

ad. veritatem

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

MARCH 2014

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Heavenly
Bookends
GREGORY WEILER



A Well of
Grace
JOHN J. FLYNN III



Evidence that
Demands a
Verdict



PUT OUT INTO
THE DEEP



HEAVENLY BOOKENDS

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN GREGORY N. WEILER



It's always good to take one's bearings, especially halfway through Lent. It seems like yesterday that the Throw Away Culture (quoting Pope Francis) just finished Christmas (pretty much without Christ), and now we've celebrated what I believe is the greatest Feast Day on the Church's calendar: the Feast of the Incarnation, the infinite God joined finite humanity, the Annunciation.

Christmas after all is a weigh station among 33 years of moments in Christ's life, better described as the Feast of Our Lord's "visibility." But the Annunciation marks the seminal moment in the history of the physical universe, the infinite stepping into time, "yes" for an incredible purpose, but at one single moment: the "fiat." BAM!

Yet inexplicably the Annunciation seems a muted celebration, not a holy day of obligation. Yes, we say the Gloria as part of the "solemnity," but Catholic schools are still open; we don't exchange gifts or eat corn beef.

Yet the confluence of mother and child, our Blessed Mother and the incarnate Christ started at a specific moment in time celebrated on March 25 – akin to the "big bang" but the most stupendous of "bangs" as God's incarnation is of eternal significance.

Did I say the greatest Feast, greater than Easter? Well, would not the incarnation, without the Cross and Resurrection, be any "less"? But we need not bifurcate. These two bookends for Christ mean he did become man and did in fact redeem mankind. We have the incredible power to grab ahold of this redemption, to choose our destiny, to partake in a life between these two bookends.

So on March 25, start your Lent anew with that greatest of pro-life feasts, the Annunciation of Gabriel to Our Lady and her grand "Yes." May we be granted the same grace to say our "yes" with our lives. PAX ~ GNW

Gregory N. Weiler is a partner at Palmieri, Tyler, Wiener, Wilhelm & Waldron LLP in Irvine.

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The St. Thomas More Society of Orange County is an independent organization sponsored by lawyers and judges who are practicing members of the Roman Catholic Church.

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IDEALS OF ST. THOMAS MORE

The legal profession is a high calling with corresponding responsibilities to society. The principal objective of every lawyer is to promote and seek justice. Catholic Lawyers pursue the truth in both their spiritual and professional lives. The duty of a Catholic lawyer is to remain faithful to Jesus Christ, His Church and its teachings at all times despite the personal consequences.

THE OBJECTIVES OF STMS

- encouraging its members to live a Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- promoting and foster high ethical principals in the legal profession generally and, in particular, in the community of Catholic lawyers.
- assisting in the spiritual growth of its members.
- encouraging interfaith understanding and brotherhood.
- sponsoring the annual Red Mass for elected and appointed officials and

members of the legal profession.

MEMBERSHIP IN STMS

Each member of the Society is committed to:

- strive to live an exemplary Christian life and apply the principles and ideals exemplified by St. Thomas More in their daily lives and encourage same in the legal profession.
- attend monthly meeting of the Society and provide personal support to the St. Thomas More Society.
- attend and support the Red Mass.

LAWYER'S PRAYER

Give me the grace, Good Lord,
to set the world at naught;
to set my mind fast upon thee
and not to hang upon the blast of men's
mouths;
to be content to be solitary;
not to long for worldly company
but utterly to cast off the world
and rid my mind of the business
thereof.

• ST. THOMAS MORE

EDITOR@STTHOMASMORE.NET

Once while on pilgrimage, I heard a Franciscan priest speak about the expectations of pilgrims. He told the story of a woman, herself on pilgrimage, who lamented to him about the lack of consolation and joy, while all around her seemed lifted like kites. He told her that she was on a walk in the desert, a “true pilgrimage.” His answer, I thought, was both highly unsatisfying and utterly unassailable.

On Ash Wednesday we enter the desert of Lent, bearing with us the bucket full of coins we have collected on the way of the previous year, now in search of the oasis that will save our lives. But before we can fill the bucket with the water we need to live, we must empty it. The prospect of emptiness produces rebellion within, but the Spirit, blowing where he will, now uncovers the path that had seemed lost to the sands. The path is regained, but we remain in the desert, even if an oasis is now in sight. It is the suffering of emptiness that we endure at Lent, the creation of the “interior space where Christ, the source of the Church’s unity can effectively act with all the power of his spirit,” to use the words of John Paul II.¹ In another context, John Paul II wrote: “It is suffering, more than anything else, which clears the way for the grace which transforms human souls.”² And it is only in suffering that love is authenticated: “If the agony on the Cross had not happened, the truth that God is Love would have been unfounded.”³

We undertake to suffer at Lent because it is the place chosen by God for the meeting of Heaven and Earth, the place where God revealed himself fully: “Love is also the fullest source of the answer to the question to the meaning of suffering. This answer has been given by God to man in the



Cross of Jesus Christ.”⁴ Now even the world of suffering has been redeemed, the abyss transformed by the suffering of Christ into a well of grace. ♦

1 John Paul II, Encyclical, *Ut Unum Sint* (1995), § 35.

2 John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, *Salvifici Doloris* (1984), § 27.

3 John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1994), 66.

4 *Salvifici Doloris*, § 13.

