


# Ad Veritatem

Volume 15 Issue 4

St. Thomas More Society of Orange County

APRIL 2010

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

*"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."*

*A Book for All Seasons*  
*Arranged by E.E. Reynolds (Pg 109)*

## APRIL MEETING:

**WEDNESDAY APRIL 21, 2010 NOON**

**SPEAKER: JOHN FLYNN, ESQ.**

**TOPIC: THE RIDDLE OF SUFFERING: THE CHALLENGE TO FAITH & THE ANSWER OF THE CROSS**

"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 1,000.

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

*St. Thomas More, please pray for us. †*

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**FR. HUGH BARBOUR,**

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*St. Michael's Abbey*

**APRIL**  
**MEETING**

**JOHN FLYNN, ESQ.**

***“THE RIDDLE OF SUFFERING: THE CHALLENGE TO FAITH AND THE ANSWER OF THE CROSS”***

**WHEN:**  
**NOON**  
**Wed. April 21**

**WHERE:**  
**Jilio-Ryan Hunter & Olsen Ct Reporters**  
**14661 Franklin #150**  
**Tustin, CA**

**FOR DIRECTIONS**  
**(714) 424-9902**  
**www.jilioryan.com**

**COST:**  
**\$15 lunch**

The problem of suffering has long plagued philosophers and theologians, and has always, in much more concrete and painful ways, afflicted the faithful. To some, their suffering, or the suffering of loved ones, has resulted in a tragic loss of faith. What is the answer to the silence of God? This month's speaker, John Flynn, drawing on the spiritual treasury of the Church, will propose some answers to, and possible perspectives on, the problem of suffering that may provide light, consolation and hope.

John 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 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. He has tried to attend Mass every day since that day. John has been married for 32 years to his wife, Susanne, and is the father of two sons, Jack, 31, and Bobby, 28. †

**STM MONTHLY MTGS:**  
**3RD WEDNESDAY OF MONTH:**

**MAY 19**  
**JUNE 16**  
**JULY 21**  
**AUGUST 18 †**

**CALENDAR**  
**REMINDERS**



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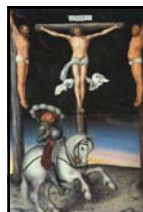
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A  
MESSAGE  
FROM  
OUR  
CHAPLAIN



CHRIST GIVING THE  
KEYS TO ST PETER

Lorenzo Veneziano

(1369)

## HOW DO I KNOW THE TRUE CHURCH?

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

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

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

Since the time of the Protestant Reformation, many in the West have been afflicted by what the Holy Father calls "*philosophies of suspicion.*" This means that the first question many people ask is not "*What is this?*" or "*Is it true?*" but, rather, "*How can I know for sure?*"

Protestantism was born out of this attitude, a modernist and unbiblical approach to divinely revealed Truth. The whole thrust of Protestantism is to establish an unassailable personal authority to determine truth and to give the individual an absolute assurance of his salvation.

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

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

The normal, serene approach appropriate for human nature is to assume that knowledge, and knowledge of the truth will lead to happiness and salvation. If one examines the Sacred Scriptures, those who have faith accept God's word in simplicity because they are used to accepting what is presented in a reasonable and authoritative way. They ask questions: "*How can this be since I know not man?*" "*Can a man return to his mother's womb?*" "*Then who can be saved?*" They ask such questions because they are reasonable and want explanations, not because they are driven by anxiety about their salvation. The biblical man knows that the truth will make him free and will lead him to salvation, so he seeks truth first trusting that happiness and salvation will follow: "*Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life,*" said St. Peter just after our Lord pronounced the most unprovable and mysterious words he ever uttered, in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, words which Protestants cannot accept on their clear meaning. St. Peter professed the truth in the hope of salvation. He did not say first, "*I am a sinner in need of a savior,*" but "*Depart from me, I am a sinful man.*" First came the objective fact, the holiness of God and His truth, and only then the gift of salvation. Protestantism "*poisons the well*" by beginning with a doubt as to whether man can know any truth at all, and then resolving it with a "*leap of faith*" which cannot and must not be explained rationally. Catholicism assumes man's orientation toward the truth as part of his nature and presumes that the evidence, the testimony of the prophets and saints, their miracles and teachings, is sufficient to justify accepting the gift of faith which is offered to all by "*the light which enlighteneth every man coming into the world.*" For those who need proof of the Christian faith by miracles, or insist on proof without miracles, St. Thomas Aquinas has this masterful, serene, and very Catholic advice:

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

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

*Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone  
who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.  
But do this with gentleness and respect. 1 Peter 3:15 †*



## HOPE SPRINGS ETERNAL

BISHOP NORMAN MCFARLAND

ORIGINALLY PRINTED IN JUNE 2003

*Let us be like a bird perched for a moment on a frail branch while it sings; although he feels it bend, yet he sings his song, knowing he has wings.* Victor Hugo (1802-1885)

“Hope! The fault of many Christians these days is that they hope too little. At every struggle, at every obstacle, they believe that is the downfall of the Church. They are the apostles in the boat during the storm; they forget that the Savior is with them. They forget that all ages of the Church have had plenty of help to cause people to hope. Catholicism, which in our days still has its storms, also has its reassuring signs.”

The quotation sounds like a commentary on the current scene. The writer, however, was a contemporary and acquaintance of Victor Hugo – Frederick Ozanam by name, the founder in 1833 of the Society of Saint Vincent de Paul, recently declared Blessed by Pope John Paul II. But the observation is indeed *ad rem* in today’s climate, for if ever there was an age that cries for hope, it is our own.

I feel there is no need to argue the point for the reader who lives in today’s Church and in today’s world. Catholics have been reeling with the scandals, the problems, difficulties and concerns, which have inundated the Household of the Faith during these recent years. At the same time, blanket media coverage of wars and their aftermath; blood baths by the millions in countries not being covered by the media, with subjugated peoples and starving masses around the world; widespread terrorism and violence; the threat of weapons of mass destruction -- nuclear, biological, chemical; the deep divisions among people about the effective and proper way to combat these evils; the uneasy relationships between the United States and many countries -- these do not gentle the mind toward achieving the peace and serenity we long for. Not to overlook the personal worries and problems that plague most people almost as a matter of course: there is sickness and there are financial difficulties, there are painful divisions within families, there is love lost and there are bitter disappointments; parents worry about their children and children worry about their parents.

Everywhere one is confronted with bewildering paradoxes. Mankind’s present unhappiness seems to stem largely from the very pursuit of happiness. One reaches out for life, for knowledge, for progress, and is frustrated by the seemingly insurmountable obstacles that life, knowledge, and progress place before their fulfillment. We desire unity, and yet conflicting ideologies on how to secure unity bring dissension and dispute.

But in the middle of it all, during the entire fifty days between Easter and Pentecost, the Church in her liturgy continues with the unrestrained joy and hope of her Paschal Alleluias. The news is glorious! Tell the world! The tomb is empty! And in the excitement of Pentecost we see the apostles taking to the streets with the good news: “With great power the apostles bore witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 4:33). This stark fact of the resurrection so illumines the rest of reality that the Church forever more will see everything in its light -- war and peace, good times and bad, suffering and death.

The resurrection of the incarnate God is the foundation of our hope, existing not as the fond wish of a Pollyanna, but confidently grounded in the realities of our faith. It assures us that, with God’s promised grace, we will see our way through what now seems such a daunting challenge, and so attain our eternal destiny. “On the third day He rose again in fulfillment of the Scriptures,” is the key affirmation of the Church’s profession of faith. One has no stronger reason for living; no surer protection against pessimism and corruption; no more glorious object of his delight, love and worship; no clearer demand for his efforts to help raise up a fallen world.

Christ said “Be not afraid.” And Pope John Paul remarked, “Peoples and nations of the entire world need to hear those words. Their conscience needs to grow in the certainty that Someone exists who holds in His hands the destiny of the passing world; Someone who holds the keys to death and the nether world (cf. Rev. 1:18); Someone who is the Alpha and the Omega of human history (cf. Rev. 22:13) – be it the individual or collective history. And this Someone is Love (cf. 1 Jn. 4:8, 16) – Love that became man, Love crucified and risen, Love unceasingly present among men” (*Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, pp. 221-222).

But there is always the danger that myopic concentration on the sad state of affairs engulfing us can lead to a distorted vision of the big picture, and subvert proper priorities. We are much tied to this life though we know we do not have here a lasting city, and we are reluctant to give up what



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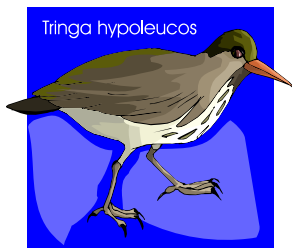
(Continued from page 5) *Hope Springs Eternal*

we perceive to be life's pleasures for the way of Christ. One is reminded of a line from Francis Thompson's poem, *The Hound of Heaven*, "For, though I knew His love Who followed / yet I was sore adread / lest, having Him, I must have naught besides." And I cannot help but think of that fellow who, the other day when traffic was all tied up on the 55 and just inching along, refused me access from an on-ramp so that he might save himself a millisecond. As I eased in behind his car, I noticed the declaration on the license plate holder: "It's about me."

