson. In condemning abortion, Jackson never failed to note that he himself was born to an unwed mother who would likely have been tempted to abort him had abortion been legal and easily available at the time.

The liberal argument against abortion was straightforward and powerful. “We liberals believe in the inherent and equal dignity of every member of the human family. We believe that the role of government is to protect all members of the community against brutality and oppression, especially the weakest and most vulnerable. We do not believe in solving personal or social problems by means of violence. We seek a fairer, nobler, more humane way. The personal and social problems created by unwanted pregnancy should not be solved by offering women the ‘choice’ of destroying their children in

He Threw It All Away (Continued on page 16)



FATHER RICHARD
JOHN NEUHAUS
1936-2009

At the same time, more than a few notable liberals were outspokenly pro-life. In the early 1970s, Massachusetts Senator Edward M. Kennedy, for example, replied to constituents' inquiries about his position on abortion by saying that it was a form of “violence” incompatible with his vision of an America generous enough to care for and protect all its children, born and unborn.

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(Continued from page 15) ***He Threw It All Away***

utero; rather, as a society we should reach out in love and compassion to mother and child alike.”

So it was that Pastor Neuhaus and many like him saw no contradiction between their commitment to liberalism and their devotion to the pro-life cause. On the contrary, they understood their pro-life convictions to be part and parcel of what it meant to be a liberal. They were “for the little guy”—and the unborn child was “the littlest guy of all.”

In the period from 1972 to 1980, however, the liberal movement steadily embraced the cause of abortion—on demand, at any point in gestation, funded with taxpayer dollars. The conservative movement went in precisely the opposite direction. In 1973, the Supreme Court handed down its decisions in *Roe v. Wade* and its companion case of *Doe v. Bolton*, effectively wiping out state laws forbidding the killing of unborn children by abortion. Ironically, several of the justices responsible for these decisions were regarded (and regarded themselves) as conservatives. Evidently, they were conservatives in the mold of James J. Kilpatrick. But the larger conservative movement did not accept *Roe* and *Doe*. The movement rejected these decisions for two reasons: first, they represented an unconstitutional (and, indeed, anti-constitutional) usurpation by the judiciary of the powers placed or left by the Constitution in the hands of legislatures; second, they constituted a grave injustice against abortion’s tiny victims. By contrast, the liberal movement circled the wagons around *Roe* and *Doe*, celebrating these decisions as victories for women’s rights and individual liberties.

By 1980, when Ronald Reagan (who as governor of California in the 1960s had signed an abortion liberalization bill) sought the presidency as a staunchly pro-life conservative and Edward Kennedy, having switched sides on abortion, challenged the wishy-washy President Jimmy Carter in the Democratic primaries as a doctrinaire “abortion rights” liberal, things had pretty much sorted themselves out. “Pro-choice” conservatives were gradually becoming rarer, and “pro-life” liberals were nearly an endangered species. (Jesse Jackson was still hanging on to his pro-life convictions, but he too yielded to the liberal movement’s pro-abortion orthodoxy when he decided to seek the Democratic nomination for president in 1984.)

Richard Neuhaus, however, stood by his convictions and refused to yield. If the pro-life position is to be counted as the “conservative” position on the question of abortion, then fidelity to the cause of the unborn is how Neuhaus became the conservative that he was. He didn’t change. His principles didn’t change. He believed in 1984 and beyond what he had believed in 1974 and 1964. For him, justice, love, and compassion all pointed to protecting every member of the human family, however young, small, and dependent. What society owed to pregnant women in need was not the ghoulish compassion of the abortionist’s knife, but the love, moral and spiritual support, and practical assistance they needed to take care of themselves and their children. As Fr. Neuhaus’s great friend, and fellow Lutheran convert to Catholicism, Fr. Leonard Klein, put it in a beautiful tribute, “Richard’s politics changed precisely because his principles did not change.”

On some issues, Neuhaus’s political views shifted because he came to doubt the wisdom and efficacy of programs and policies he had once believed in. The liberal movement’s capitulation to the abortion license and the conservative movement’s resolution to fight it opened him up to a reconsideration of where he should be—which for him meant a reconsideration of where the truth was to be found—on a variety of questions. He grew more skeptical of the bureaucratized big-government programs by which liberals sought to fight poverty and other social ills. He began to see that most of these programs were not only ineffective, but counterproductive. For a variety of reasons, statist solutions to poverty tended to increase and entrench rather than diminish it. And not unrelatedly, governmental expansion tended to weaken the institutions of civil society, above all the family and the church, on which we rely for the formation of decent, honest, responsible, civic-minded, law-abiding citizens—citizens capable of caring for themselves, their families, and people in need.

