

Imprimatur

Let it Be Printed



What's Up?

Sundays - Adult Faith Formation, 5pm. 2/10 "A Catholic Approach to Divorce and Remarriage"; 2/17 "A Catholic Approach to Voting"; 2/24 "Claims Every Catholic Should be Able to Answer"

Wed/Thurs - Living Your Catholic Faith, 7:30pm (Th) and 9:15am (Wed). 2/13 and 14 "Lessons from the Prophets on Repentance"; 2/20 and 21 "Lessons from St. Paul on the Cross of Christ"; 2/27 and 28 "Lessons from the Passion According to the Synoptic Gospels"; 3/5 and 6 "Lessons from the Passion According to Gospel of John"; 3/12 and 13 "Film: *The Passion of the Christ*"

Fr. Larry Richards will be offering St. Joseph's Lenten mission this year. Richards—known for his Catholic tapes and CD's—will be offering talks February 11-15, from 6:30pm-8:30pm. Contact St. Joseph's in Vancouver for more information.

Parish Mission - Week of March 2nd. Led by special guest, Fr. John Cihak. He received a doctorate in theology from the *Gregorianum* in Rome, is a Hans Urs von Balthasar scholar and adjunct professor at Mt. Angel Seminary. Call office for more information.

Imprimatur is a publication of St. Thomas Parish and is Edited by Justin Nickelsen, Assistant for Religious Education.

Staying Engaged in the Faith

I have often heard Catholics vent that they feel intellectually disconnected from their Catholic Faith. They complain that their knowledge of the faith or understanding of what is going on in the Church is poor. They want to "be in the know" and yet have "busy lives" that keep them from engaging the Faith as much as they would like.

Many are perceptive enough to realize that a lack of intellectual growth can and often does have an adverse affect on our spiritual growth (cf. *Catechism* 158), and even keeps us from being able to fulfill some of the basic duties we have as baptized Christians, such as providing "reasons for the hope that is in us" (cf. 1 Peter 3:15) when we are challenged or questioned about our Faith, or evangelizing in *both* action *and* word (cf. *Catechism* 905, and 1268-1270 for example).

Natural Desire for God—Being Human

Leaving behind the issue of what things fill up our "busy days", the *concern* about our lack of knowledge shows that we are implicitly tapping into what it means to be *human*. If our soul is restless until it rests in God—as St. Augustine said—or, if we have a *natural* desire for God (the *Supernatural*), then it is quite "*human*" to feel an emptiness in ourselves if we are not completely filled with the things of God. This is why you may have heard it said before that the "saints are the most human of all of us".

Some people may roll their eyes and scoff at such a statement, but it reflects a distinctively catholic truth: we are called by nature to God, and anything that gets in the way of that *human fulfillment* (original sin, actual sin, unchecked emotion, disordered 'appetites' or attachments, etc.) makes us less like humans and more like the animals who are not ruled by reason (reason being one of the distinctive elements of *human nature*). This is all part of what it means for humans to be made in the "image and likeness of God" (cf. Genesis 1:26 and *Catechism* 27, 30-31, 36-38, etc.)

Highway to Heaven

Since the vast majority of us (perhaps *all* of us) will *never* be *completely* filled in this life, it *should* produce a longing in us for something more—or, perhaps, more of *Some-One*. Finding the *time* to *act* on that longing seems to be the hard part for most of us. But once we realize that we are driving along the road of life with a tank that is *anything* but full, we have a *responsibility* to respond and participate with grace and "fill'er up", if you will. The spiritual life can *never* be running idle; you are either driving uphill on a "Highway to Heaven" (like Michael Landon in the 1980's TV series), or you are rolling backwards. Period.

So, how do we put the "gas in the tank", so to speak? Well, it *should* go without say that we must be prayerfully and sacramentally engaged with God through His "universal sacrament of salvation": the Church (cf. *Catechism* 775-76). Nothing replaces that, especially the devout reception of the Holy Eucharist! However, my monetarily compensated emphasis here at St. Thomas is largely supplemental to the spiritual life, and, perhaps, *conducive* to it—that is, the realm of "education". (*Continued on Next Page...*)

Protest of Pope—UPDATE

In the last *Imprimatur* we discussed the protest of some faculty and students at La Sapienza University who accused the Holy Father of being "hostile to science" and noted that the protest led to the Vatican's cancellation of the talk he was to give at the University—an unprecedented event.

CatholicNewsAgency.com is now reporting that the 67 professors who wrote the letter opposing the Holy Father's visit were basing their opinion on false information found on the free online and user-edited encyclopedia, Wikipedia, which is known for its errors. How ironic that university professors priding themselves on "science" could be so uncritical or ... "unscientific" about their research!

Holy Quotes

"From the Greatness and Beauty of Created Things Comes a Corresponding Perception of Their Creator" - Wisdom 13:5

(Engaged, Continued From Previous Page...)