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PUT OUT INTO THE DEEP

Are you content with your spiritual life?

Do you often find yourself frazzled, exhausted, and seemingly under assault from all sides?

Do you have that gnawing feeling that you could be a better spouse or parent? Are you not at peace even though you are a “successful” lawyer or judge?

Do you simply “long” for more? Do you want to make Jesus more than an abstraction in your life?

Troubling questions, huh?!

If you have the gumption to really put out into the deep, to change the status quo for the good, consider one of these life changing spiritual adventures.

Missionaries of the Poor

Please join a small group of STMS members in visiting and serving with the Missionaries of the Poor in their clinics in Jamaica or Haiti. Father Ho Lung (often seen on EWTN) and his brothers serve the least of our brethren (clinics which serve orphans, the severely handicapped, HIV infected and all the disenfranchised) with unbelievable selflessness. Join the brothers for a week in their Monastery, with them in their monastic prayer and venture out each day to serve. While not for those desiring a little spiritual vacation, your visit will be life changing and will, in a way that cannot be described in words, blast you out of what might be a Christian comfort zone.

An incidental benefit will be to be with Father Ho Lung, a priest who we can only liken to a living Mother Theresa.

If you're interested, call Gregory Weiler: (949) 300-4581.

The Spiritual Exercises

Join one of the small groups for the famous Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola, the same exercises that every Jesuit experiences during a 30-day retreat but which we laity can experience over nine months. These are the same exercises which formed Pope Francis!

Meet once a week with a small group and leader and pray through Scripture in a “special” way for nine months. The Spiritual Exercises have been a pillar of Catholic formation for almost five Centuries and are available to us in Orange County. If you ask around many of the most passionate Catholics you know will have gone through the exercises.

For more information contact David Werner: (949) 244-1566.

Attend a Cursillo Retreat

Cursillo, called a “short course in Christianity” has probably influenced more passionate Catholics in Orange County than any other movement or Ministry. How? Again it is hard to describe how a three-day retreat can be life changing.

However there is no denying that the men and women who start the Retreat Thursday night are enabled, Grace charged, and are sort of divinized by Sunday afternoon. The founders of the STMS started the Society after their Cursillo. It's not some secret society or clique, but rather a three-day retreat with 15 talks that build on each other, all given in the “oven” of an incredibly loving Christian community.

Cursillo is a Catholic must, especially if you think you don't need it!

Email Don Hunsberger (dah@hunsbergerlaw.com) for more information.

If you long for more, pray on participating in one of these gifts. “Lord should I do this? Lord, give me the courage and Grace to break my spiritual complacency.”

EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT

Josh McDowell coined this phrase when he wrote his Christian apologetic classic in 1992, *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*. This article addresses a new question. Is there physical evidence that supports the case that Jesus Christ really was fully man and fully God and that he rose from the dead?

In the quest for an answer, the Shroud of Turin has once again obtained the spotlight. A new book written in Italian, *The Mystery of the Shroud*, by Giulio Fanti, professor of mechanical and thermal measurement at the University of Padua's Engineering Faculty, and journalist Saverio Gaeta, states that by measuring the degradation of cellulose in linen fibers from the shroud, two separate approaches show the cloth is at least 2,000 years old. Previous carbon dating suggesting the Shroud was only 700 years old has been debunked by tests that confirm that the areas of the Shroud that were previously tested had been contaminated by the carbon remnants from a fire in the 14th Century. The fire was caused by an act of sabotage. We have moved past the 700 year old carbon dating theory. It is no longer accepted in scientific circles.

In pursuit of the answer to the mystery of the Shroud, we have a world class full length exhibit of the Shroud here in Orange County. The Shroud Center of Southern California was established by Dr. Gus Accetta, M.D. in 1996. Dr. Accetta was raised a Catholic. During his college years he fell away from the faith as has happened to so

many before him. In 1996, Dr. Accetta became curious about the Shroud upon reading an article which sparked his scientific curiosity.

His interest soon grew into an obsession. He has assembled one of the world's finest exhibits of the Shroud. His work continues today.

Recently, Dr. Accetta conducted some MRI studies that disclose another secret within the Shroud. The white illuminations in the area of the mouth can be duplicated. The duplication study suggests the image of full size teeth. In other words, the teeth were imprinted on the Shroud when the image was created.