Of course, Neuhaus famously fought the liberal movement as it increasingly associated itself with the cause of driving religion and religiously-informed moral witness out of the public square and into the merely private domain. His book *The Naked Public Square* did far more than introduce a catchy phrase; it revolutionized the debate. Neuhaus easily saw through the dubious (and sometimes laughable) “interpretations” of the religion clause of the First Amendment by which ACLU lawyers and judges in their ideological thrall attempted to privatize religion and marginalize people of faith. What motivated him most strongly, however, was the perception of

He Threw It All Away (Continued on page 17)

(Continued from page 16) *He Threw It All Away*

the indispensable roles played by religious institutions and other mediating structures in preserving a regime of ordered liberty against unjustified encroachments by the administrative apparatus of the state. The real danger, as Neuhaus rightly saw it, was not that religious groups would seize control of the state and establish a theocracy; it was that the state would undermine the autonomy and standing of those structures that provide credible sources of authority in people's lives beyond the authority of the state—structures that could, when necessary, prophetically challenge unjust or overweening state power.

For Neuhaus, the liberal movement had gone wrong not only on the sanctity of human life, but on the range of issues on which it had succumbed to the ideology of the post-1960s cultural left. While celebrating “personal liberation,” “diverse lifestyles,” “self-expression,” and “if it feels good, do it,” all in the name of respecting “the individual,” liberalism had gone hook, line, and sinker for a set of doctrines and social policies that would only increase the size and enhance the control of the state—mainly by enervating the only institutions available to provide counterweights to state power.

The post-1960s liberal establishment—from the *New York Times* to NBC, from Harvard to Stanford, from the American Bar Association to Americans for Democratic Action—having embraced the combination of statism and lifestyle individualism that defines what it means to be a “liberal” (or “progressive”) today, could not understand Richard Neuhaus or, in truth, abide him. Far from being lionized, he was loathed by them, albeit with a grudging respect for the intellectual gifts they once hoped he would place in the service of liberal causes. Those gifts were deployed relentlessly—and to powerful effect—against them and all their works and ways.

And so Fr. Richard John Neuhaus did not go through life, as it once seemed he would, collecting honorary degrees from the most prestigious universities, giving warmly received speeches before major professional associations and at international congresses of the great and the good, being a celebrated guest at social and political gatherings on the Upper West Side, or appearing on the Sunday network news shows as spiritual guarantor of the moral validity of liberalism's favored policies and practices.

His profound commitment to the sanctity of human life in all stages and conditions placed him on a different path, one that led him out of the liberal fold and into intense opposition. As a kind of artifact of his youth, he remained to the end a registered member of the Democratic Party. But he stood defiantly against many of the doctrines and policies that came to define that Party in his lifetime. He was, in fact, their most forceful and effective critic—the scourge of the post-1960s liberals. He was not, as things turned out, their Niebuhr, but their nemesis. †

SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

"It is not easy to say 'No' to oneself; that is why so many philosophers have erected a philosophy of life based on saying 'Yes' to every impulse and desire while dignifying it with the name 'self-expression.'

But the fact still remains that serious progress in every walk of life demands some form of restraint." †

MORE ON HERESY



THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE

To substantiate this reading of history, More goes back a thousand years and recalls the problems Augustine had with the Donatists. For most of his long life, St. Augustine “had with great patience borne and suffered their malice, only writing and preaching in reproof of their errors, and had not only done them no temporal harm, but also had prevented and resisted others who would have done it.” Finally, however, “for the peace of good people,” Augustine found it necessary to exhort “Count Boniface and others to repress them with force and threaten them with bodily punishment.”

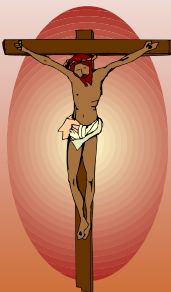
Augustine’s experience was confirmed by “holy Saint Jerome and other virtuous Fathers.” Yet none of these Church Fathers allowed the church itself to use physical force against heretics: this was a matter for the civil government, a means sometimes needed in the effort to avoid “common sedition, insurrection, and open war”—All of which could “in the beginning be right easily avoided, by punishment of those few that were the first.”