Spiritual and Mental Stability

Fides quaerens intellectum—a phrase that celebrates and, perhaps, summarizes the teaching of St. Anselm: *faith seeks understanding* (loose translation). As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches, "... it is intrinsic to faith that a believer desires to know better the One in whom he has put his faith and to understand better what He has revealed." Seems logical and simple enough, right? The beautiful part is what it says should happen next: "...a more penetrating knowledge will in turn call forth a greater faith, increasingly set afire by love." So, faith and reason (*fides et ratio*) work together, and this section of the *Catechism* ends with a quote from St. Augustine: "I believe, in order to understand; and I understand, the better to believe" (*Catechism*, 158). Thus, the life of a Christian is cyclical: we believe and *thus* naturally desire to better understand the Lover of our soul. And as our knowledge and understanding increases so does our faith and love, etc. etc. It is a constant movement of *both* heart and mind until we can be filled no more; until we can lovingly look into the face of our Beloved forever in Eternity—the *Beatific Vision*.

Starting Simple

Perhaps another time I will address the issue of whether we are really as "busy" as we think or whether we fill up our time with various distractions. For most of us, a simple five minute reflection can easily answer that question. (!) For now, I would like to offer a few helpful tips which you can immediately begin to use to help better understand your faith and stay on top of what is happening in the Church. Hopefully these mediums of mental stimulation can help produce a springtime of conversion in your soul—*Lent is a wonderful time for renewal!*

1) Webs of Information

Most of us have a computer with an internet connection. There are many solid Catholic news service providers that give you a good run down of national, international Catholic related news. While I check a few of these per day, I would highly recommend Zenit.com and CatholicNewsAgency.com. The latter comes in full color with pictures and it acts as my home page. So when I log onto the internet it is the first thing I see—a helpful reminder to check it out! You could do the same. (If you don't know how to make a certain website your 'home page' let me know and I will help you!).

Zenit.com is text oriented. For some, this will be a turn off, but I appreciate its simplicity. If you are looking for educational material, Catholic Answers is probably the best for the "Average Joseph and Mary". You can find them at www.Catholic.com.

2) Educational CD's or Tapes

For the last ten years I have listened to Catholic educational CD's or tapes in the car or doing office work. Sure, music is nice sometimes. And the news is great as well. But many of us spend hours on the road per week and devoting at least *some* of that time listening to educationally oriented Catholic CD's or tapes is very helpful. Check out St. Joseph's Communications (SaintJoe.com), or head on over to Queen of Peace Bookstore in Vancouver (360.693.5031) for a good selection of tapes and CD's to purchase. If you want some recommendations, I am a phone call or a click away!

3) Scripture—Join the Revelation!

Beyond the fact that it is the *only* place where you can actually read *the words of God*; beyond the fact that reading Scripture is a means of unique grace; beyond the fact that the Church has "forcefully exhorted us" to read Scripture and at Vatican II made St. Jerome's words Her own, saying, "ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" (*Dei Verbum*, 25); beyond all of this... there is another good reason to read the Bible: *you can get a lot out of Scripture in very short periods of time*. Most of the chapters in the Bible will take the average person five minutes to read.

"But Scripture is too difficult", you say. Well, that is about as true as you wish to make it (which, actually, is one of the *wonderful* things about Scripture!). But you don't need to be a Biblical scholar to come away with a profound and deeply moving understanding of Scripture. "But I don't have the time," you say. Please. Five minutes? Come now. "But I go to mass and they read the Bible there so I don't have to." That is like saying "I pray at mass so I don't need to pray outside of it", which you would agree is ridiculous—at least ... I *hope* you would agree!

Start with the Gospels and read one chapter per day. If you do that, you can get through the Gospel of Matthew in twenty eight days. You *will* be blessed

and you *will* be surprised at what you retain intellectually.

If you can combine the above mentioned items with even a couple minutes of private prayer per day and the sacramental life of the Church you *will* be amazed at the results. Guaranteed! And maybe... just maybe... *you will want even more!* Blessed Lent!

Evangelicals Finding the Fathers

The February 2008 edition of *Christianity Today*—a well-known Evangelical Protestant periodical—had an interesting article titled "The Future Lies in the Past—Why Evangelicals Are Connecting with the Early Church as They Move Into the 21st Century". As Catholics, we couldn't be happier about such an article: *it encourages Evangelicals to engage and understand the early Church Fathers*.

As venerable Cardinal John Henry Newman once said, "to be deep into history is to cease to be Protestant". Despite what some may have told you about the infamous "Spirit of Vatican II", yes... we *still* seek the conversion of all people to Catholicism in which the fullness of Christian truth subsists (cf. *LG* 34, etc.)

It was there, in the early Church, that I began to question my intellectual meanings in Protestantism. Be it the real and substantial presence of Christ in the Eucharist or the apostolic succession from the apostles to the bishops and down through the ages; the hierarchy of the Church or the Mass—it is all their in seed or explicit form, ready to be read by the willing bibliophile.

Such reading—combined with my deep concerns for what appeared to be doctrinal relativism in Protestantism—was a major reason for my *re*-version to the Catholic Church. Let us pray that it can produce similar results in the hearts and minds of our separated brethren.

Book Shelf

It would be hard to find a more appropriate title for this time of year than the Pope's *Journey to Easter—Spiritual Reflections for the Lenten Season*. Short chapters split up for each day of Lent makes it accessible for most Catholics. *Cheap* on Amazon.com!