No, it isn't! Saint Augustine perhaps said it most succinctly: "You have made us for Yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You" (*The Confessions*). Or as I -- I and Saint Augustine!! -- once titled an essay, "Let go and let God." That's when we will finally have hope realized. ☩

## A SANDPIPER TO BRING YOU JOY

### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY



She was six years old when I first met her on the beach near where I live. I drive to this beach, a distance of three or four miles, whenever the world begins to close in on me.

She was building a sand castle or something and looked up, her eyes blue as the sea.

"Hello," she said. I answered with a nod, not really in the mood to bother with a small child.

"I'm building," she said.

"I see that. What is it?" I asked, not caring.

"Oh I don't know, I just like the feel of the sand."

That sounds good, I thought, and slipped off my shoes. A sandpiper glided by.

"That's a joy," the child said.

"It's what?"

"It's a joy. My mama says sandpipers come to bring us joy."

The bird went glissading down the beach. "Good-bye joy," I muttered to myself, "hello pain," and turned to walk on. I was depressed; my life seemed completely out of balance.

"What's your name?" She wouldn't give up.

"Ruth," I answered. "I'm Ruth Peterson."

"Mine's Wendy...and I'm six."

"Hi, Wendy."

She giggled. "You're funny," she said. In spite of my gloom I laughed too and walked on.

Her musical giggle followed me. "Come again, Mrs. P," she called. "We'll have another happy day."

The days and weeks that followed belonged to others: a group of unruly Boy Scouts, PTA meetings, an ailing mother. The sun was shining one morning as I took my hands out of the dishwasher.

"I need a sandpiper," I said to myself, gathering up my coat.

The never-changing balm of the seashore awaited me. The breeze was chilly, but I strode along, trying to recapture the serenity I needed. I had forgotten the child and was startled when she appeared.

"Hello, Mrs. P," she said. "Do you want to play?"

"What did you have in mind?" I asked, with a twinge of annoyance.

"I don't know, you say."

"How about charades?" I asked sarcastically.

The tinkling laughter burst forth again. "I don't know what that is."

"Then let's just walk." Looking at her, I noticed the delicate fairness of her face.

"Where do you live?" I asked.

"Over there." She pointed toward a row of summer cottages. Strange, I thought, in winter.

"Where do you go to school?"

"I don't go to school. Mommy says we're on vacation."

She chattered little girl talk as we strolled up the beach, but my mind was on other things. When I left for home, Wendy said it had been a happy day.

# THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

JOHN FLYNN, ESQ.

## INTRODUCTION

Vatican II, the Council of renewal, closed in 1965. Certainly the look of the Church has changed considerably since then, but it is at times difficult to escape the intuition that renewal seems in other ways to have been nearly immobilized. Why does the debate about renewal seem so often to be fundamentally misdirected, as if the key to renewal lay merely (for example) in the choice of correct liturgical forms? There is no denying the integral relationship of liturgy to renewal, but the Church has a heart, as the newest doctor of the Church once declared,<sup>1</sup> and there is where renewal begins.

The Church is the meeting place of two hearts, divine and human, a truth that concedes the need for conversion, but also points to the means by which it may be realized. Traced below is the relationship of renewal to conversion, conversion to dialogue, and dialogue to suffering. Indeed, the dialogue promoted by Vatican II seems to have been intended by the Holy Spirit precisely so as to present the opportunity of suffering, specifically, the suffering of deeper conversion.

Finally, though it will no doubt seem ironic to some (perhaps many), with due regard for the convictions and sensibilities of non-Catholic Christians, the passage of suffering presented by dialogue has an unavoidably Marian dimension, one that is essential to fuller self-understanding, and to the authenticity of the dialogue necessary for conversion and renewal.

## THE HEART OF THE CHURCH

The key to the Church's renewal is her conversion, a thesis to which many in the Church will object: How can the Church, all-holy, be in need of conversion? John Paul II has proposed this response:

"Although she is holy because of her incorporation into Christ, the Church does not tire of doing penance: before God and man **she always acknowledges as her own her sinful sons and daughters**. As *Lumen Gentium* affirms: 'The Church, embracing sinners to her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal.'<sup>2</sup>

It is sometimes necessary to distinguish juridically between corporation and shareholders, or state and citizens. But the Church, as mother,<sup>3</sup> is the place of union between the heart of God and the heart of man.<sup>4</sup> She does not distance herself from her sons and daughters, and therefore bears the stain of their sins.

The heart of the Church is the one heart formed by the union of the two, the divine and the human:

"These dimensions together constitute 'one complex reality which comes together from a human and a divine element': The Church is essentially both **human** and divine, visible but endowed with invisible realities, zealous in action and dedicated to contemplation, present in the world, but as a pilgrim, so constituted that in her the human is directed toward and subordinated to the divine, the visible to the invisible, action to contemplation, and this present world to that city yet to come, the object of our quest."<sup>5</sup>

This union constitutes the core reality of the Church, revealed to the Church by her quest for self-understanding; "self-understanding" belongs to a vocabulary that points to the deeper meaning of renewal, a vocabulary used to extraordinary effect by Paul VI to describe the "pillars" of Vatican II in his opening address for the second session, referring to the Church's struggle for self-discovery and self-realization.<sup>6</sup> Renewal, understood in that sense, has less to do with "becoming" than it does "revealing". This is not to say, of course, that renewal resists change, but that change must be oriented to the goal of revealing. As Paul VI also observed, in *Ecclesiam Suam*:

"A vivid and lively self-awareness on the part of the Church inevitably leads to

*Heart of the Church* (Continued on page 8)



**CHRIST GIVING THE KEYS TO ST PETER**

**Giovanni Battista Castello**

(1598)

(Continued from page 7) *Heart of the Church*

a comparison between the ideal image of the Church as Christ envisaged it, His holy and spotless **bride**, and the actual image which the Church presents to the world today. . .

Hence the Church's heroic and impatient struggle for renewal: the **struggle** to correct those flaws introduced by its members which its own self-examination, mirroring its exemplar, Christ, points out to it and condemns."<sup>7</sup>

The Church has been slow to acknowledge the sins of her sons and daughters. But the reluctance to acknowledge such sins, and to repent for them, only preserves the burden of sin, obscuring the Church's beauty, concealing her supernatural attributes and inhibiting the Church's intrinsically ecumenical and evangelical tendencies.<sup>8</sup> The result has been not only to conceal the Church that is to be revealed by renewal, but also to thwart formation of the "style" proper to the work of renewal,<sup>9</sup> a style of openness to dialogue, the "style of the Second Vatican Council and the spirit in which it took place."<sup>10</sup>

Thus, John Paul II, since almost the beginning of his papacy, has led the Church in a program of repentance for the past sins of the Church's members, in the hope that the necessary self-examination will inspire the members of the Church to follow the path of deeper conversion, freeing the Church of the burden of sin, exposing her beauty, and laying the ground for true renewal.<sup>11</sup> This is hardly a novel way of conceiving reform:

"The same conception, applied to anthropology in general, is found in St. Bonaventure, who explains the path by which man truly becomes himself with the help of the likeness of the sculptor. The sculptor, says the great Franciscan theologian, does not **make** anything. Rather his work is '*ablatio*' – the removal of what is not really the sculpture. In this way, that is, by means of *ablatio*, the *nobilis forma* -- the noble form -- takes shape. In the same way, continues Bonaventure, **man, in order that God's image may shine radiantly in him, must first and foremost receive the purification whereby the divine Sculptor frees him from that dross that conceals the authentic figure of his being, making him appear to be nothing more than a stone block, whereas the divine form dwells in him. Rightly understood, this image contains the prototypical model of Church reform.**...Reform is ever-renewed *ablatio* -- removal, whose purpose is to allow the *nobilis forma*, the countenance of the bride, and with it the Bridegroom Himself, the living Lord, to appear."<sup>12</sup>

To understand the Church as the meeting place of two hearts, divine and human, is to understand the need for her conversion, and conversion as the revelation of Christ, who is too often obscured by the sins of the Church's sons and daughters.

