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ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

NOVEMBER 2013

VOLUME 18 ISSUE 9

President's  
Column  
GREGORY WEILER



Something Old  
JOHN J. FLYNN III



Red Mass  
Photos



# THANKSGIVING: TO WHOM, FOR WHAT?

## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN GREGORY N. WEILER

Isn't it ironic that one of our iconic national holidays, centered around giving thanks, is sacrosanct, while at the same time, the right to be publicly thankful to God is being aggressively excised from the public square? As Catholics we know that Thanksgiving is more than thanks for our food and shelter. Though these things are great gifts, we give greater thanks for the Good News itself – the promise of an eternity with God.



The Good News, Jesus Christ, who He is, what He did, and our ability to appropriate it by grace through faith--those are the things on my mind this month.

This Thanksgiving coincides with the start of Advent. The great preparatory period for the Feast of His Incarnation started back on March 25 at the Feast of the Annunciation. Would it not be good for us in the legal community to spend some time this Advent season focusing on the import of the Incarnation? If He is who He says He is (the creator of the universe), and if He did what He said He was going to do (die on the cross for our sins and redeem us), and if we can appropriate that redemption, become children of God, by grace through faith, then .... what's stopping us?

This pondering, dare I say praying, on the Good News does not involve one iota of shopping. On the other hand it does drive us to the theme of every great Christmas carol, the joy attendant to the tidings of great joy, the reality that a Savior has been born (and indeed He was 2013 years ago).

This Thanksgiving and Advent season, let us focus on that Good News which the great commission commands us to proclaim to all nations. Let's start first with ourselves and take the **time** to earnestly thank God for His manifold blessings. Let's then push back on our culture with an aggressive charity and abiding joy.

Our joyful, loving sharing of the Good News, always but especially this Christmas season where our culture confusingly participates in celebrating Our Lord's birth, is the essence of the New Evangelization urged on us by soon-to-be Saint John Paul II.

Have a Blessed Thanksgiving. 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



# SOMETHING OLD

JOHN J. FLYNN III

The feast day of St. Charles Borromeo, November 4, calls to mind a passage in Mark Twain's *The Innocents Abroad*. Twain, if it is fair to assess his judgment of Catholicism on the basis of *Connecticut Yankee* and a few other passages in *Innocents Abroad*, was no friend of the Church, or at least no friend of certain clerical behaviors and popular devotions. But there was more to his perspectives on the Church than those harsh but very specific criticisms. While it is not possible here to do justice to the complexities of his relationship to the Church, when Twain was faced with the real evidence of Catholicism, he said this about Charles Borromeo, in a passage excerpted from *Innocents Abroad*, describing Borromeo's tomb in the Milan Cathedral:

Now we shall descend into the crypt, under the grand altar of Milan Cathedral, and receive an impressive sermon from lips that have been silent and hands that have been gestureless for these 300 years. This is the last resting place of a good man, a warm-hearted unselfish man; a man whose whole life was given to succoring the poor, encouraging the faint-hearted, visiting the sick; in relieving distress, whenever and wherever he found it. His heart, his hand and his purse were always open. With his story in one's mind, we can almost see his benignant countenance moving calmly among the haggard faces of Milan in the days when the plague swept the city; brave when all others were cowards, full of compassion where pity had been crushed out of all other breasts by the instinct of self-preservation gone mad with terror, cheering all, praying with all, helping all with hand and brain and purse, at a time when parents forsook their children, the friend deserted the friend, and the brother turned away from the sister while her pleadings were still wailing in his ears. This was good St. Charles Borromeo, Bishop of Milan.

