

# ad. veritatem

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

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Hypocrites,  
Sinners or  
Saints?  
**GREGORY WEILER**



Shock and Awe,  
Then Joy  
**JOHN J. FLYNN III**



7 Questions  
**YOLANDA V. TORRES**



# HYPOCRITES, SINNERS OR SAINTS?

GREGORY N. WEILER



I was complaining to my spiritual advisor (for the uninitiated, that means my “spiritual director”) that I was burdened by the “feelings” of hypocrisy. After all I’m Catholic, and we Catholics set a pretty high bar for virtue and charity. Yet I screw up all the time: Who am I to urge others to a holiness that so often eludes me?

Father Leo smiled and said “Oh Greg, you’re not a hypocrite. A hypocrite thinks he’s OK. You know you’re messed up. You are just a sinner on the road to sainthood.”

Oh, thank you. I feel so much better.

Thus is the joy of Advent, the awareness of the soon-to-be celebrated Salvation event, the reality of the coming of the only means possible of taking us from sinner to saint.

As Father Leo also pointed out, it is grace that makes us want to share the reality of the Redeemer’s coming. Emanuel, or God with us—He is the means to our personal salvation. For the mystery of the Incarnation had to precede the Cross and empty tomb. And because of that, we can revel for a time in the joy of the Babe and unabashedly share the merriness of Christmas.

That’s the job, the *raison d’être*, of our STMS community: to clearly and lovingly share/proclaim to the legal community our great joy and our Great News (that sure sells better than St. John the Baptist merry line, “repent you brood of vipers”).

Merry Christmas to you and your families. 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

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CAN we still be shocked by the faith? By miracles, by the Resurrection, and this month, by the Incarnation? We should beg to be shocked now and then by the truths of our faith, the deep mysteries that are intelligible, but by no means fully comprehended. Because of human nature, faith can become a habit that diminishes our susceptibility to shock. We believe that God almighty made the universe and the physical and moral laws that govern it and us, whose supremacy is owed not to his power but to his goodness, and in whom alone are the two perfectly married. We believe that God made us to know him, and therefore to find incomprehensible happiness. But that was not enough for us, and so we made gods of ourselves, and opened a chasm that could not be bridged by any human initiative, by any human exertion, or by any human suffering. The evil done could only be overcome by a good that was greater, and there was no human good that was great enough. It was God alone whose sacrifice could save us, and so he made his dwelling in human flesh, born as we are, small, weak, defenseless, dependent, and born too in poverty, momentarily homeless, finding shelter in a place fit only for habitation by animals.

Perhaps we are indeed shocked at Christmas, and the evidence of it is all around us, in music, in worship, in the halls be-decked, and the unhinged gift-giving and great fits of charity and generosity. Can anything less than shock produce something so mad as Christmas?

We are ensouled to seek the eternal, yet we are bound to the earth for now by our bodies, though even the senses at times have a fleeting glimpse of the infinite. These glimpses are enough for us, for the impact is both unmistakable and indelible. We can be patient then, knowing what we know, that God is real, that Heaven awaits, that nothing we endure in this life, not the greatest misery, can darken the imperishable light that illumines the heavens, the vision of which we always bear within us, or we could not have hope. At Christmas, we know the illimitable joy of one who has lost all hope, having lost everything dear, only to see it all fall at his feet from Heaven. ♦

## 1. How did you come to the Legal profession?

One simple reason. I wanted to help people. I thought the best way to accomplish this goal for me was to become a lawyer or a teacher. Having been a long term substitute teacher, prior to becoming a lawyer, I came to realize that teaching and being a trial lawyer have many traits in common.

One must always be prepared, be willing to learn about new subjects, and of course prepared. Without preparation, both lawyers and teachers are doomed as opposing counsel and the students, no matter how young, will smell blood and or realize that the lawyer and or teacher is unprepared.

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

My family, mostly my mom and my aunt Selia. Unfortunately my parents divorced when I was very young. It was not my mother's decision to divorce, even though she was a victim of domestic violence. My mother faced certain circumstances as a single mother and dealt with them. She had no time to complain and or feel sorry for herself. No matter how bad things may have been for us, she was always grateful and maintained her faith when most would have probably lost their faith.

For example, she was always grateful to have the opportunity to work several overtime hours per week when most would have given up and said it was

impossible to maintain our home and raise two children. Because of her faith, she was able to maintain her vigorous work schedule and raise me and my brother.

My brother and I would often spend time with my aunt Selia who would take us to church with her and her family on Sundays. My aunt Selia was debilitated with Multiple Sclerosis but that never stopped her from going to church.

## 3. What is your favorite book?

This question is so difficult for me to answer as I do not have a favorite book. My favorite book depends on my mood. A couple are *A Man For All Seasons* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

## 4. Who is your favorite saint?

I have several. Of course, St. Thomas More, St. John Paul II are some of my favorites. St. Catherine is also

# 7 QUESTIONS

with

**Yolanda Victoria Torres**



one of my favorite saints.

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

There are so many to choose from that my answer is no. It would depend on how I am feeling at a particular moment. Psalm 23 is a top contender.

## 6. What do you appreciate most about the faith?

I love the pomp and circumstance and the traditions of the faith. I also love the fact that our Pope, Francis, is a man of the people and his outlook on the faith. None of us are perfect. We need to use our faith to help us be better people and give back to our society. I believe our Pope is a great example of our faith.

## 7. What advice can you

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give to a young lawyer on living the Catholic faith in the legal profession?

I believe one can still have their faith and maintain their practice/profession. At first, I had difficulties as a Christian Attorney being a Family Law Attorney. I NEVER wanted to be a DIVORCE attorney! This was not my goal in law school and or college. I always dreamed of helping people and thought this meant that my calling would be to be a District Attorney.

Unfortunately, when I graduated from law school Orange County was still suffering from the aftermath of the bankruptcy. The District Attorney’s Office had a hiring freeze. I thought I was fortunate in that I was able to secure employment with the Department of Child Support Services (which was part of the District Attorney’s Office at the time). Shortly thereafter the Departments disenfranchised and I was type cast as a family law attorney. As my goal was to help people, I believe there were other plans for me. I studied and sat for the Certified Specialist Examination in Family Law solely for the purpose of

learning more about the area of law. It was never my intention to become a Certified Family Law Specialist as I did not have the requisite trial experience at the time. I successfully passed the examination and am now very grateful that I am a Certified Family Law Specialist.

I think that we should continue to believe that there may be bigger plans for us. “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” (Jeremiah 29:11) ♦

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MONTH	DATE	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
December	Tues., Dec 22, 6:00-8:00 p.m.	STMS Christmas Party. Refreshments will be served.	Advanced Depositions 17752 Sky Park Circle, Ste. 100 Irvine, CA 92614
	Wed., Dec 30, 12:00 p.m.	Monthly Noon Lunch Talk. V. Rev. Hugh Barbour, Prior, St. Michael’s Abbey, will give a presentation on the Year of Mercy declared for 2016 by Pope Francis.	Advanced Depositions 17752 Sky Park Circle, Ste. 100 Irvine, CA 92614