## CONVERSION AND DIALOGUE

By what means is the "removal" of conversion to be accomplished? There is an essential and organic relationship between conversion and dialogue; conversion opens us to dialogue, and dialogue deepens our conversion.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, for the same reason Jesus commanded dialogue as the precondition of meaningful worship,<sup>14</sup> Vatican II identified dialogue as one of the keys to renewal.<sup>15</sup>

Dialogue does not, however, permit us to disregard truth for the sake of a "unity" achieved by surgeries that remove what is true and essential.<sup>16</sup> 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. When we deny truth to buy peace, the situation, supernaturally speaking, is unstable, because of truth's (i.e., the Holy Spirit's) desire for acknowledgment and recognition. The longer we suppress truth for the sake of maintaining a counterfeit peace, the more unstable the condition of the Church.<sup>17</sup>

At the same time, we cannot offend love in defending the truth, because love and truth exist to each other in a state of harmonious unity, a reality publicly 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."<sup>18</sup>

The unity of love and truth, grounded ultimately in the oneness of God, imposes specific demands upon the character of dialogue.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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.'<sup>21</sup>

This "style" refers to the mystery of 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

*Heart of the Church* (Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8) *Heart of the Church*

dialogue, but to a fundamental change in the orientation of one's faith,<sup>22</sup> involving "the human subject in his or her entirety"<sup>23</sup>: "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".<sup>24</sup> The relationship of conversion to the Church's in-built ecumenical impulses 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."<sup>25</sup>

But dialogue is effectively linked to conversion only by the Cross. The Church's self-discovery and self-realization must discover and reveal the radical demands presented by our debt to the Cross. We are, as John Paul II has said, "all equally indebted to our Redeemer,"<sup>26</sup> an equality that provides the source of true unity, overshadowing all other differences, providing, in addition, a new perspective on the meaning of dialogue. Conversely, the lack of openness to 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. This radical awareness of indebtedness (radical because of its predominance), an awareness always in need of renewal, promotes the cultivation of the styles, attitudes and mentalities essential for true renewal:

"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.***"<sup>27</sup>

## DIALOGUE AND SUFFERING

Dialogue, thus understood, refers to suffering. John Paul II has acknowledged the relationship, at least implicitly. 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," the Pope has 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."<sup>28</sup>

Suffering is perhaps the most challenging and daunting of all of the mysteries of human existence; for many, it has caused a tragic loss of faith. At the same time, membership in the Church enters us into a new, fundamentally different relationship to suffering, because the mystery of suffering is very much the mystery of the Church:

"Now I rejoice in my sufferings, for your sake, and in my flesh I am filling up ***what*** is lacking in the afflictions of Christ on behalf of His body, which is the church . . . ." <sup>29</sup>

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.***"<sup>30</sup>

The Cross is the answer to suffering, though we are yet unable to absorb the fullness of the response. We know the answer is complete, however, for God has no answer to any question that is greater than Himself:

"Love is also the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of ***suffering***. This answer has been given by God to man in the Cross of Jesus Christ."<sup>31</sup>

However difficult it is for us to absorb the totality of the response provided by the Cross, we know at the very least that if Christ did not suffer, we would not know the love of God: "***If the agony on the Cross had not happened, the truth that God is Love would have been unfounded.***"<sup>32</sup> The love of God is revealed precisely in the suffering of His Son. Love, therefore, in some way seems to derive its power and meaning from suffering, the test of love's authenticity.

Suffering is also the price of sin,<sup>33</sup> but in the divine plan it exists to serve mercy and promote conversion:

"This is an extremely important aspect of suffering. It is profoundly rooted in the entire Revelation of the Old

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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.<sup>34</sup>

Suffering both reveals and **unleashes** love.<sup>35</sup> For that reason, suffering is also mysteriously linked to man's transcendence, for, in the willingness to suffer for the sake of love, one rejects the finality of suffering: "Suffering seems to belong to man's transcendence: it is one of those points in which man is in a certain sense 'destined' to go beyond himself and he is called to this in a mysterious way."<sup>36</sup> Thus, suffering itself, endured for the sake of love, breaks the bonds of suffering. Through love, the same suffering that threatens to imprison us becomes the vehicle of our freedom. It is love, therefore, that imparts value to suffering, value revealed to us in the sufferings of Christ. The Cross, in a sense, is therefore present in all human suffering;<sup>37</sup> it has "divinized" suffering and made it fruitful.<sup>38</sup> For that reason, the suffering that might otherwise appear to be pointless, becomes transcendent, turning defeat into victory. Life answers death; God Himself enters our suffering. What appears to the world as folly is revealed to faith as divine wisdom. The Cross becomes the means by which to enter our own suffering, facilitating the development of new outlooks and attitudes that liberate human thinking from the apparent futility of suffering.<sup>39</sup>

And what has suffering to do with dialogue? Suffering is deeply embedded in the reality of dialogue; dialogue presents, in a sense, a decisive crucible for the Church, a passage of suffering intended by the Holy Spirit, it seems, for the implementation of Vatican II. 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. It is a fateful moment in the life of faith, the importance of which we overlook at our peril.<sup>40</sup> We can, at those moments, choose the way of self-vindication, disguised as zeal for the Church, or we can choose the way of the Cross. Our response to the challenge of dialogue reveals the depth of our conversion, and our readiness for renewal.

### THE MARIAN CORRIDOR

There is, finally, and ironically, a profoundly Marian dimension to this passage of suffering presented by dialogue. Mary has become, like her Son, a sign of contradiction,<sup>41</sup> the embodiment of the "Roman Catholic heresy," as Karl Barth put it.<sup>42</sup> Demurring to Barth's indictment of the Marian "heresy," "the human creature cooperating in its own salvation by making use of prevenient grace,"<sup>43</sup> Cardinal de Lubac contended that to call Mary a "type of the Church" is not enough:

"Catholic faith regarding Our Lady sums up symbolically, in its special case, the doctrine of human cooperation in the Redemption, and thus provides the synthesis, or matrix concept, as it were, of the dogma of the Church. . . . **But as long as we stop short at positing a functional analogy between the two, and a more or less exterior one at that, we have not fully grasped the reason for it. The links between Our Lady and the Church are not only numerous and close; they are essential, and woven from within. These two mysteries of the faith are not just solidary; we might say that they are 'one single and unique mystery.'**"<sup>44</sup>

The union of the divine and the human, the "one complex reality" that forms the Church, is already perfect in Mary:

"But while in the most Blessed Virgin the Church has already reached that perfection whereby she exists without spot or wrinkle, the faithful still strive to conquer sin **and** increase in holiness. And so they turn their eyes to Mary: in her, the Church is already 'all-holy'."<sup>45</sup>

What the Catechism has said about the coming together of the human and the divine in the Church, has been said elsewhere about Mary:

"In the Holy Spirit's union with Mary we observe more than the love of two beings: in one there is all the love of the Blessed Trinity; in the other all of creation's love. **So it is that in this union heaven and earth are joined; all of heaven with all the earth, the totality of eternal love with the totality of created love.** It is truly the summit of love."<sup>46</sup>

The Church is, accordingly (and we are by no means unaware of the unfortunately controversial nature of this terminology), co-redemptive by its very nature, an idea that should be regarded neither as an innovation nor as a merely secondary aspect of the Church's identity. Mary's unique role in the co-redemptive union that forms the Church is owed to her purity, her obedience and, most especially, to her maternity.<sup>47</sup> Nevertheless, while Mary's role is unique, she is not entirely alone. We are linked to Mary in co-redemption, that is, in the Church, because of our shared humanity, and our aspirations as members of the Church.<sup>48</sup> Co-redemption is the core reality of the Church; as such, it both illuminates and reveals the Church.

Co-redemption does not imply equality with Christ; perhaps the key to avoiding confusion lies in the careful choice of the correct "matrix concept," as Cardinal de Lubac might have said. Who, for example, would argue that the soul's desire for union with God is a "grasping at equality," or, to say it more simply, that union implies equality? What need has God for us? Yet, is He less God, or less "efficacious," because He desires union with us? The answer should be self-evident. In the same way, our union with the redemptive suffering of Christ takes nothing whatever away from the efficacy of His suffering. Indeed, it is precisely in His suffering where union is completed and perfected. Co-redemption, therefore, refers not to equality, but to **union**, the union of the divine and the human which comprises the Church. This union, to which the Church aspires, **is at all times**

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**oriented to salvation.** It draws its meaning and its power from the redemptive suffering of Christ, which, sacramentally, is not merely acknowledged in the Eucharist as a good to be affirmed, but as one to be shared: "Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink?"<sup>49</sup> Therein lies the power of the Eucharist: the union of the whole Church with the redemptive suffering of Christ.<sup>50</sup>

It is therefore in suffering where this union of the divine and the human is completed, as prefigured in the sufferings of Christ's Mother,<sup>51</sup> prophesied by Simeon,<sup>52</sup> and realized in the Church, where the two hearts, the divine and the human, meet:

"It is precisely the Church which ceaselessly draws on the infinite resources of the redemption, introducing it into the life of humanity, which is the dimension in which the redemptive suffering of Christ can be constantly completed by the suffering of man. **This also highlights the divine and human nature of the Church. Suffering seems in some way to share in the characteristics of this nature.** And for this reason suffering also has a special value in the eyes of the Church. It is something good, before which the Church bows down in reverence with all the depth of her faith in the redemption. She likewise bows down with all the depth of that faith with which she embraces within herself the inexpressible mystery of the Body of Christ."<sup>53</sup>

To understate the Marian dimension of the Church's identity is to understate the human, to obscure "the doctrine of human cooperation in the Redemption,...[the] matrix concept, as it were, of the dogma of the Church."<sup>54</sup> Though Mary is still too often unfortunately perceived as a stumbling block to ecumenical initiatives, we must have confidence that truth, in the long run, will serve unity, having found Mary, as the embodiment of the "dogma of the Church," at the "depths [that] may indeed provide the common ground to meet the other."<sup>55</sup> For that very reason, Mary is, paradoxically, a touchstone of authentic dialogue. Far from a stumbling block, Marian doctrine asks that we face each other directly, without dissimulation, and to endure the suffering that dialogue entails. Mary is, so to speak, the very corridor of suffering through which the Christian communions must pass on the path to unity.