And here is Twain's description of another Catholic, St. Joan of Arc:

She was deeply religious, and believed that she had daily speech with angels; that she saw them face to face, and that they counselled her, comforted and heartened her, and brought commands to her direct from God. She had a childlike faith in the heavenly origin of her apparitions and her Voices, and not any threat of any form of death was able to frighten it out of her loyal heart. She was a beautiful and simple and lovable character. In the records of the Trials this comes out in clear and shining detail. She was gentle and winning and affectionate, she loved her home and friends and her village life; she was miserable in the presence of pain and suffering; she was full of compassion: on the field of her most splendid victory she forgot her triumphs to hold in her lap the head of a dying enemy and comfort his passing spirit with pitying words; in an age when it was common to slaughter prisoners she stood dauntless between hers and harm, and saved them alive; she was forgiving, generous, unselfish, magnanimous; she was pure from all spot or stain of baseness. And always she was a girl; and dear and worshipful, as is meet for that estate: when she fell wounded, the first time, she was frightened, and cried when she saw her blood gushing from her breast; but she was Joan of Arc! and when presently she found that her generals were sounding the retreat, she staggered to her feet and led the assault again and took that place by storm.

...

Taking into account, as I have suggested before, all the circumstances -- through origin, youth, sex,

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## SOMETHING OLD

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illiteracy, early environment, and the obstructing conditions under which she exploited her high gifts and made her conquests in the field and before the courts that tried her for her life, -- she is easily and by far the most extraordinary person the human race has ever produced.

Finally, another observation excerpted from *Innocents Abroad*, describing the treatment received by his tour group from the Catholic "Desert Fathers":

They knew we were foreigners and Protestants, and not likely to feel admiration or much friendliness toward them. But their large charity was above considering such things. They simply saw in us men who were hungry, and thirsty, and tired, and that was sufficient.

...

I have been educated to

enmity toward everything that is Catholic, and sometimes, in consequence of this, I find it much easier to discover Catholic faults than Catholic merits. But there is one thing I feel no disposition to overlook, and no disposition to forget: and that is, the honest gratitude I and all pilgrims owe to the Convent Fathers in Palestine. Their doors are always open, and there is always a welcome for any worthy man who comes, whether he comes in rags or clad in purple. The Catholic Convents are a priceless blessing to the poor. A pilgrim without money, whether he be a Protestant or a Catholic, can travel the length and breadth of Palestine, and in the midst of her desert wastes find wholesome food and clean bed every night in these buildings. Pilgrims in better circumstances are often stricken down by the sun and the fevers of the country, and then their saving refuge is the Convent. Without these hospitable retreats, travel

in Palestine would be a pleasure which none but the strongest men could dare to undertake. Our party, pilgrims and all, will always be ready and always willing to touch glasses and drink health, prosperity and long life to the Convent Fathers of Palestine.

None of these saints, canonized or otherwise, who so impressed Twain knew anything about the New Evangelization, but who among us could provide better guides for the path ahead? Holiness is the faithful imitation of the crucified Christ, its meaning, implications and ramifications revealed in Church teachings, the branches of the vine. The content of her teaching is in no need of the slightest alteration; indeed, it is the very source of the attractions exerted by the saints whom Twain so deeply admired. Though we must employ the techniques, vocabularies and mentalities appropriate to these times, whether this new evangelical impulse is old or new, the hope of its success will rest upon the revelation of the ageless Christ, ever new, in the lives of the faithful. ♦

## TUNE IN FOR A TUNE UP

What do you listen to while you commute or while driving around town? Many STMS lawyers and judges have discovered the great Catholic radio programming available in our area.

Immaculate Heart Radio (AM 1000) is available throughout San Diego and most of Orange County. Immaculate Heart Radio broadcasts an incredible

array of programming including, Tim Staples, Marc Shea, the whole array of EWTN resources.

"I look forward to listening to Sister Ann Shields every morning on my iPhone. It's like daily spiritual direction," said current STMS President Greg Weiler.

Check it out.

**Immaculate Heart Radio**

## CALENDAR

**Wednesday, December 18, 12 p.m.**

Lunch meeting with STMSOC Chaplain Fr. Hugh Barbour, O. Praem., speaking on travels through the Holy Land.

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