Such punishment, More explains, can be a civil and moral obligation, since “nature, reason, and God’s behest find first the prince to safeguard his people” and then also “bind every man to help and defend his good and harmless neighbor against the malice and cruelty of the wrongdoer.”

What makes heresy such a difficult social disorder, says More, is the hardened pride which is inevitably involved. Since “pride is the very mother of all heresies,” heretics can come to a point where only the frantic pleasure of their own will can satisfy and content them. These proud fantasies arise among the learned “because they want to be singular among the people”; they arise among the not-so-learned because they “long to seem far better learned than they are.” In either case, the reward for their labor is the “delight of beholding what pleasure the people have in their preaching.”

Thomas More: A Portrait of Courage Gerald B. Wegemer Scepter Publishers (p. 126) †

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*

- ◆ Judi McEachon (death)
- ◆ Dr. Douglas McKee (deceased)
- ◆ Bill Allard (special intention)
 - ◆ Carol Flynn (illness)
 - ◆ 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)
- ◆ Anne Lanphar (special intention)
 - ◆ Children in Juvenile Hall †

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI

*St. Peter's Square
Wednesday, November 19, 2008*

The Doctrine of Justification: from Works to Faith

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

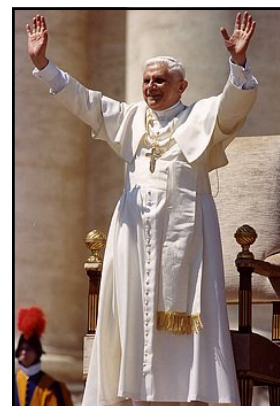
On the journey we are making under St Paul's guidance, let us now reflect on a topic at the centre of the controversies of the century of the Reformation: the question of justification. How does man become just in God's eyes? When Paul met the Risen One on the road to Damascus he was an accomplished man; irreproachable according to the justice deriving from the Law (cf. Phil 3:6), Paul surpassed many of his contemporaries in the observance of the Mosaic Law and zealously upheld the traditions of his fathers (cf. Gal 1:14). The illumination of Damascus radically changed his life; he began to consider all merits acquired in an impeccable religious career as "refuse", in comparison with the sublimity of knowing Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 3:8). The Letter to the Philippians offers us a moving testimony of Paul's transition from a justice founded on the Law and acquired by his observance of the required actions, to a justice based on faith in Christ. He had understood that what until then had seemed to him to be a gain, before God was, in fact, a loss; and thus he had decided to stake his whole existence on Jesus Christ (cf. Phil 3:7). The treasure hidden in the field and the precious pearl for whose purchase all was to be invested were no longer in function of the Law, but Jesus Christ, his Lord.

The relationship between Paul and the Risen One became so deep as to induce him to maintain that Christ was no longer solely his life but also his very living, to the point that to be able to reach him death became a gain (cf. Phil 1:21). This is not to say he despised life, but that he realized that for him at this point there was no other purpose in life and thus he had no other desire than to reach Christ as in an athletic competition to remain with him forever. The Risen Christ had become the beginning and the end of his existence, the cause and the goal of his race. It was only his concern for the development in faith of those he had evangelized and his anxiety for all of the Churches he founded (cf. 2 Cor 11:28) that induced him to slow down in his race towards his one Lord, to wait for his disciples so they might run with him towards the goal. Although from a perspective of moral integrity he had nothing to reproach himself in his former observance of the Law, once Christ had reached him he preferred not to make judgments on himself (cf. 1 Cor 4:3-4). Instead he limited himself to resolving to press on, to make his own the One who had made him his own (cf. Phil 3:12).

It is precisely because of this personal experience of relationship with Jesus Christ that Paul henceforth places at the centre of his Gospel an irreducible opposition between the two alternative paths to justice: one built on the works of the Law, the other founded on the grace of faith in Christ. The alternative between justice by means of works of the Law and that by faith in Christ thus became one of the domi-



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



(Continued from page 19) *Papal Message*

nant themes that run through his Letters: "We ourselves, who are Jews by birth and not Gentile sinners, yet who know that a man is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus in order to be justified by faith in Christ, and not by works of the law; because by works of the law no one will be justified" (Gal 2:15-16). And to the Christians of Rome he reasserts that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus" (Rm 3:23-24). And he adds "we hold that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the law" (*ibid.*, v. 28). At this point Luther translated: "justified by faith alone". I shall return to this point at the end of the Catechesis. First, we must explain what is this "Law" from which we are freed and what are those "works of the Law" that do not justify. The opinion that was to recur systematically in history already existed in the community at Corinth. This opinion consisted in thinking that it was a question of moral law and that the Christian freedom thus consisted in the liberation from ethics. Thus in Corinth the term "*πάντα μοι ἔξεστιν*" (I can do what I like) was widespread. It is obvious that this interpretation is wrong: Christian freedom is not libertinism; the liberation of which St Paul spoke is not liberation from good works.