### CONCLUSION

The key to renewal is conversion. The Church cannot be renewed if she is not converted, a truth not yet sufficiently appreciated. This conversion requires a specific form of suffering, dialogue oriented to the Cross and to conversion, demanding the intense pain of self-denial, denial of every impulse that sees in dialogue the opportunity for self-vindication rather than self-effacement.

Dialogue, guided by an acute awareness of indebtedness to the Cross, is the means chosen by the Holy Spirit for the conversion of the Church, an opportunity with which we are presented in every encounter, and one that we squander at great risk.

Renewal calls the Church neither backward nor forward, but Christward. The path to renewal is the Way of the Cross. †

### ENDNOTES

1. *The Story of a Soul: The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux*, chap. 11.
2. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (1994) ("TMA"), § 33, emphasis in original.
3. *Catechism*, § 169
4. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Mulieris Dignitatem* (1988), § 22. The reader is encouraged to see also the commentary of Father H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, O.P., on the teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe, as set forth in *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe* (Libertyville: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977), 19.
5. *Catechism*, § 771.
6. Xavier Rynne, *The Second Session: The Debates and Decrees of Vatican Council II, September 29 to December 4, 1963* (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Company, 1964), 347-363.
7. Paul VI, Encyclical, *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), §§ 10-11, emphasis added. The passage of thirty years did not change the twofold nature of the Church's introspection: "The Catholic Church acknowledges and confesses the *weakness of her members*, conscious that their sins are so many betrayals of and obstacles to the accomplishment of the Savior's plan. Because she feels herself constantly called to be renewed in the spirit of the Gospel, she does not cease to do penance. At the same time, she acknowledges and exalts still more the power of *the Lord*, who fills her with the gift of holiness, leads her forward, and conforms her to His Passion and Resurrection. John Paul II, Encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), ("UUS"), § 3, emphasis in original.
8. *UUS*, § 98.
9. *TMA*, §§ 33-35; *UUS*, § 11
10. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 162.
11. See, generally, Luigi Accattoli, *When a Pope Asks Forgiveness: The Mea Culpa's of John Paul II* (New York: Alba House, 1998), and International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (December, 1999).
12. Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, *Called to Communion* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 142-143, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
13. *UUS*, §§ 15-16, 34-36.
14. Mt 5:23-24.
15. Vatican II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, § 4.
16. 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.
17. *UUS*, § 36.

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18. Vatican Information Service [web site], October 11, 1998.
19. Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 31-32.
20. *UUS*, §§ 36, 19, 37; Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 31-32.
21. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 162, emphasis in original.
22. Wojtyla, *Sources of Renewal*, 29-32; *UUS*, §§ 28-29.
23. *UUS*, § 28.
24. *Ibid.*, § 36.
25. *Ibid.*, § 21, quoting Vatican II, *Decree on Ecumenism*, § 8, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
26. John Paul II, Letter, *Dominicae Cenae* (1980), § 13.
27. *UUS*, § 35.
28. John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris* (1984), (“SD”), § 27.
29. Col. 1:24.
30. *SD*, § 3, emphasis added.
31. *Ibid.*, § 13.
32. John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 66, emphasis added.
33. *SD*, § 15.
34. *Ibid.*, § 12, emphasis in original.
35. “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.**” *SD*, § 29, first emphasis in original, second emphasis added.
36. *SD*, § 2.
37. “One can say that with the passion of Christ all human suffering has found itself in a new situation ... in the Cross of Christ not only is the redemption accomplished through suffering, **but also human suffering itself has been redeemed.** Christ -- without any fault of His own -- took on Himself ‘the total evil of sin.’” *SD*, § 19, emphasis added.
38. *Ibid.*, § 23.
39. *Ibid.*, §§ 26-27.
40. Mt 5:21-22, 12:34-37.
41. Lk 2:33-35.
42. Henri de Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 316.
43. *Ibid.*, 316-317, emphasis added.
44. *Ibid.*, 317.
45. *Catechism*, § 829. Referring to Mary’s constitutive, antecedent role, the Church has also said: “...Mary goes before us all in the holiness that is the Church’s mystery as ‘the bride without spot or wrinkle.’ **This is why the ‘Marian’ dimension of the Church precedes the ‘Petrine.’**” *Catechism*, § 773, emphasis added.
46. Fr. H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, O.P., *Immaculate Conception and the Holy Spirit: The Marian Teachings of St. Maximilian Kolbe* (Libertyville: Franciscan Marytown Press, 1977), 5, quoting St. Maximilian Kolbe.
47. “In effect, Mary’s mediation *is intimately linked with her motherhood*. It possesses a specifically maternal character, which distinguishes it from the mediation of the other creatures who in various and always subordinate ways share in the one mediation of Christ, although her own mediation is also a shared mediation.” John Paul II, Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*, § 38, emphasis in original.
48. Vatican II, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, § 53.
49. Mt 20:22.
50. *SD*, § 24.
51. “And again, after the events of her Son’s hidden and public life, events which she must have shared with acute sensitivity, it was on Calvary that Mary’s suffering, beside the suffering of Jesus, reached an intensity which can hardly be imagined from a human point of view **but which was mysteriously and supernaturally fruitful for the redemption of the world.** Her ascent of Calvary and her standing at the foot of the Cross with the Beloved Disciple were a special sort of sharing in the redeeming death of her Son. And the words which she heard from His lips were a kind of solemn handing-over of this Gospel of suffering so that it could be proclaimed to the whole community of believers.” *Ibid.*, § 25, emphasis added.
52. “The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Behold, this child is destined for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted (**and you yourself a sword will pierce**) so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.’” Lk 2: 33-35, emphasis added.
53. *SD*, § 24, emphasis added.
54. De Lubac, *The Splendor of the Church*, 317.
55. Hans Urs von Balthasar, Commentary, *Mary: God’s Yes to Man* [John Paul II’s Encyclical, *Redemptoris Mater*] (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 162; *UUS*, § 38. †

## **NO ABIDING CITY\***

**BY FATHER BEDE JARRETT, O.P.**

### **CHAPTER 4 WHITHER GOEST?**

In our pilgrimage upon earth the virtues that, in a sense, are most demanded of us are courage and independence—the spirit, that is to say, that takes its faith absolutely and unafraid. Our faith, our life, our ideals, our actions should be proof against human respect. We should prefer to obey God rather than man or man's fashion—the passing fashions of mankind. And, again, it is the perfect quality of Our Blessed Lord that He was staunch to all the principles that He came to teach. He would rather die than surrender them. He would rather the crowd drifted from Him than change one jot or tittle of the message He came to bring it. After that dramatic sermon on His Body that He was to give, and His Blood, to be man's food and drink, He preferred to let men leave Him rather than alter His teaching to suit their prejudices or their ideas. He was the living truth. Truth is unfaltering; and though it may be many-sided, it is changeless. It is of eternity, it is God. God is truth as well as love. We pilgrims, strangers on earth, in order that we may the better hearten ourselves for our pilgrimage, have to remember that towards which we are journeying, to remember that life here is a passing life, that, though now many things press on us, one day we shall be out of their reach, that life's troubles, perplexities and bewilderments, all that hurly-burly, will at last be done and finished with.

If you go walking, often it is only by a distinct effort that you can keep steadily in front of you that towards which you journey. Yet if you do, even though you may be tired, the very sense that you are getting nearer, that there is an ending to your journey, will of itself give you courage to go on. In our life on earth too, it would seem that we need to remind ourselves of that towards which we journey, which is now the hope of all our lives. We should be the most miserable of men unless those things we set our faith on, unless those things were true. So holding them as truths and journeying towards them, there will always be comfort and inspiration in the memory of that towards which we come. As man grows older he cannot help the intensifying of his desires. Perhaps, in a sense, this may also be the purifying of them. Something of the material dreams of childhood and youth must fade as his own physical order and its energies diminish, but the dreams of childhood and youth are still there. These dreams are not false. Almost, we might say, it is the purpose of faith not only to explain God to us but to explain to ourselves the secret of ourselves, our old hopes and ambitions, their newer modes.

