

ad. veritatem

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

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Even If You're Not
a Good Person, You
Will Be!

FR. HUGH BARBOUR



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IN THE LENTEN meditations of the Roman Curia in 1974, the Argentine Cardinal Eduardo Pironio—a mentor of Pope Francis—focused his reflections on the “Paschal Hour,” which he said the Church today is crossing. *We Wish to See Jesus*, Eduardo F. Pironio, St. Paul Publications, 1988. It is a time of expectation, like the disciples awaiting Christ’s Resurrection on Holy Saturday, or awaiting his return after his Ascension.

Can you think of the moments of great expectation you experience as a lawyer, in your practice of law? We might experience heightened states of expectation even before we become lawyers—when we are awaiting our bar results. Or, once we start our practice, we might feel a great sense of expectation while waiting for a jury verdict, or even a court ruling, or just waiting for an offeree to get back to us.

Of course, these examples all involve instances of *uncertainty*. Paschal anticipation, on the other hand is something we can bank on. It is the core of our faith!

It strikes me that the Paschal Hope may well be expressed, with respect to Catholic lawyers, in terms of the legal profession that we aspire to become.

- We must become a profession which always respects the dignity of the human person, from the moment of conception until natural death, and in all stages in between, especially those reflecting the most desperate depths of need and misery.

- We must represent a legal system which metes out justice for wrongs, but which also knows how to show mercy to those who sin against society.

- We must be a profession which fosters harmony and reconciliation where there is social strife and conflict.

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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

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Vintage Veritatem

AD VERITATEM IS CELEBRATING ITS 20TH YEAR



EVEN IF YOU
AREN'T A
GOOD PERSON,
**YOU SOON
WILL BE!**

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

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“DO GOOD AND AVOID EVIL.”

This is the most fundamental principle of the moral life. No attempts to produce a more universal or succinct principle have ever succeeded. Even the Golden Rule is a few steps farther along in moral complexity. Not that we would like a different or more general principle of moral life. Attempts to replace this simple principle have turned out to be too demanding in the concrete for mere mortals such as we are. Kant’s categorical imperative comes to mind, or Calvin’s intrinsically impossible Divine precepts. The elegant but unbreakable generality of the norm “Do good and avoid evil” includes the most morally sophisticated among us, say, cloistered nuns or Trappists, as well as the most morally primitive, say, inmates of the kindergarten. Let’s face it, as much as we recognize how morally confused and lacking in basic formation men and women are becoming, it still remains true that the vast majority of us, in our quiet moments know whether our actions are seeking good and avoiding evil. We know when we are—to use an impolite word—sinning. There may be some need for instruction

or clarification on some detail, large or small, of the moral life. But whether we are seeking to do the good which is in our power and avoiding doing evil is at least as clear to us as whether we are happy, or successful, or in love. The morality of our actions is no more vague and imperceptible than these other things.

Well, if the moral sense is so basic to us as to be obvious after a bit of reflection, how is it that we so very often fail in doing the good we know we ought to do, and avoiding the evil we know we ought to spurn? It doesn’t seem reasonable that the answer should be the sheer malice of sinning in order to sin, Nietzsche’s “evil be thou my good.” That might be true for some few very scary people, whom we may have been so unfortunate as to encounter. The explanation of most of our moral failures might surprise us, but this writer at least can guarantee its truth from the experience of dealing with all sorts of people.

Worry is the principal cause
of most of our active moral

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IN GOOD FAITH

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- We each must personally model virtue: charity in defending the innocent; faith in our moral character; hope in our relentless pursuit

of favorable (fair and rational) dispute resolutions.

- We must be persons of principle, who uphold ideals and help our nation and the legal system enshrined in our

institutions to function according to the values that animate them.

If we do these things, we will imbue our work with the qualities of the “Hour of Jesus,” which Cardinal Pironio described as the hour “of the cross and of hope, of possibilities and of risks, of responsibility and of commitment.” ♦



ONE MINUTE WITH FRANCIS

For the month of April, the Holy Father’s Prayer Intention is “that young people may respond generously to their vocations and seriously consider offering themselves to God in the priesthood or consecrated life.”