So what does the Law from which we are liberated and which does not save mean? For St Paul, as for all his contemporaries, the word "Law" meant the Torah in its totality, that is, the five books of Moses. The Torah, in the Pharisaic interpretation, that which Paul had studied and made his own, was a complex set of conduct codes that ranged from the ethical nucleus to observances of rites and worship and that essentially determined the identity of the just person. In particular, these included circumcision, observances concerning pure food and ritual purity in general, the rules regarding the observance of the Sabbath, etc. codes of conduct that also appear frequently in the debates between Jesus and his contemporaries. All of these observances that express a social, cultural and religious identity had become uniquely important in the time of Hellenistic culture, starting from the third century B.C. This culture which had become the universal culture of that time and was a seemingly rational culture; a polytheistic culture, seemingly tolerant constituted a strong pressure for cultural uniformity and thus threatened the identity of Israel, which was politically constrained to enter into this common identity of the Hellenistic culture. This resulted in the loss of its own identity, hence also the loss of the precious heritage of the faith of the Fathers, of the faith in the one God and in the promises of God.

Against this cultural pressure, which not only threatened the Israelite identity but also the faith in the one God and in his promises, it was necessary to create a wall of distinction, a shield of defense to protect the precious heritage of the faith; this wall consisted precisely in the Judaic observances and prescriptions. Paul, who had learned these observances in their role of defending God's gift, of the inheritance of faith in one God alone, saw this identity threatened by the freedom of the Christians this is why he persecuted them. At the moment of his encounter with the Risen One he understood that with Christ's Resurrection the situation had changed radically. With Christ, the God of Israel, the one true God, became the God of all peoples. The wall as he says in his Letter to the Ephesians between Israel and the Gentiles, was no longer necessary: it is Christ who protects us from polytheism and

Papal Message (Continued on page 21)



**THE SEVEN ACTS
OF MERCY**

Caravaggio

(1607)

(Continued from page 20) *Papal Message*

all of its deviations; it is Christ who unites us *with* and *in* the one God; it is Christ who guarantees our true identity within the diversity of cultures. The wall is no longer necessary; our common identity within the diversity of cultures is Christ, and it is he who makes us just. Being just simply means being with Christ and in Christ. And this suffices. Further observances are no longer necessary. For this reason Luther's phrase: "*faith alone*" is true, if it is not opposed to faith in charity, in love. Faith is looking at Christ, entrusting oneself to Christ, being united to Christ, conformed to Christ, to his life. And the form, the life of Christ, is love; hence to believe is to conform to Christ and to enter into his love. So it is that in the Letter to the Galatians in which he primarily developed his teaching on justification St Paul speaks of faith that works through love (cf. [Gal 5:14](#)).

Paul knows that in the twofold love of God and neighbor the whole of the Law is present and carried out. Thus in communion with Christ, in a faith that creates charity, the entire Law is fulfilled. We become just by entering into communion with Christ who is Love. We shall see the same thing in the Gospel next Sunday, the Solemnity of Christ the King. It is the Gospel of the judge whose sole criterion is love. What he asks is only this: Did you visit me when I was sick? When I was in prison? Did you give me food to eat when I was hungry, did you clothe me when I was naked? And thus justice is decided in charity. Thus, at the end of this Gospel we can almost say: love alone, charity alone. But there is no contradiction between this Gospel and St Paul. It is the same vision, according to which communion with Christ, faith in Christ, creates charity. And charity is the fulfillment of communion with Christ. Thus, we are just by being united with him and in no other way.