Our Lord comes and tells us that we were made for God, that He is our purpose, that somehow we fit into God. Since He is the object of our creation, though, perhaps, we did not realize it, in all our youthful dreamings and hungers it was really for God that we yearned, really God that we desired. Faith does not come and teach us things altogether outside the range of our ordinary human faculties. We could not believe unless our nature was designed by God to be able to accept the living truths. Faith tells us, indeed, of much that is beyond their range, but not beyond their purpose. It tells us of what can comfort us, perfect us, of what, without knowing it, always men hungered for from the start. We were made for God. Well, you know, if we are made for anything we cannot help hungering for it. - Each child is made for its particular, personal vocation and hungers for it from the first. Pick up any biography and read it. You see the man already in a child, beginning to do the things he wants to do and is to do afterwards. See Walter Scott as a boy collecting such historical relics as he can find, relics that belonged to the heroes of romance. You will find him as a child listening to the old stories, to the stories of the people, of battles, adventures, defeats, hopes, dreams. You can see all that he ever was to become somehow already in his childhood; or you can find the future engineer in a little boy with his fingers itching for tools. From the beginning tools or wheels have interested him; he was made for them. We are all children, and God is the vocation or profession for which we all were made.

People forget what the Christian faith is. They often quarrel with the prominence given to Heaven in Catholicism. They will sometimes say: 'Is it not rather selfish to work for a reward? Is this not something degrading to mankind?' They forget the essence of religion: it is 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God.' It is not degrading to wish, at last, to possess someone or something that is the love of your heart. No man has been degraded by that; man has been lifted by it. Man is always at his noblest when he is in love with someone or something. With a person, a cause, an ideal. He is most unselfish when he is working for that. Heaven is not a reward in the sense that it is something for which we are laboring. God is our reward. That is what we mean by Heaven. In

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***For all this  
business  
must pass  
away and He  
whom we  
have served  
will still hold  
us. This  
passes. Do  
not set your  
heart on it.  
Look beyond!***

\* **No Abiding City** is a small book of the sermons of Father Jarrett which is out of print. Written in 1930s, its message is still relevant and inspiring. A chapter will be reprinted each month.

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our foolish way what we strive for is to love God. He is the reward for which we were made. For Him every faculty is crying out all our time. We were made for everlasting things—for God, the knowledge, love and service of Him. We are interested in many of our own particular interests, whatever they happen to be. But it is not hard to show how these really are but fragments that mirror God.

If you look in the history of mankind all the arts of man began in worship. All the dramas we first hear of are sacred dramas. The first dance was a sacred dance. The first music was the praising of God in unknown and no doubt clumsy manners. The first representation that we know was a representation that lifted man above himself to God. It is out of divine worship that has come everything that has helped man to rise above himself. But eventually each civilization and culture becomes secularized because men so easily forget the object for which they work. The world is so beautiful that it distracts us. Even we are tempted to say to God: 'Why have You put such obstacles in my way? Why have You given me such a wonderful world to live in? Why have You given me such attractive people to live with?' He has commanded that He alone shall be worshipped. It is the breaking of this commandment that ruins most human lives. For God they have substituted something less perfect. They see what is visible. They miss the invisible. Yet one should lead to the other. From the visible things the invisible are known. That is what Our Lord came to teach us. He took the world and showed it as a parable that could lead man to God. He sees a child—'Of such is the kingdom of God.' He sees the sower. That too is a symbol of the kingdom. Whatever He sees is not something which blocks His vision of God, but something which opens and shows God manifestly. This is the definition of life that He came to teach. Cannot you see that God is right up against you? 'Because you did it to the least of my brethren you did it to Me.' That is the true view, the whole view of life for us. That is what should hearten us and should give meaning to our lives. 'My life is small,' you say. Naturally, but only because you are short-sighted. 'I spend my life looking after this one or that one. I am at someone else's service always. I never am allowed to live my own life.' Yes, but see—cannot you see? 'Because you did it to the least of My brethren.' See Whom it is that you are serving? St. Francis got off his horse to kiss a leper. He did not see the leper. He saw deeper than that ruin of humanity. The leper would pass. His leprosy would fall from him, but that which was eternal in him would abide.

We are pilgrims, strangers, and this is not an abiding city. Or, if you like, 'All the world's a stage.' That which appears is but painted canvas, the kings wear cardboard crowns. But there is a reality behind. We must rub our eyes with the fairy's eye-salve and see the truth. We must look on that which is eternal, remind ourselves of it, comfort ourselves by remembering that all the rest will pass. We are going to God.

You have intelligence. You like to use your intelligence. You will then be able to use it to its fullness face to face with Truth itself. You love goodness, real, generous goodness, not mere respectable goodness; you shall go to goodness, infinite and complete. You love beauty—how can you help loving beauty? Do not you know you were made for beauty? Well, you will see beauty unveiled to you, the beauty for which men have hungered unknown from the world's dawn. That is what you must remind yourself of if you live in darkness, in dullness, this ultimate fulfillment of your desires. 'My life is empty of purpose,' you may say to me. O, blind! blind! Your purpose is above, not here. Not here! To complain that your life is purposeless is to deny Christianity. God is what you are made for, not this busy little world below.

God is kind. He has no need of us and yet He lets us serve Him in a thousand ways. Even here we can come on Him; He is not far from any of us. For all this business must pass away and He whom we have served will still hold us. This passes. Do not set your heart on it. Look beyond! You are journeying to a city—your city. The saints are there already and the saints are your saints. As you grow older, the city will seem more familiar to you. You will know so many more each year of those who have gone to walk its streets. St. Catherine of Siena, in the year of the plague herself laid her nephews and nieces to rest in the cemetery, and she said as she laid each in turn there, 'That one I have not lost.' The tragedy of living is that in this misty world you can lose the living. The dead you cannot lose. Remember then that towards which you journey. It will give reality to your life. All those other things, the troubles and the joys, they pass, but that for which we were made remains forever. Whatever passes, that shall not pass away. Our Lord came with a message of infinite peace to humanity. He gave us a hold by which to steady ourselves in the turmoil of life. Your heart is restless? It must be restless until it finds infinite rest. All of us He has called to that ultimate purpose—for that all we were made. Our soul is so shaped that it will fit into God as a key is shaped to fit into the lock for which it is made. To Him we belong : to us He belongs. We were meant to be one. We should remember our ultimate purpose. In our moments of misery it shall be warmth to us. Poor are we ? Feeble? Tired ? Yet we were made for God. †

## 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*

- ◆ Laura Firmat (serious injury)
- ◆ Rhonda Huber (serious injury)
- ◆ Patricia Goethels (illness)
- ◆ Carol Flynn (illness)
- ◆ Carli Whittemore

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

- ◆ Ryan McEachon (special intention)
- ◆ Kathy Todd (cancer)
- ◆ Scott Smith (illness)
- ◆ Children in Juvenile Hall
- ◆ Homeless and Isaiah House †

## WHY CONVERTS CHOOSE CATHOLICISM

FATHER JOHN MCCLOSKEY

Dave Shiflett, described by Chuck Colson as "one of the most astute culture watchers and writers I know," has written *Exodus* to answer the question he poses in the subtitle: *Americans are Fleeing Liberal Churches for Conservative Christianity* (Sentinel, New York, 2005).

An accomplished journalist and a member of the White House Writer's Group, Shiflett writes in a breezy and personal style from a perspective that fairly represents the new religious styles but clearly favors religions that don't consider "dogmatic" a dirty word.

Why is his book important? Over the long term, a people's health can be measured by whom they worship, how they worship, and what difference it makes in their day-to-day lives.

Today, Christianity is spreading like wildfire in Africa and Asia, while its influence is rapidly diminishing in Europe. We will have to see whether Pope Benedict and his youthful troops in the new ecclesial communities can pull off a miracle, but the intermediate prognosis is grim.

That brings us back to Shiflett's America.

A recent survey shows that the United States, unlike Europe, continues to hold steady as a nominally Christian country, with over 80% of Americans identifying themselves as Christians. Given the drastic decline in public and private morals since 1960, the obvious question is: How can this be? Imagine a 1950s American mother waking up in 2005 and turning on the television or the radio, or picking up a popular magazine. She would probably suffer a fainting spell, if not cardiac arrest, from the assault of deeply immoral attitudes toward marriage, family and sexuality.

The reason this can happen in a nominally Christian country is that the definition of "Christianity" in America has changed, and this is the story that Shiflett's book tells.

The great culture clashes that divide our country presently are at their root theological: They pit those who acknowledge religious authority (either Biblical or exercised by a divinely guided inspired Church) against those who ground their principles on the unencumbered moral right of each person to create his own personal religion, regardless of objective morality and doctrinal belief.

Shiflett, who classifies himself "as an itinerant Presbyterian, with an emphasis on the itinerant," demonstrates first with statistics, and then through interviews and anecdotes drawn from the northern Virginia and D.C.-area, that "Americans are vacating progressive pews and flocking to churches that offer more traditional versions of Christianity."

Even *The New York Times* cannot duck the evidence: "Socially conservative churches that demand high commitment from their members grew faster than other religious denominations in the last decade."

Shiflett turns first to the Episcopal church, which was once the prototype for a traditional denomination. Many former Episcopalians have fled to more conservative Protestant denominations, or to the more liturgically minded and doctrinally based Catholic and Orthodox Churches.

