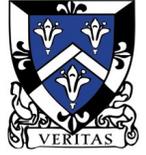




St. Thomas Aquinas Church

November 2, 2014, ALL SOULS DAY



Pastor's Corner

Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. This is our prayer for the dead at every funeral Mass: *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.* November is the month of the dead. We begin that month with the dead who are not everlastingly with God: All Saints Day. That is followed immediately with a day of prayer for dead who are en route to that blessed condition: All Souls Day.

We don't pray for the light of a day for them, nor even for the light of the sun. The light of the sun is too little for us. We pray for God's own light, *lux aeterna*. And the rest we seek for ourselves and our loved ones is not that of the grave, but a share in the brilliant, ecstatic rest of God himself, when his creative work was completed: *requiem aeternam*, the deeply satisfying joy of accomplishment. God's rest is in fact a most intense activity but without exhaustion. This, then, is our prayer for the *Church suffering*, i.e., the souls in Purgatory: eternal rest, eternal light.

It's necessary to get straight exactly what we believe about life after death, especially Purgatory, which so often gets mangled in the transmission. Here are some excerpts from the *Catechism*:

"All who die in God's grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven.

"The Church gives the name *Purgatory* to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned" (CCC 1030-31).

Purgatory is often confused as being a "second chance" after death to be saved; it is not. The souls in Purgatory are already assured their salvation—they simply do not see God yet, though they will. It is a time of purifying, so it is not another hell—hell's pains are eternal and do not purify. They only torment.

Purgatory is also not to be confused with *Limbo*—in fact *Limbo* does not have the same doctrinal weight as Purgatory has. The existence of Purgatory is dogmatically defined; *Limbo* (a provision for the unbaptized just, especially infants) has never been defined dogmatically by the Church but is rather a theological speculation of many of the Church fathers). The main thing to be clear about is that *Purgatory is not everlasting*—the souls in Purgatory are assured eventual salvation indeed but need purifying, to be made perfect, for nothing imperfect can be in God's presence. Jesus himself commands his disciples: "be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Yet it's very common to hear people say: "no one is perfect." Some even say that God doesn't expect perfection

from us, that we sin because we're human, etc. But if sinning is human, why does Jesus come to save us from it? And if we don't need to be perfect, why the dominical admonition? There is someone who is perfect—someone human. In fact, *two* humans. Jesus and Mary, Jesus of course being perfect through himself, and Mary through Jesus. It is through Christ's merits (and Mary's prayers) that we fulfill the command to "be perfect." The rest of us? Well, yes, it's true, we can't be perfect on our own, without Christ. But Jesus' the command is not to be perfect without him, and in fact he told us we had no hope without him: "without me you can do nothing." The idea is to be united to him.

But the moment we become skeptical of the possibility of perfection for ourselves—holiness—we lose hope in salvation. For salvation *means* being holy, not simply getting in the door. God saves us by changing us. He won't have us in his presence unless we're mentally prepared for the experience (it wouldn't be joyful otherwise). I'm afraid many people have the idea of salvation in which the bouncer at the door lets certain people into the club. And some poor schlubs get turned away even though they'd *love* to go in. Not a helpful metaphor. "Heaven" just means the presence of God, and those who never loved God and earth and never obeyed his commands would find his presence insufferable after death. No one is turned away except those who refuse to love God—and it's better said that they turn themselves away. Being saved is all about being in good condition, not about being given a pass. To be saved, we must be changed, brought to perfection—and while a few may achieve that on earth, for the balance of people that means Purgatory—a provision of God's mercy.

And so we must pray for the souls in Purgatory, especially our own family and friends. Though their salvation is assured, their sufferings can be lessened and shortened by our loving prayers—and they can pray for the living. It's good both to pray for your deceased parents and ask for their prayers. They need us. But we need them, too, and they're a huge constituency of the Church, even though dead. And we shall all join the ranks of the dead. Let's pray we all be together again—with God.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace! —Fr. Peter

Conference table needed Our parish center needs a conference table—preferably with matching chairs. Given our financial state I'm not about to buy anything new, but if you or someone you know, or your work, has an old one in good shape that we could buy for a decent price, please let me know.