Easter is Not a Fairy Tale Ending

We expect God in His omnipotence to defeat injustice, evil, sin and suffering with a triumphant divine victory. Yet God shows us a humble victory that, in human terms, appears to be failure. Indeed, the Son of God appears on the Cross as a defeated man: he suffers, is betrayed, reviled and finally dies. But Jesus allows evil to be unleashed on him and he takes it upon himself in order to conquer it.

The Resurrection of Jesus is not the happy ending to a nice story, it is not the “happy end” of a film; rather, it is God the Father’s intervention there where human hope is shattered. At the moment when all seems to be lost, at the moment of suffering, when many people feel the need to get down from the Cross, it is the moment closest to the Resurrection. Night becomes darkest precisely before

morning dawns, before the light dawns. In the darkest moment God intervenes and raises.

When at certain moments in life we fail to find any way out of our difficulties, when we sink in the thickest darkness, it is the moment of our total humiliation and despoliation, the hour in which we experience that we are frail and are sinners. It is precisely then, at that moment, what we must not deny our failure but rather open ourselves trustingly to hope in God, as Jesus did.

Dear brothers and sisters, this week it will do us good to take the crucifix in hand and kiss it many, many times and say: thank you Jesus, thank you Lord.

(By His Holiness Pope Francis, April 16, 2016 General Audience Talk)

Who Truly “Laughs Last”

JOSEPH CARDINAL RATZINGER

[Years before he became Pope Benedict XVI, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger delivered his prepared reflections on Bavarian Radio. The passage below is excerpted from one such meditation.]

JESUS IS BOTH THE LAMB AND ISAAC.

He is the lamb who allowed himself to be caught, bound, and slain. He is also Isaac, who looked into heaven; indeed, where Isaac saw only signs and symbols, Jesus actually entered heaven, and since that time the barrier between God and man is broken down. Jesus is Isaac, who, risen from the dead, comes down from the mountain with the laughter of joy in his face. All the words of the Risen One manifest this joy—this laughter of redemption: If you see what I see and have seen, if you catch a glimpse of the whole picture, you will laugh! (cf. Jn 16:20).

In the Baroque period the liturgy used to include the *risus paschalis*, the Easter laughter. The Easter homily had to contain a story that made people laugh, so that the church resounded with a joyful laughter. That may be a somewhat

superficial form of Christian joy. But is there not something very beautiful and appropriate about laughter becoming a liturgical symbol? And is it not a tonic when we still hear, in the play of cherub and ornament in baroque churches, that laughter which testified to the freedom of the redeemed? And is it not a sign of an Easter faith when Haydn remarked, concerning his church compositions, that he felt a particular joy when thinking of God: “As I came to utter the words of supplication, I could not suppress my joy but loosed the reins of my elated spirits and wrote ‘allegro’ over the Miserere, and so on”?

The Book of Revelation’s vision of heaven expresses what we see by faith at Easter: the Lamb who was slain lives. Since he lives, our weeping comes to an end and is transformed into laughter (cf. Rev 5:4f.). When we look at the Lamb, we see heaven opened. God sees us, and God acts, albeit differently from the way we think and would like him to act. Only since Easter can we really utter the first article of faith; only on the basis of Easter is this profession rich and full of consolation: I believe in God, the Father Almighty. For it is only from the Lamb that we know that God is really Father, really Almighty. No one who

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WHO TRULY “LAUGHS LAST”

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

has grasped that can ever be utterly despondent and despairing again. No one who has grasped that will ever succumb to the temptation to side with those who kill the Lamb. No one who has understood this will know ultimate fear, even if he gets into the situation of the Lamb. For there he is in the safest possible place.

Easter, therefore, invites us not only to listen to Jesus but also, as we do so, to develop our interior sight.