Shiflett devotes considerable space to the Episcopalian membership drain provoked by the ordination of an openly practicing homosexual, Gene Robinson, as bishop (an event that continues to roil church members worldwide). Some Episcopalians consider this the last straw, but the same noise was heard when the Episcopal church revised the Book of Common Prayer, ordained women, and blessed homosexual unions.

To capture the "loyalist" position that embraces even a changed church, Shiflett presents the thinking of Rev. Hertherington, an Episcopal priest: "He called for broad-mindedness, justice, quality, equality and hospitality. ... He made it clear that the contemporary virtues of openness, inclusion, hospitality and tolerance have won over Biblical admonition, especially regarding sexual sin."

After examining "celebrity heretics" such as Episcopal Bishop John Shelby Spong and describing their "missionary" work in deconstructing traditional Christianity, Shiflett allocates the rest of the book to the destinations of refugees from heresy and ersatz religion.

Chief among these, as we might imagine, is the Catholic Church. As Shiflett puts it: "When heretics make headlines, they are also making Catholics, and very good Catholics at that. Some take a long while to reach Rome, but once there they have joined not only the ancients but also the rapidly expanding Catholic population of the Southern Hemisphere. Before many more decades pass by, those who fear Catholic power may find themselves pining for the days when all they had to worry about was a tunnel connecting the Vatican to the White House."

In his section on the Catholic Church, Shiflett interviews converts such as Al Regnery, the well-known scion of a conservative publishing house of the same name. Regnery converted from



THE CRUCIFIXION  
AND THE CONVERTED  
CENTURIAN

Lucas Cranach  
the Elder

(1536)

(Continued from page 15) *Why Converts Choose Catholicism*

Episcopalianism along with an old friend and writer, Andy Ferguson, who at one time wished to become an Episcopal priest.

Ferguson was strongly impressed by the Church's history and consistent liturgy, while Regnery was attracted by "commitment to principle, institutional vastness and forgiving attitude."

Shiflett also discusses other high-profile converts, such as Judge Robert Bork, dean of Washington columnists Robert Novak, possible presidential candidate (and evangelical turned Catholic) Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., and popular radio talk-show host Laura Ingraham.

Remaining chapters are quite helpful, particularly for Catholics seeking to understand the mindset of fellow Christians who are united with us on so many issues, except the fundamental ones of authority and the sacraments. (I refer to the Southern Baptists and the evangelicals.)

To gain insight into the Southern Baptists, Shiflett interviews two important and influential members: Richard Land and Albert Mohler. He writes that interviewing them gives an insight into how evangelical thinkers see the world:

"They aren't triumphalistic — quite the opposite. They are not chauvinistic, for they have little hope of stopping, on a societal scale at least, what they believe is an irresistible anti-Christian juggernaut. Nor does this type of orthodox Christian buy in to the argument that America is a shining city on the hill, or for that matter worthy of God's benevolence."

Moving on to that broad group of generic Christians that come under the umbrella of "evangelicals," Shiflett profiles Colson, for whom he once served as speech writer. Colson's story is well-known — how a Boston-born, Ivy league-educated, Republican henchman under President Nixon went to jail in the Watergate era, had a born-again experience, and founded the Prison Fellowship, which evangelizes criminals with notable success.

According to Colson, "the purest form of Christianity is practiced in prison. In prison you don't have to worry about stepping on anyone's toes if you talk about sin. As they say, the hangman's noose concentrates the mind."

At the same time, he has tough words for the so-called "soft" evangelicals with their mega-churches:

"Colson says they are purveyors of 'self-centered worship.' You may get people to come to those churches, and you may have church growth. But you will not have church impact. The reason is that church becomes increasingly like the culture. People go in, see a skit, listen to some music, hear a soothing sermon, and think they have done their Christian duty. They are entering the exact precarious position the mainline found itself in the '60s and '70s."

Perhaps we Catholics, who lived through the last 40 years in the United States, know exactly what he means, as our own drop in Church attendance demonstrates.

Shiflett finishes his excellent survey of the exodus from "liberal" Christianity to "conservative" Christianity by re-telling perhaps the most dramatic conversion story of all to demonstrate the power of orthodox Christianity.

That is the conversion to Catholicism of the father of legal abortion in the United States, the Jewish-born former atheist Dr. Bernard Nathanson.

Colson, who attended his baptism, recounts, "It was a sight that burned into my consciousness, because just above Cardinal O'Connor was the cross. ... I looked at the cross and realized again that what the Gospel teaches is true; in Christ is the victory. He has overcome the world, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against his Church."

Shiflett's book moves the case for unity in the Church forward. Although he does not say so, his storytelling and interviews clearly show that Christianity without a divinely instituted authority to guide and govern leads inexorably to a total reliance on private judgment and utter chaos in doctrine and morals.

John Paul II's greatest goal of unity among all Christians was not accomplished in his lifetime. That project continues, however, and where else could it end except in returning home to Rome? †



### THE CHINESE CONVERT

*Sir Geoffrey Kneller*

(1687)

**You have not chosen me. I have chosen you.**

**Go and bear fruit that will last.**

**(John 15:16)**



(Continued from page 6) *A Sandpiper to Bring You Joy*

Feeling surprisingly better, I smiled at her and agreed.

Three weeks later, I rushed to my beach in a state of near panic. I was in no mood even to greet Wendy. I thought I saw her mother on the porch and felt like demanding she keep her child at home.

"Look, if you don't mind," I said crossly when Wendy caught up with me, "I'd rather be alone today." She seemed unusually pale and out of breath.

"Why?" she asked.

I turned on her and shouted, "Because my mother died!" I thought, my God, why was I saying this to a little child?

"Oh," she said quietly, "then this is a bad day."

"Yes, and yesterday and the day before that and-oh....go away!"

"Did it hurt?"

"Did what hurt?" I was exasperated with her, with myself.

"When she died?"

"Of course it hurt!" I snapped, misunderstanding, wrapped up in myself. I strode off.

A month or so after that, when I next went to the beach, she wasn't there.

Feeling guilty, ashamed and admitting to myself I missed her, I went up to the cottage after my walk and knocked at the door. A drawn-looking young woman with honey-colored hair opened the door.

"Hello," I said. "I'm Ruth Peterson. I missed your little girl today and wondered where she was."

"Oh yes, Mrs. Peterson, please come in."

"Wendy talked of you so much. I'm afraid I allowed her to bother you. If she was a nuisance, please accept my apologies."

"Not at all-she's a delightful child," I said, suddenly realizing that I meant it. "Where is she?"

"Wendy died last week, Mrs. Peterson. She had leukemia. Maybe she didn't tell you."

Struck dumb, I groped for a chair. My breath caught.

"She loved this beach; so when she asked to come, we couldn't say no. She seemed so much better here and had a lot of what she called happy days.

"But the last few weeks, she declined rapidly..." Her voice faltered. "She left something for you...if only I can find it. Could you wait a moment while I look?"

I nodded stupidly, my mind racing for something, anything, to say to this lovely young woman.

She handed me a smeared envelope, with MRS. P printed in bold, childish letters.

Inside was a drawing in bright crayon hues-a yellow beach, a blue sea, a brown bird. Underneath was carefully printed: A SANDPIPER TO BRING YOU JOY.

Tears welled up in my eyes, and a heart that had almost forgotten how to love opened wide. I took Wendy's mother in my arms. "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm so sorry," I muttered over and over, and we wept together. The precious little picture is framed now and hangs in my study. Six words one for each year of her life that speak to me of inner harmony, courage, undemanding love. A gift from a child with sea-blue eyes and hair the color of sand-who taught me the gift of love. †



SIMPLE TRUTHS



Fulton J. Sheen

**"Everyone boasts that he loves to knock at the door of truth, but the sad fact is that if the door opened, many would die of the shock. They much prefer to hear the sound of their knuckles on the portals, rather than to accept responsibilities which truth implies. We do not even want to hear truth about ourselves." †**

# Ad Risum Vertere Veritatem\*



\*Latin for "To turn truth into laughter"

## DON'T...

After creating heaven and earth, God created Adam and Eve. And the first thing he said was, "Don't."

"Don't what?" Adam replied.

"Don't eat the forbidden fruit", God said.

"Forbidden fruit? We have forbidden fruit? Hey, Eve we have forbidden fruit!"

"No way!"

"Yes, way!"

"Do NOT eat the fruit!" said God.

"Why?"

"Because I am your Father and I said so!" God replied, (wondering why He hadn't stopped creation after making the elephants).

A few minutes later, God saw His children having an apple break and was He ticked!

"Didn't I tell you not to eat the fruit?" God, as our first parent, asked?

"Uh huh," Adam replied.

"Then why did you?" said the Father.

"I don't know," said Eve.

"She started it!" Adam said,

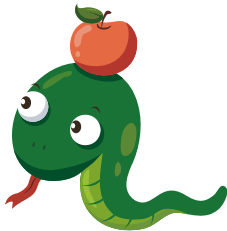
"Did not!"

"Did too!"

"DID NOT!"