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MASS INTENTIONS

Sun, Nov 2	ALL SOULS DAY
5:00pm	Don Frame & Family
7:00am	Leo Burkhart (+)
9:00am	People of the Parish
11:00am	Richard McCarty (+)
Mon, Nov 3	<i>St. Martin de Porres, O.P., religious (M)</i>
8:00am	Fallen-away Catholics
Noon	Carl & Marguerite Conrath & Family
Tue, Nov 4	<i>St. Charles Borromeo, bishop (M)</i>
8:00am	Fallen-away Catholics
Wed, Nov 5	
8:00am	Peg & Sherry Dinan (anniv)
Noon	Charles & Leota Schaumleffel & Family
Thu, Nov 6	<i>Dominican Martyrs of Japan (M)</i>
8:00am	Fallen-away Catholics
Fri, Nov 7	ALL DOMINICAN SAINTS (F)
8:00am	Fallen-away Catholics
Noon	Mary & Bill Reilly (+)
Sat, Nov 8	ALL DOMINICAN SOULS
9:00am	Souls in Purgatory
Sun, Nov 9	DEDICATION, LATERAN BASILICA
5:00pm	Peg Mattingly (+)
7:00am	People of the Parish
9:00am	Beverly McLoughlin (+)
11:00am	Joe Jamiolkowski (+)

(Incense will not be used at 7:00am Masses; it may be used at other Sunday Masses, as well as evening Masses on Holy Days of Obligation.)

2nd Collections

Nov. 9: Catholic Campaign for Human Development
Nov. 23: Dominican Novices

Parish Finances

Week of October 27, 2014

Envelopes (252).....	\$8,796.00
Loose.....	990.05
Total	9,786.05
Weekly Budget.....	11,538.00
Deficit... ..	1,751.95

Thank you!

Please pray for the home-bound of the parish:

Margaret Gladys **Abbott**, Maxine **Anders**, William & Jan **Barry**, Josephine **Basalla**, Mary **Battiger**, Dorothy **Beaver**, Gertrude **Bell**, Ed **Bowman**, Madelyn **Bronkar**. Mathilda **Clark**, Mary **Cowden**, Michael **Curtis**, Jeanne **Dittmar**, Ralph **Dosch**, Paul & Marcy **DuBeck**, Betty **Fedor**, Jenni **Finnen**, Claude & Beverly **Foley**, Isabel **Gilchrist**, Mary Ellen **Grafton**, Nancy **Hamler**, Mr. and Mrs. Jack **Hartnett**, Florence **Herbert**, Gabrielle **Hinkle**, Patricia **Huck**, Mary **Imlay**, Mary Caroline **Johnson**, Eileen **Johnston**, Henry **Long**, David **Macenko**, Farida **Mach**, Gerald **Marshall**, Josephine **Marshall**, Alice **McGonagle**, Betty **Mercer**, Michael **Overstreet**, Loretta (& Charles) **Paynter**, Patricia **Perrone**, Glenna **Pfeifer**, Alice **Pitcock**, Mary **Polascak**, Mary **Postlewaite**, George and Barb **Ridenour**, Barbara **Schumacher**, Charles & Mary Lou **Scott**, Loretta **Sfliko**, Theresa **Tracey**, Teresa **Woods**, Terri **Woods**

Weekly Calendar

Sun, Nov 2

10:00 a.m. CCD (School)
Coffee and doughnuts (Rosary Hall)

Mon, Nov 3

7:00 p.m. Children of God prayer group

Tue, Nov 4

6:00 p.m. Rosary for Life (Church)
7:00 p.m. RCIA (Parish Center)

Please note that henceforth, RCIA sessions will be for candidates and catechumens (and sponsors) only.

Wed, Nov 5

12:30-8:00 p.m. Eucharistic exposition
7:30 p.m. St. Monica Novena

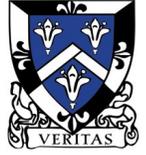
Thu, Nov 6

3:00 p.m. Extraordinary Minister meeting (Church)



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[Last week I ran a short piece by Fr. Robert Barron about the goings-on at the Synod on the Family. This article, by German philosopher Robert Spaemann, ran in the August/September 2014 issue of First Things. In it, he replies to the claim that the Church should relax her teachings on Holy Communion for the divorced and remarried. It's a sobering reflection.]

Divorce and Remarriage, by Robert Spaemann

The divorce statistics for modern Western societies are catastrophic. They show that marriage is no longer regarded as a new, independent reality transcending the individuality of the spouses, a reality that, at the very least, cannot be dissolved by the will of one partner alone. But can it be dissolved by the consent of both parties, or by the will of a synod or a pope? The answer must be no, for as Jesus himself explicitly declares, man cannot put asunder what God himself has joined together. Such is the teaching of the Catholic Church.

