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ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

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Feet of Clay
JOHN J. FLYNN III



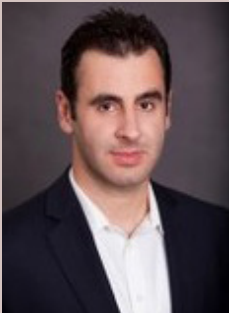
Communion
of Saints
PATRICK E. WHALEN



7 Questions
JEREMY S. CLOSE



NOVEMBER MEETING



Speaker: Michael Altia
Topic: Christianity in the Middle East: Persecution and Genocide
Day: Wednesday, November 18
Time: 12:00 p.m.
Location: Advanced Depositions
 17752 Sky Park Circle, Ste. 100

"The hour is coming when everyone who kills you will think he is offering worship to God. They will do this because they have not known either the Father or me." John 16: 2-3

Millions of Christians suffer persecution throughout the world, solely because of their faith. Persecution exists in many forms including hostile attitudes and discrimination, the torture, rape and murder of Christians, the destruction of churches, an outright prohibition against Christianity, and in the worst cases, genocide. ISIS is making daily news headlines for its merciless brutality, as Christian communities face extinction in their ancient homeland in the heart of the Middle East.

ISIS atrocities are not an anomaly, but follow historic patterns of persecution against minorities. Pope Francis, who has endorsed the use of force against ISIS, said, "The blood of our Christian brothers and sisters is a testimony which cries out to be heard by everyone who can still distinguish between good and evil. All the more this cry must be heard by those who have the destiny of peoples in their hands."

And now we have Paris terrorism again.

Michael Altia, a Catholic originally from the Middle East, will explore some of the most abhorrent cases of persecution, the complex causes for it, and suggestions for action that Westerners may take against persecution.

Mr. Altia is a Board Member with the St. Thomas More Society. He is the founder of the Altia Law Firm, practicing land use, environmental law, and business law. He is also of counsel with Community Legal Advisors, representing community associations.

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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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FEET OF CLAY

JOHN J. FLYNN III



image via

WE live one clay foot in this world, and one in the next, awash in realities we cannot see, yet the only realities that impart meaning and hope to earthly existence. Among the unseen realities that envelop us must be counted the communion of saints, a phrase so familiar that we can be severely challenged to comprehend its real meaning, and the resource it represents. If we do not take care, the saints can become little more than names inscribed in marble, cloying images on holy cards, or the speechmaking statuary that typically populates movies about the saints. But all these habits of mind and heart produce only a sense of foreignness about the saints, inhibiting the formation of intimate friendship with them, friendship for which the saints themselves long, if longing is the right word for the aspirations of those who see God.

Soon after my return to the Church in 1992, I found myself under siege by devout Catholic friends about St. Therese of Lisieux, never failing to refer to her as the Little Flower, as if not to do so was a kind of heresy. It had been my hope, a vain hope it turns out, that “Little Flower” had been fastened to her against her will; in fact, she chose the name herself, a point of some strain between us even today. I tried reading *The Story of a Soul*, Therese’s spiritual autobiography, in those early days. Though apparently heavily edited by other sisters in her community, it is the work of a profoundly gifted soul, one who was allowed a look inside the heart of the Lord himself. But her style of expression is nearly unbearable. So

I put Therese aside for a while. She could fairly have done the same to me, but did not. Her ghost followed me with saintly patience, waiting for the right moment, perhaps a moment of weakness, of openness to grace.

Twenty-three years later, I now count Therese among the closest friends I have ever known. The friendship provides all the consolations that one gains from earthly friends, a very strange thing to say, and I am no more able than you to explain or understand this seeming impossibility. I have been on pilgrimage with my wife four times to Lisieux, each time transported and transformed, each visitation yielding new insights into the love of God, which Therese had perceived with astonishing acuity. This, in a nutshell, was her mission, that is, to make the Heart of Jesus, the ways of his heart, known to the Church and to the world.

Therese understood, too, that the Heart of Jesus is the heart of orthodoxy, and orthodoxy the path of deliverance from our innumerable addictions. But orthodoxy cannot be taken for mere conformity, however exacting, to the externalities of the faith. Orthodoxy draws all of its life from the Heart of Jesus, or it has no life at all, or any power to attract or convert. The practice of true orthodoxy begins with the faithful imitation of the crucified Jesus, walking with feet of clay, and loving with the heart of God. Only then can we reveal to our broken world the face of its salvation. ♦



PATRICK WHALEN

Often on our journey of faith, we give glory to God in sacred liturgy and private prayer. Occasionally, we experience the reflected “Glory of God” at an intimate level that belittles the pyrrhic victories of our careers and life’s routinely scheduled celebrations.

The right state of mind, the right prayer space and the right liturgy can all converge and catch up your spirit to its Creator. Think of Handel’s musical composition Messiah as it is performed with full orchestra and inspirational choir. The Hallelujah Chorus! Think of those few times when you have felt the Spirit of God draw upon your very being and open your eyes to your promised glorious future with Him.