This greatest festival of the Church's year encourages us, by looking at him who was slain and is risen, to discover the place where heaven is opened. If we comprehend the message of the Resurrection, we recognize that heaven is not completely sealed off above the earth. Then—gently and yet with immense power—something of the light of God penetrates our life. Then we shall feel the surge of joy for which, otherwise, we wait in vain. Everyone who is penetrated by something of this joy can be, in his own way, a window through which heaven can look upon earth and visit it. In this way, what Revelation foresees can come about: every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea,

everything in the world, is filled with the joy of the redeemed (cf. Rev 5:13). To the extent that we realize this, the words of the departing Jesus—who, parting from us, is the coming Jesus—are fulfilled: “Your sorrow will turn into joy” (Jn 16:20). And, like Sarah, people who share an Easter faith can say: “God has made me laugh; every one who hears will laugh with me” (Gen 21:6). ♦

[Excerpted from: Ratzinger, J.C., 1997, *‘Easter: Sarah’s laughter’, in Images of hope: Meditations on major feasts*, transl. J. Rock & G. Harrison, pp. 43–52, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, CA. The passage has been cited variously on the Internet.]

EVEN IF YOU AREN'T A GOOD PERSON...

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3)

failures. Avoidance of pain and self denial, fear of uncertainty emotionally or financially, the desire to forget the worry which troubles the mind, the lack of courage to stand up for what is right, the suspicion that others may harm us, anxiety about what others may think: all of these are the stuff of that worrying which stifles our serene awareness of what is good and what is evil, and move us to act for motives which are sinful. Saint Francis de Sales, another saint who studied and practiced law, had this to say about worry:

“With the single exception of sin, worry is the greatest evil that can happen to a soul. Just as sedition and internal disorders bring total ruin on a state and leave it helpless to resist a foreign invader, so also if our heart is inwardly disturbed and troubled it loses both the strength necessary to maintain the virtues it had acquired and the means to resist the temptations of the enemy. He (the devil) then uses his utmost efforts to fish in troubled waters, as they say...There is nothing that tends more to increase evil and prevent good than to be disturbed and anxious.”

All the popular talk of stress and stress management adds nothing to the analysis of the saints. What to do? Saint Francis de Sales gives us his advice. There are three things we can do: PRAY, WAIT, TALK. Lift up your heart to God and ask for His

help while you entrust your cares to Him sincerely. Wait as long as you reasonably can (this is the hardest part for many of us) and do not act from your worries, but from reason and faith. Find a confidant you can trust and talk about your worries just as you perceive them. In a while you will find that your moral life has improved a great deal, just by eliminating worry, if only a little bit.

At the beginning of this article we said that the first and universal moral norm could not be improved upon: “Do good and avoid evil.” But—move over Kant—perhaps there is a close second as a practical corollary to our axiom: “Not to worry!” ♦

You can find all back issues of Ad Veritatem at the STMS web site: <http://www.stthomasmore.net/>.

1. How did you come to the Legal profession?

I have always been inquisitive as a kid and I was always reading books. I lived in a small town in the Philippines and my home was not near a library so I would ask my mom to bring me a volume of the Encyclopedia Britannica so I can read it. I also was very argumentative as a kid so the legal profession was a natural choice for me.

2. Who had the most profound impact on the development of your Christian faith?

There are a few people in my life that had a profound impact on my Catholic faith. When I was a kid, my Dad had a profound impact on my Catholic faith. I remember walking to church with him every Sunday and stopping at my favorite toy store along the way. He also took me to see Pope John Paul II when he was visiting Manila in 1981. Later on, my wife had a tremendous impact in helping develop an adult relationship with Christ.

3. What is your favorite book?

A book that I have read recently, which became a favorite, is *A Good Man: Rediscovering my father Sargent Shriver* by Mark Shriver. It's a story about being a devout Catholic, a husband, a father, and a lawyer. It spoke to me on many levels.

7 QUESTIONS

with

Michael
David



4. Who is your favorite saint?

I have several that I pray to. But I pray to St. Joseph the Worker a lot. When my son in college has an exam to take, I usually pray to St. Joseph of Cupertino. My wife and I also have a devotion to St. Therese of Lisieux.

5. Do you have a favorite verse or story from scripture?

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you besides." Mt 6:33 NAB. It keeps me focused and not worried about the small stuff.

6. What do you appreciate most about the faith?

The Catholic faith in particular, I appreciate the Sacraments and how we can be given grace and mercy through them. I like that whenever I travel that I can almost always go to a nearby Catholic church, hear Mass, and receive our Lord in the Eucharist.

7. What advice can you give to a young lawyer on living the Catholic faith in the legal profession?

Do not ever lose it. Try to find something that you can enjoy doing and that you can take on as a lay apostolate ministry.