The Christian understanding of the good life claims to be valid for all human beings. Yet even Jesus's disciples were shocked by their Master's words: Wouldn't it be better, then, they replied, not to marry at all? The astonishment of the disciples underscores the contrast between the Christian way of life and the way of life dominant in the world. Whether it wants to or not, the Church in the West is on its way to becoming a counterculture, and its future now depends chiefly on whether it is able, as the salt of the earth, to keep its savor and not be trampled underfoot by men.

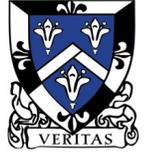
The beauty of the Church's teaching can shine forth only when it is not watered down. The temptation to dilute doctrine is reinforced nowadays by an unsettling fact: Catholics are divorcing almost as frequently as their secular counterparts. Something has clearly gone wrong. It's against all reason to think that all civilly divorced and remarried Catholics began their first marriages firmly convinced of its indissolubility and then fundamentally reversed themselves along the way. It's more reasonable to assume that they entered into matrimony without clearly realizing what they were doing in the first place: burning their bridges behind them for all time (which is to say until death), so that the very idea of a second marriage simply did not exist for them.

Sadly, the Catholic Church is not without blame. Christian marriage preparation very often fails to give engaged couples a clear picture of the implications of a Catholic wedding. Were that so, many couples would very likely decide against being married in the Church. For others, of course, good marriage preparation would provide a helpful impetus to conversion. There is an immense appeal in the idea that the union of a man and a woman is "written in the stars," that it endures on high, and that nothing can destroy it, both "in good times and in bad." This conviction is a wonderful and exhilarating source of strength and joy for spouses working through marital crises and seeking to breathe new life into their old love. Instead of reinforcing the natural, intuitive appeal of marital permanence, many churchmen, including bishops and cardinals, prefer to recommend, or at least to consider, another option, one that is an alternative to Jesus's teaching and basically a capitulation to the secular mainstream. The remedy for the adultery entailed by remarriage of the divorced, we are told, is no longer to be contrition, renunciation, and forgiveness but the passage of time and habit, as if general social acceptance and our personal comfort with our decisions and lives have an almost supernatural power. This alchemy supposedly transforms an adulterous concubinage that we call a "second marriage" into an acceptable union to be blessed by the Church in God's name. Given this logic, of course, it is only fair for the Church to bless homosexual partnerships as well.



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But this way of thinking is based on a profound error. Time is not creative. Its passage does not restore lost innocence. In fact, its tendency is always just the opposite—namely, to increase entropy. Every instance of order in nature is wrested from the grip of entropy and over time eventually falls under its dominion once again. As Anaximander puts it, “From whence things arise, to that they eventually return, according to the appointed time.” It would be wrong to repackage the principle of decay and death as something good. We should not confuse the gradual deadening of the sense of sin with its disappearance and release from our ongoing responsibility for it.

Aristotle taught that there is a greater evil in habitual sin than in a single lapse accompanied by the sting of remorse. Adultery is a case in point, especially when it leads to new, legally sanctioned arrangements—“remarriage”—that are almost impossible to undo without great pain and effort. Thomas Aquinas uses the term *perplexitas* to characterize cases like these. They are situations from which there is no escape that does not incur guilt of one sort or another. Even a single act of infidelity entangles the adulterer in perplexity: Should he confess his deed to his spouse or not? If he confesses, he might just save the marriage and, in any case, he avoids a lie that would eventually destroy mutual trust. On the other hand, a confession could pose an even greater threat to the marriage than the sin itself (which is why priests often counsel penitents against revealing infidelity to their spouses). Note, by the way, that St. Thomas teaches that we never stumble into *perplexitas* without some measure of personal guilt and that God allows this as a punishment for the sin that initially set us down the wrong path.

To stand by our fellow Christians in the midst of the *perplexitas* of remarriage, to show them empathy and assure them of the solidarity of the community, is a work of mercy. But to admit them to communion without contrition and to regularize their situation would be an offense against the Blessed Sacrament—one more among the many that are committed today. Paul’s instruction on the Eucharist in First Corinthians culminates in a warning against unworthy reception of Christ’s body: He who eats and drinks unworthily eats and drinks judgment to himself. Why did the liturgical reformers strike these decisive verses from the second reading for Mass on Holy Thursday and Corpus Christi, of all feasts? When the entire congregation stands up to receive communion Sunday after Sunday, one has to wonder: Do Catholic parishes now consist exclusively of saints?