Having had it with the two of them, God's punishment was that Adam and Eve should have children of their own. Thus, the pattern was set, and it has never changed!

But there is reassurance in this story... If you have persistently and lovingly tried to give children wisdom, and they haven't taken it, don't be hard on yourself. If God had trouble raising children, what makes you think it would be a piece of cake for you? †



## THE WRITINGS OF THOMAS MORE



## MORE ON THE TRUE CHURCH

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 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 human endeavor and all attempts at virtue."* By *"raging against good works,"* Luther would only *"lure people to vice and unteach virtue."*

**ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI  
TO THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE PLENARY SESSION  
OF THE CONGREGATION FOR  
THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH**

**Clementine Hall  
Thursday 31 January 2008**

Your Eminences,  
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,  
Dear and Faithful Collaborators,

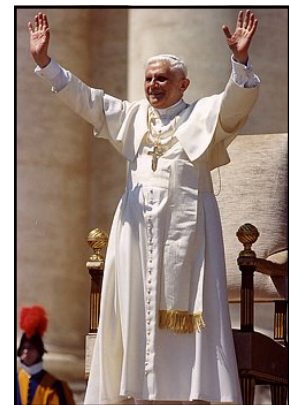
It gives me great joy to meet you on the occasion of your Plenary Assembly. I can thus express to you my sentiments of deep gratitude and cordial appreciation for the work that your Dicasterium carries out at the service of the *ministry of unity*, entrusted in a special way to the Roman Pontiff. It is a ministry expressed primarily in terms of the *unity of faith*, resting on the "sacred deposit" whose principal custodian and defender is the Successor of Peter (cf. Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus*, n. 11). I thank Cardinal William Levada for expressing your common sentiments and for recalling the themes that have been the subject of some Documents published by your Congregation in recent years, as well as the topics that are still under examination by the Dicasterium.

Last year, in particular, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith published two important Documents which offered doctrinal clarification on essential aspects of the Church's teaching and on evangelization. These clarifications are necessary if the ecumenical dialogue with the world's religions and cultures is to progress as it should. The first Document is entitled "Responses to Some Questions Regarding Certain Aspects of the Doctrine of the Church" (29 June 2007). In its formulation and language, it re-proposes the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, in full continuity with the doctrine of Catholic Tradition. Thus, it confirms that the one and only Church of Christ, which we confess in the Creed, has its subsistence, permanence and stability in the Catholic Church, and that therefore, the unity, indivisibility and indestructibility of Christ's Church is in no way annulled by the separations and divisions of Christians. Alongside this fundamental doctrinal definition, the Document re-proposes the correct linguistic use of some ecclesiological terminology that risks being misunderstood. To this end, it calls attention to the difference that still endures among the different Christian denominations with regard to the understanding of *being Church* in the proper theological sense. Far from preventing authentic ecumenical commitment, this difference will encourage a realistic and fully informed discussion of the issues that still separate the Christian denominations; it will also encourage joyful recognition of the truths of faith professed in common and the need to pray without ceasing for a more deeply committed advance towards greater and ultimately full Christian unity. The consequence of fostering a theological vision which holds the unity and identity of the Church to be gifts "hidden in Christ", reconcilable only in an eschatological perspective, would be that the Church in history would exist *de facto* in multiple ecclesial forms, and ultimately hinder and paralyze ecumenism itself.

The Second Vatican Council's assertion that the true Church of Christ "subsists in the Catholic Church" (Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, n. 8), does not exclusively concern the relationship with the Churches and Christian Ecclesial Communities but also extends to the definition of relations with the religions and cultures of the world. In the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* on Religious Liberty, the Second Vatican Council affirmed that "this one true religion continues to exist in the Catholic and Apostolic Church, to which the Lord Jesus entrusted the task of spreading it among all men" (n. 1). The *Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelization* - the other Document, published by your Congregation in December 2007 - confronted by the risk of persistent religious and cultural relativism, reaffirms that in the age of interreligious and intercultural dialogue the Church does not dispense with the need for evangelization and missionary activity for peoples, nor does she cease to ask men and women to accept the salvation offered to them all. Recognition of elements of truth and good in the world's religions and the seriousness of their religious endeavors, together with dialogue and a spirit of collaboration with them for the defense and promotion of the person's dignity and the universal moral values, cannot be understood as a limitation of the Church's missionary task, which involves her in ceaselessly proclaiming Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life (cf. Jn 14: 6).



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



(Continued from page 19) *Papal Message*

I also ask you, dear friends, to pay special attention to the difficult and complex issues of bioethics.

In fact, new biomedical technologies, do not only involve certain specialized doctors and researchers but are disseminated through the modern means of social communication, giving rise to expectations and questions in ever broader sectors of society. The Church's Magisterium certainly cannot and ought not address every scientific innovation, but has the task of reaffirming the important values at stake and of suggesting to the faithful and to all people of good will the ethical and moral principles and guidelines for new and important issues. The two fundamental criteria for moral discernment in this field are: a) unconditional respect for the human being as a person from conception to natural death; b) respect for the originality of the transmission of human life through the acts proper to spouses. After the publication in 1987 of the Instruction *Donum Vitae* which spelled out these criteria, many leveled criticism at the Magisterium of the Church for being an obstacle to science and to the true progress of humanity. However, the new problems associated, for example, with the freezing of human embryos, with embryonic reduction [selective abortion of medically implanted embryos], with pre-implantational diagnosis, with research on embryonic stem cells and with attempts at human cloning, clearly show that with extra-corporeal artificial fertilization, the barrier that served to protect human dignity has been violated. When human beings, in the weakest and most defenseless stage of their lives are selected, abandoned, killed or used as mere "biological material", how can it be denied that they are no longer being treated as "someone" but rather as "something", hence, calling into question the very concept of human dignity?

Of course, the Church appreciates and encourages the progress of the biomedical sciences which open up unprecedented therapeutic prospects until now unknown, for example, through the use of somatic stem cells, or treatment that aims to restore fertility or cure genetic diseases. At the same time, she feels duty-bound to enlighten all consciences to the only authentic progress, namely, that scientific progress truly respect every human being, whose personal dignity must be recognized since he is created in the image of God. The study of these themes, which has involved your Assembly in a special way in these days, will certainly help to encourage the formation of the consciences of a large number of our brethren, in accordance with what the Second Vatican Council stated in the Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*: "In forming their consciences the faithful must pay careful attention to the sacred and certain teaching of the Church. For the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth. It is her duty to proclaim and teach with authority the truth which is Christ and, at the same time, to declare and confirm by her authority the principles of the moral order which spring from human nature itself" (n. 14).

As I encourage you to persevere in your demanding and important work, on this occasion I also express my spiritual closeness to you and I warmly impart the Apostolic Blessing to you all, as a pledge of affection and gratitude. ✠

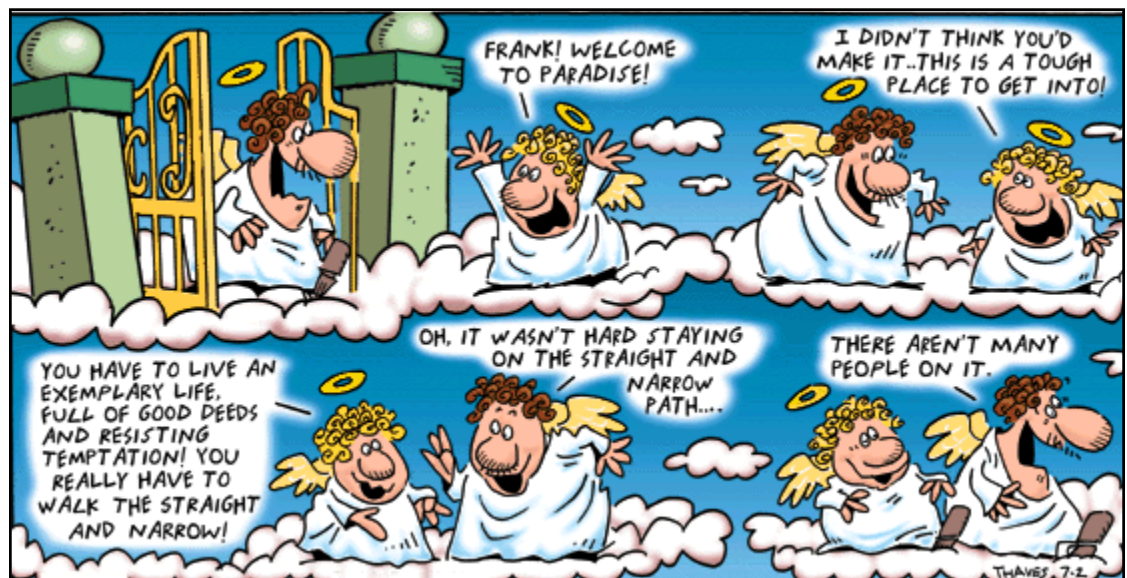


**ST. PETER PREACHING**

*Masolino da Panicale*

(1426-17)

**FRANK ERNEST**  
©



## MATTHEW 16: 19

*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

### COMMENT FROM THE NAVARRE BIBLE:\*

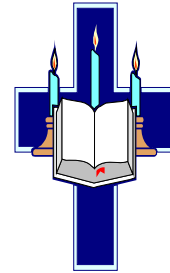
In this passage St Peter is promised primacy over the whole Church, a primacy which Jesus will confer on him after his resurrection, as we learn in the Gospel of St John (cf. Jn 21:15-18). This supreme authority is given to Peter for the benefit of the Church. Because the Church has to last until the end of time, this authority will be passed on to Peter's successors down through history. The Bishop of Rome, is the successor of Peter.