This does not usually happen in church or in private prayer. We are blessed if it ever happens. There are always those distractions, those concerns about all things trivial and those trance like habits of mind that lead us out of prayer and into

the mundane. The glory of God is distant then; it seems almost irrelevant to our human condition.

It takes self discipline and God’s grace to be lifted up!

Consider for a moment those centuries of disciplined contemplatives and Canons Regular (living under the Rule of St. Augustine) who with perseverance have assisted daily at Holy Mass, said their daily divine office, prayed and sang together in praise to God. This has been happening for centuries in Catholic monasteries and cloistered convents out of the political spotlight.

Still there are these faithful souls who are cloistered, i.e. set apart for God, and who “invisibly” live out their days praying, singing glory to God and interceding for the salvation of souls in need all over the world, including those

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COMMUNION OF SAINTS

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who have died and are being purified before they can be united with the One Holy Triune God.

These prayer warriors are likely helping to hold the universe together in the opinion of many! What does that mean? There are verses in the bible and church teaching that Our Lord holds the universe together second by second in a divine act of will power. (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, hereinafter “CCC” at 301) Without this divine act, the very atomic fabric of all things would disintegrate. Does this sound unscientific? It is more logical than the genesis of the Big Bang Theory: In the beginning there was nothing, and then it exploded, creating the universe without God.

It is a fitting and proper response to God creating the universe and sustaining it for us that some still spend their lives giving thanks to God and praying for the salvation of souls in distress.

For example, take the Norbertine Canonesses of the Bethlehem Priory of St. Joseph in Tehachapi, California. They were initially gathered here in Orange County before moving to the wilderness and their mountain Priory at over 5,000 feet above sea level. These Canonesses of the Norbertine Order are Roman Catholic cloistered nuns, and their lives are devoted to liturgical prayer, to the solemn and reverential celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and to interceding for the needs of the Church and the world, especially their founding fathers of St. Michael’s Abbey (and all priests around the globe) in the complementary role as spiritual daughters of St. Michael’s Abbey.

These youthful sisters continually strive to be self-sustaining and self-sufficient, a requirement of all independent Norbertine communities. They maintain a small working dairy farm with cows and goats, along with a large year-round greenhouse for organic produce and outdoor vegetable,

berry and vine gardens. They are beekeepers, too! They also make and sell priest vestments, have a small guest house and monastery gift shop. Last but not least, they have an annual Christmas wreath fund-raiser.

Yet, as a young and growing foundation and the first Norbertine community of canonesses in the United States (the sisters have grown from the first five foundresses in 1997 to their current number of 37), these Sisters naturally have significant material needs: paying off their monastery land, equipping their self-sustaining industries and planning for their new chapel where more visitors in spiritual need can participate in worship with them. Their converted ranch house currently contains a chapel which has been expanded twice for the sisters and their growth. Even with this expansion, the current chapel can only accommodate a dozen visitors for Mass and services (on feast days, the chapel is often overflowing, with guests in the hallway and into the adjacent gift shop- or outside the door in the grotto). With a new chapel, these “Sisters of the Mountains” could welcome more pilgrim worshippers.

But they need our financial support. As part of the hidden heart of the Body of Christ, through their prayers and sacrifices, these nuns help pump the life-blood of grace to all Church members, keeping us growing as the visible feet, hands and minds of the living Church.

We live and survive by God’s act of divine will. It is not asking too much on occasion to financially act and support those who are devoted to constantly thanking God and giving him praise. Together we are the earthly band of the Communion of Saints in myriad ministries, some active and some contemplative, all doing God’s will on earth as it is in heaven (CCC at 946 to 961). ♦

Learn more about these Canonesses and donate to them at:
<http://norbertinesisters.org/>

1. How did you come to the Legal profession?

I decided in high school that I wanted to be an attorney. I was drawn to the concepts of advocacy and fairness, and of course, the glamorous portrayals of the profession on TV shows.

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

Growing up, it was my parents. They made sure our family was at mass every Sunday morning (though inevitably 5 minutes late!), and they taught us and showed us God's love every day. As an adult, it is my wife Julia. It is amazing to see how God uses her to do His work as a compassionate healer.

3. What is your favorite book?

The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The imagery and prose are fantastic. And while not a Christian story per se, it is really one of sin, penance, and redemption.

4. Who is your favorite saint?

St. Thomas More has always been my favorite saint, and is my confirmation name saint. I also have an affinity for Father Damien for the sacrifices he made ministering to the sick.



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

When people questioned why Jesus ate and spoke with tax collector and sinners, He said "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." This reminds us that God's love is for everyone, even if we are tempted to believe that some are "undeserving." I recite this passage in my head every time I go to my church on Easter and Christmas and become annoyed that I can't get my regular seat. We must welcome everyone to form a relationship with Christ and hear His teachings.

6. What do you appreciate most about the faith?

There is great comfort in knowing that God will always provide, and that He has a plan for us.

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

Remember the Catholic principles on the battlefield of law. And avoid the urge to use your legal training to find "loopholes" in the Ten Commandments!