At the end, we can only pray the Lord that he help us to believe; really believe. Believing thus becomes life, unity with Christ, the transformation of our life. And thus, transformed by his love, by the love of God and neighbor, we can truly be just in God's eyes. †



**ST MARTIN
AND THE BEGGAR**

El Greco
(1597)

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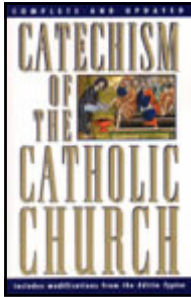
THE CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

PART THREE: LIFE IN CHRIST

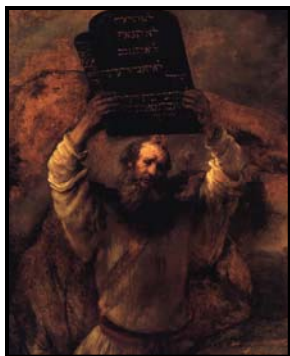
SECTION ONE: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

CHAPTER ONE: "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART, AND WITH YOUR WHOLE SOUL AND WITH YOUR WHOLE MIND"

ARTICLE 1: THE FIRST COMMANDMENT



CATECHISM CORNER



MOSES SMASHING
THE TABLETS
OF THE LAW

Rembrandt

(1659)

I. "YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND HIM ONLY SHALL YOU SERVE"

2084 God makes himself known by recalling his all-powerful loving, and liberating action in the history of the one he addresses: "I brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." the first word contains the first commandment of the Law: "You shall fear the LORD your God; you shall serve him.... You shall not go after other gods." God's first call and just demand is that man accept him and worship him.

2085 The one and true God first reveals his glory to Israel. The revelation of the vocation and truth of man is linked to the revelation of God. Man's vocation is to make God manifest by acting in conformity with his creation "in the image and likeness of God":

There will never be another God, Trypho, and there has been no other since the world began . . . than he who made and ordered the universe. We do not think that our God is different from yours. He is the same who brought your fathers out of Egypt "by his powerful hand and his outstretched arm." We do not place our hope in some other god, for there is none, but in the same God as you do: the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

2086 "The first commandment embraces faith, hope, and charity. When we say 'God' we confess a constant, unchangeable being, always the same, faithful and just, without any evil. It follows that we must necessarily accept his words and have complete faith in him and acknowledge his authority. He is almighty, merciful, and infinitely beneficent... Who could not place all hope in him? Who could not love him when contemplating the treasures of goodness and love he has poured out on us? Hence the formula God employs in the Scripture at the beginning and end of his commandments: 'I am the LORD.'"

FAITH

2087 Our moral life has its source in faith in God who reveals his love to us. St. Paul speaks of the "obedience of faith" as our first obligation. He shows that "ignorance of God" is the principle and explanation of all moral deviations. Our duty toward God is to believe in him and to bear witness to him.

2088 The first commandment requires us to nourish and protect our faith with prudence and vigilance, and to reject everything that is opposed to it. There are various ways of sinning against faith:

Voluntary doubt about the faith disregards or refuses to hold as true what God has revealed and the Church proposes for belief. *Involuntary doubt* refers to *hesitation in believing, difficulty in overcoming objections connected with the faith, or also anxiety* aroused by its obscurity. If deliberately cultivated doubt can lead to spiritual blindness.

2089 *Incredulity* is the neglect of revealed truth or the willful refusal to assent to it. "Heresy is the obstinate post-baptismal denial of some truth which must be believed with divine and catholic faith, or it is likewise an obstinate doubt concerning the same; apostasy is the total repudiation of the Christian faith; schism is the refusal of submission to the Roman Pontiff or of communion with the members of the Church subject to him." ✠

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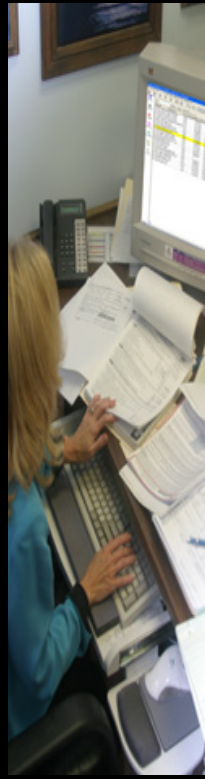


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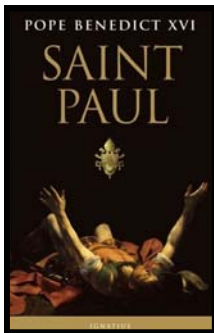
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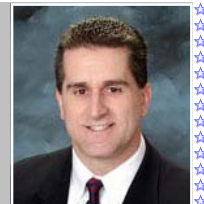


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