How could this occur? The explanation comes from the evidence that the Shroud offers us. First of all, the Shroud is a heavy linen cloth with a herringbone pattern. The fancy pattern and expensive linen cloth are more consistent with the use as a table cloth, not a burial cloth. The Jews had burial traditions but only if the deceased died a dignified death. Death by crucifixion did not meet that criteria. Jesus death as described in scripture would not have qualified for traditional Jewish funeral rite. The body of a criminal



under Jewish law would not have been washed and would have been wrapped in a sacred burial cloth. The Shroud is stained by blood, type AB or universal receive. The body was in the state of rigor mortis. Rigor mortis develops and then declines within three days of death, therefore; the imprint on the Shroud occurred within three days of death.

The fibers of the cloth were imprinted by an image caused by a light source. Microscopic examination reveal a process of oxidation on the underside of the linen fibers. The oxidation has caused a discoloration of the fibers. The image can be seen only on the underside of the fibers of the cloth. Dr. Accetta has duplicated this marking process by using radiological studies to reproduce the same effect. His work supports the conclusion that the image on the linen fibers was caused by a light source.

There is no evidence that the image was created by some form of pigment at the hands of a man. When a light is

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

EVIDENCE THAT DEMANDS A VERDICT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

shown through the Shroud from front to back, the light proceeds completely through the fabric with no obstruction. A substance applied to the cloth would block some of the light. The markings on the linen are likened to a negative image similar to how a Kodak film strip is created by light when the lens of a camera is opened.

Modern computers have delivered a dramatic statement in support of the authenticity of the Shroud. In recent years, a team of secular scientist examined the Shroud by computer analysis. The scorch marks were assembled and analyzed by a computer. The computer study revealed a shocking truth. The scorch marks on the underside of the Shroud, when analyzed, are three dimensional. In other words, the image on the lined cloth has three sides as if the image was created when the cloth fell through something. That something is consistent with a resurrecting body. As the body mass was transformed from solid to light, the cloth dropped through and to the floor of the tomb, thus creating a three dimensional image.

In summary, the Shroud is made up of a negative image caused by a powerful light source that burned an image on

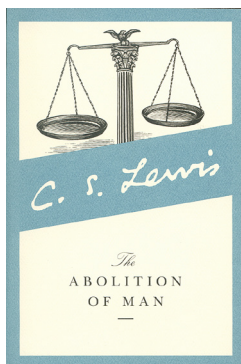
one side of the fibers of a linen cloth that when analyzed by a computer is three dimensional. It is not difficult to understand why Dr. Accetta and so many other scientist continue to be enthralled by the Shroud of Turin.

Dr. Accetta continues with his work on the Shroud. The facts discussed in this article are just a few of the total findings that support the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin. The Catholic Church has not made a formal statement on the authenticity of the Shroud. The closest claim to authenticity was a statement by Blessed John Paul II who referred to the Shroud of Turin as “the greatest relic in Christendom”.

The Shroud will continue to draw interest from Christians and non Christians alike. Certainly, it continues to draw controversy. As the scientific evidence grows, the message of what the Shroud is revealing to us grows. The evidence supports a verdict that Jesus Christ existed and that he rose from the dead.

Albert Einstein, a religious man and believer in God, was once quoted as saying, “there either are miracles in which case everything we see is a miracle, or there are no miracles at all”. The image on the Shroud represents a miraculous event. If true, outside of creation, it is the greatest miracle in the history of man. Albert Einstein would have been pleased to know that the answer to his query supports the belief that “everything is a miracle.” ♦

Father Hughes recommendation of the month: **C.S. LEWIS' ESSAY "THE ABOLITION OF MAN"**



Professor Robert George, the heir to the mantle of Father Richard Neuhaus in the intellectual and theological defense of the Church, in a recent talk on Religious Liberty, Secularism and the future of the Catholic Church, referred to Lewis's 1943 work *The Abolition of Man* as a seminal work which should be read by every Catholic who is serious about their faith and how it is exercised in the Public Square. Well our AV readers are presumably such Catholics !

Hindsight makes Lewis's 1943 Essay more than prescient, more like a prophetic description of Lent in America in March 2014 . Written when the results of world war II were still uncertain, two years after the blitz, long before even the Cold War, when the titanic political struggle

was between dehumanizing fascism and Western democracy (whatever that was/is), Lewis pointed to the fulcrum. Will man live by Truth, is there truth , reason , reality – the subjective vs. the objective - sanity . What is man without those values that are universal and do exist? “Men without chests.”

His last chapter tells us what we can expect of a culture of “men without chests” and it sounds eerily like the Op Ed page of the *New York Times*.

“And all the time — such is the tragi-comedy of our situation — we continue to clamor for those very qualities we are rendering impossible. You can hardly open a periodical without coming across the statement that what our civilization needs is more ‘drive’, or dynamism, or self-sacrifice, or ‘creativity’. In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honour and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the geldings be fruitful.”