But there is still one last point, which by all rights ought to be the first. The Church admits that it handled the sexual abuse of minors without sufficient regard for the victims. The same pattern is repeating itself here. Has anyone even mentioned the victims? Is anyone talking about the woman whose husband has abandoned her and their four children? She might be willing to take him back, if only to ensure that the children are provided for, but he has a new family and has no intention of returning.

Meanwhile, time passes. The adulterer would like to receive communion again. He is ready to confess his guilt, but he is not willing to pay the price—namely, a life of continence. The abandoned woman is forced to watch while the Church accepts and blesses the new union. As if to add insult to injury, her abandonment receives an ecclesiastical stamp of approval. It would be more honest to replace “until death do you part” with “until the love of one of you grows cold”—a formula that is already being seriously recommended. To speak here of a “liturgy of blessing” rather than of a remarriage before the altar is a deceptive sleight of hand that merely throws dust in the eyes of the people.

Robert Spaemann is emeritus professor of philosophy at the University of Munich.



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Parish Life

Rosary Altar Society Auction The annual Christmas auction sponsored by the Rosary Altar Society will be held on Sunday, November 9th, 2014 beginning at 12:30 p.m. in the Activity Center. We are excited about all the great items that will be at the event this year, such as our "Theme Baskets," Religious Basket, Boy's Basket, Girl's Basket, (ages 2-8), Teen's Basket (gift cards from any Teen Store at the mall), and a Pasta Basket. Bake sales, items and 2-Liter Bottles of pop will be needed closer to the date. Also don't forget to turn in your Quilt raffle tickets. **Many thanks to Teresa Pennock, who donated the quilt for the Rosary Altar Christmas Auction.** Parents, there will be free babysitting available to assist you while you shop and enjoy yourself. For more details you may contact Lori Gnau, at (740) 453-8501.

The Saint Thomas/Saint Nicholas Youth Group will meet at Saint Nicholas teen center at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 2 (All Souls Day) to travel to Mount Calvary Cemetery and pray for faithful departed. A Dominican priest will accompany and give instruction and answer questions about the Christian teachings on death and life after death. All high school students are welcome (permission slips required). The Youth Group will be providing breakfast after the 7:30, 9:30 and 11:30 a.m. Masses on Sunday, November 9th in the St. Nicholas Church Basement.

A word about the History of the parish installments. The continuous history of Saint Thomas Aquinas parish is yielding this week to the article by Prof. Spaemann I wished to run, but it will be back next week. People have often thanked me for writing it. I have to be honest here: I haven't been writing it! The credit for that very well-written and informative history belongs to Melanie Von Gunten, parish DRE and general factotum around these parts. So, please thank Melanie!
—Fr. Peter

Varia

Turkey Dinner at St. Ann's/St. Mary Parish

What: Turkey Dinner

Where: St. Ann's/St. Mary's Parish Hall (4th & Chestnut St. Dresden) On Sunday, Nov. 2 11am to 2pm. Menu includes Turkey, Dressing, Mashed Potatoes, Gravy, Green Beans, Roll Applesauce or Cranberry Sauce, Dessert, & Drink Cost: Adults \$8.00 Children \$5.00 (Carry Out Available). This is our parish's largest fundraiser.

Craft & Resident Art Show

The Oaks at 3291 Northpointe invites you to be a vendor at our Craft & Resident Art Show. On Saturday, November 15th from 9:00 - 3:00 p.m. Reserve your table for only \$5.00 with a Chinese Auction donation. Lunch will be served for \$5.00 per person. You need to reserve your table by November 5th by calling Marissa Kinnan at 452-3000.

First Annual Bishops Alumni Social

at the Knights of Columbus on Friday, November 28th from 7 - 10 pm. Tickets are \$10 at the door or \$5 if purchased in advance at the high school. Appetizers and soft drinks included. This event is open to all RHS supporters, alumni, family, and friends.

Know Your Dominican Saints

November 3 Saint Martin de Porres, Friar Martin de Porres was born in Lima, Peru in 1579 of John, a Spanish nobleman, and Anna Velasquez, a freed slave. As a boy he studied medicine which later, as a member of the Dominican Order, he put to good use in helping the poor. Martin was received as a servant at the priory of the Holy Rosary in Lima where he was finally admitted to profession as a cooperator brother in 1603. In his life of prayer Martin was especially devoted to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Passion of Our Lord. He was noted for his care of the poor and the sick. He died at Lima on November 3, 1639.