The solemn Magisterium of the Church, in the First Vatican Council, defined the doctrine of the primacy of Peter and his successors in these terms:

"We teach and declare, therefore, according to the testimony of the Gospel that the primacy of jurisdiction over the whole Church was immediately and directly promised to and conferred upon the blessed Apostle Peter by Christ the Lord. For to Simon, Christ had said, 'You shall be called Cephas' (Jn 1:42). Then, after Simon had acknowledged Christ with the confession, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Mt 16:16), it was to Simon alone that the solemn words were spoken by the Lord: 'Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the powers of hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and what you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven' (Mt 16:17-19). And after his Resurrection, Jesus conferred upon Simon Peter alone the jurisdiction of supreme shepherd and ruler over his whole fold with the words, 'Feed my lambs...Feed my sheep' (Jn 21:15-17)[...].

"(Canon) Therefore, if anyone says that the blessed Apostle Peter was not constituted by Christ the Lord as the Prince of all the Apostles and the visible head of the whole Church militant, or that he received immediately and directly from Jesus Christ our Lord only a primacy of honor and not a true and proper primacy of jurisdiction: let him be condemned...."

*\*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. †*



## SCRIPTURAL CORNER



**APOSTLE ST PETER**

*El Greco*

(1610-40)

## SOCIAL JUSTICE

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

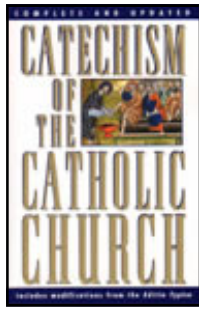


**FOURTH SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH  
BREAKFAST 8:30-10:30 AM & MASS**

**OC CATHOLIC WORKER (ISAIAH HOUSE)  
316 Cypress, Santa Ana (714) 558-7478**

For more information, contact:

Greg Weiler (949) 851-7238 or [gweiler@ptwww.com](mailto:gweiler@ptwww.com) or  
Steve Cotungo (949) 412-8663 or [scotugno@sbcglobal.net](mailto:scotugno@sbcglobal.net) †



## CATECHISM CORNER



**ST PETER**

*Andea di Vanni  
d'Andrea*

(1390)

## THE CHURCH'S ORIGIN, FOUNDATION AND MISSION

**758** We begin our investigation of the Church's mystery by meditating on her origin in the Holy Trinity's plan and her progressive realization in history.

### **A PLAN BORN IN THE FATHER'S HEART**

**759** "The eternal Father, in accordance with the utterly gratuitous and mysterious design of his wisdom and goodness, created the whole universe and chose to raise up men to share in his own divine life, "to which he calls all men in his Son. "The Father . . . determined to call together in a holy Church those who should believe in Christ." This "family of God" is gradually formed and takes shape during the stages of human history, in keeping with the Father's plan. In fact, "already present in figure at the beginning of the world, this Church was prepared in marvelous fashion in the history of the people of Israel and the old Advance. Established in this last age of the world and made manifest in the outpouring of the Spirit, it will be brought to glorious completion at the end of time."

The Church - foreshadowed from the world's beginning

**760** Christians of the first centuries said, "The world was created for the sake of the Church." God created the world for the sake of communion with his divine life, a communion brought about by the "convocation" of men in Christ, and this "convocation" is the Church. the Church is the goal of all things, and God permitted such painful upheavals as the angels' fall and man's sin only as occasions and means for displaying all the power of his arm and the whole measure of the love he wanted to give the world:

Just as God's will is creation and is called "the world," so his intention is the salvation of men, and it is called "the Church."

### **THE CHURCH - PREPARED FOR IN THE OLD COVENANT**

**761** The gathering together of the People of God began at the moment when sin destroyed the communion of men with God, and that of men among themselves. the gathering together of the Church is, as it were, God's reaction to the chaos provoked by sin. This reunification is achieved secretly in the heart of all peoples: "In every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable" to God.

**762** The remote *preparation* for this gathering together of the People of God begins when he calls Abraham and promises that he will become the father of a great people. Its immediate preparation begins with Israel's election as the People of God. By this election, Israel is to be the sign of the future gathering of All nations. But the prophets accuse Israel of breaking the covenant and behaving like a prostitute. They announce a new and eternal covenant. "Christ instituted this New Covenant."

### **THE CHURCH - INSTITUTED BY CHRIST JESUS**

**763** It was the Son's task to accomplish the Father's plan of salvation in the fullness of time. Its accomplishment was the reason for his being sent. "The Lord Jesus inaugurated his Church by preaching the Good News, that is, the coming of the Reign of God, promised over the ages in the scriptures." To fulfill the Father's will, Christ ushered in the Kingdom of heaven on earth. the Church "is the Reign of Christ already present in mystery."

**764** "This Kingdom shines out before men in the word, in the works and in the presence of Christ." To welcome Jesus' word is to welcome "the Kingdom itself." The seed and beginning of the Kingdom are the "little flock" of those whom Jesus came to gather around him, the flock whose shepherd he is. They form Jesus' true family. To those whom he thus gathered around him, he taught a new "way of acting" and a prayer of their own.

**765** The Lord Jesus endowed his community with a structure that will remain until the Kingdom is fully achieved. Before all else there is the choice of the Twelve with Peter as their head. Representing the twelve tribes of Israel, they are the foundation stones of the new Jerusalem. The Twelve and the other disciples share in Christ's mission and his power, but also in his lot. By all his actions, Christ prepares and builds his Church.

**766** The Church is born primarily of Christ's total self-giving for our salvation, anticipated in the institution of the Eucharist and fulfilled on the cross. "The origin and growth of the Church are symbolized by the blood and water which flowed from the open side of the crucified Jesus." "For it was from the side of Christ as he slept the sleep of death upon the cross that there came forth the 'wondrous sacrament of the whole Church.'" As Eve was formed from the sleeping Adam's side, so the Church was born from the pierced heart of Christ hanging dead on the cross.

### **THE CHURCH - REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT**

**767** "When the work which the Father gave the Son to do on earth was accomplished, the Holy Spirit was sent on the day of Pentecost in order that he might continually sanctify the Church." Then "the Church was openly displayed to the crowds and the spread of the Gospel among the nations, through preaching, was begun." As the "convocation" of all men for salvation, the Church in her very nature is missionary, sent by Christ to all the nations to make disciples of them.

**768** So that she can fulfill her mission, the Holy Spirit "bestows upon [the Church] varied hierarchic and charismatic gifts, and in this way directs her." "Henceforward the Church, endowed with the gifts of her founder and faithfully observing his precepts of charity, humility and self-denial, receives the mission of proclaiming and establishing among all peoples the Kingdom of Christ and of God, and she is on earth the seed and the beginning of that kingdom."

### **THE CHURCH - PERFECTED IN GLORY**

**769** "The Church . . . will receive its perfection only in the glory of heaven," at the time of Christ's glorious return. Until that day, "the Church progresses on her pilgrimage amidst this world's persecutions and God's consolations." Here below she knows that she is in exile far from the Lord, and longs for the full coming of the Kingdom, when she will "be united in glory with her king." The Church, and through her the world, will not be perfected in glory without great trials. Only then will "all the just from the time of Adam, 'from Abel, the just one, to the last of the elect,' . . . be gathered together in the universal Church in the Father's presence." ✠

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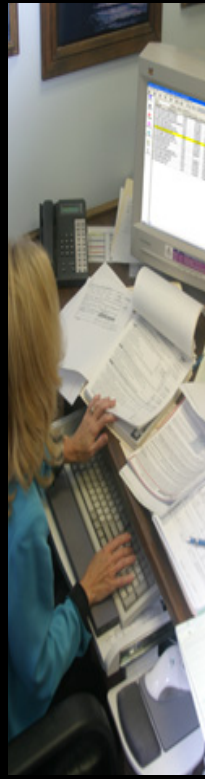


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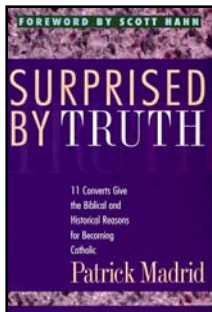


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**About the Author**

Patrick Madrid is the editor-in-chief of Envoy Magazine. For over 10 years, he has been active in the full-time apostolate of Catholic apologetics. His other books include *"Any Friend of God's Is a Friend of Mine"* and *"Pope Fiction: Answers to 30 Myths and Misconceptions About the Papacy."*

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