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Regis Servus Dei Prius

February 8, 2016

Dear Members and Friends of the Society:

February, of course, marks the beginning of Lent. Ash Wednesday is this week.

The Society has events planned to help us do a little spiritual preparation for Easter. First, our February luncheon (February 18) will feature Father Michael Hurley, Pastor of St. Dominic's Church. A really outstanding (and succinct) homilist, Father Hurley will give a micro retreat at the luncheon on ways to bring Christ into our daily work lives. Second, Society Member, and former President and STMS Award Honoree, Don Carroll will be delivering his Brown Bag Lenten Series, four one-hour, lunchtime reflections at 44 Montgomery Street (Wednesday, February 24, March 2, 9 16 – more information below). These events are convenient ways to help prepare us for the Feast of Easter. Please put some time aside to attend the luncheon and any or all of the Lenten Series dates.

February Luncheon

Date: Thursday, February 18. 12:00 noon
Place: The Family Club, 545 Powell Street, San Francisco
Cost: \$52, \$42 (less than 10 years practice), \$25 (law students and clergy) There is no cost for first time prospective members of the Society
email Andres at orphanopoulos@gmail.com (or respond to Evite) to attend
Speaker: Fr. Michael Hurley, O.P.

Springtime of Mercy: “40 Days Towards Living the Joy of Gospel.” The talk will be a spiritual refresher inspired by Pope Francis calling for a “Jubilee Year of Mercy” anchored in the classic threefold Lenten imperative: fast, pray, give. Flowing from this Lenten context, the talk will touch on themes of mercy and compassion, forgiveness and perseverance towards awakening our daily faith life. A mini-lunch retreat for the busy lawyer!

Brown Bag Lenten Series

Dates: Wednesday, February 24, March 2, 9, 16;
12:00 – 1:00 p.m.
Place: Laws Office of Kelly, Hockel & Klein
44 Montgomery Street, Suite 1500, San Francisco
Led by: Don Carroll

Pope Francis has captured the interest of a great many including former Catholics and non-Christians. Now, he has called for a “Year of Mercy.” In this series our member, former-President and Society Honoree Don Carroll will help us look at the scripture passages Francis cites in order to see if we can more fully grasp what motivates this Pope.

Mark your calendars now! Bring a lunch and consider bringing a friend.

Following up on my promise to share brief stories of some of the Church’s great Lawyer-Saints (other than our patron), I’ll start with St. Alphonsus Liguori (1696-1787 – Italy). St. Alphonsus had a successful civil law practice in Naples, but quit practice after losing an important case – his first loss in eight years of practice! In a letter to a fellow lawyer he wrote, “My friend, our profession is too full of difficulties and dangers, we lead an unhappy life and run the risk of dying an unhappy death.” Wow! What did he accomplish after leaving the practice of law? He was ordained, worked for years with the poor and marginalized youth in Naples, founded the Redemptorist Order with the mission of preaching in the slums of cities and other poor places, vigorously fought the heresy of Jansenism, became Bishop of Saint Agatha de Goti, became (and remains) one of the most widely read Catholic writers of all time (111 works on spirituality and theology, including the “Way of the Cross,” that have been reprinted in 21,500 editions and translation into 72 different languages), was canonized and named a Doctor of the Church. A renowned but simple preacher, he once said, that he never preached a sermon that the poorest old person in the congregation could not understand.

But you don’t have to lose a big case and switch careers in order to serve God and neighbor. Here are a couple of possibilities:

St. Anthony Dining Room

The Society has arranged two service opportunities for members (and family or friends – over 13 years of age) as follows:

March 5 (Sat.) – 9:00 am – 12 noon: The Women of the St. Thomas More Society are sponsoring this volunteer event to help St. Anthony's set up for their Women's Day. Volunteers will help sort through donations and house objects that they think are suitable for their clothing store. Email Karen Kimmey at kkimmey@fbm.com if you would like to volunteer.

March 26 (Sat.) – 9:15 – 1:45: Help prepare and serve lunch to St. Anthony's guests. St. Anthony's serves 3,000 meals daily. Email me at mgraham@wendel.com if you would like to volunteer.

Pope Francis Legal Clinic

The Pope Francis Legal Clinic now has a physical presence within the Oakland Diocese Chancery. The clinic's space includes a dedicated office, complete with a separate entrance enabling the clinic to meet the needs of clients outside of normal business hours.

The clinic will provide legal advice and representation to residents of the East Bay. Currently, the clinic plans to offer legal advice and representation in the areas of immigration, landlord/tenant, and elder law. The clinic will also offer a dispute resolution service. Attorneys with experience in any practice area are encouraged to volunteer.

The clinic's next planning meeting is set for 6:00 pm on February 16, 2016 at the Oakland Diocese Chancery.

For those interested in volunteering with the legal clinic or to RSVP for our next meeting, please contact Nicomedes Herrera at nico@herreralegal.com.

And now, a few word from our Chaplain:

Sit Up Straight!

When I left the practice of law six years ago to enter the seminary, I was forty-four years old. Most of my colleagues were associates in their mid-twenties. Feeling somewhat like a father figure gave me license, at least in

my own mind, to offer unsolicited advice to my younger counterparts.

On my last day at the firm, I passed by Marcia's office. At twenty-five, Marcia was smart, hardworking, dedicated, and

ambitious. She also had the bad habit of hunching over her computer for hours on end, reading cases and typing briefs. In fact, it was rare that I passed by her office and she was not there hunched over her computer. She came in early, stayed late, skipped lunch and dinner, and remained forever hunched over her computer.

I poked my head through the door frame to say goodbye. She turned to look at me and wished me the best in my new life. She then turned back toward her computer screen, once again hunched over. I could not resist. I said, "Marcia, I suspect that I will return here to visit in twenty years, and you will still be here, hunched over your computer." It was sort of unkind, I admit. But somehow I believed that I needed to say something.

In our profession, it is all too easy to imprison ourselves in a legal microcosm of life. Exaggerated pride in our work, unhealthy perfectionism, and an overwrought sense of duty and zealous representation lend themselves to practices, like working on a motion until 11:59 p.m. or preparing thirty different versions of a single brief, that are harmful to our personal lives. Our families and friends often are injured as a result of a failure to find balance in our lives.

By now the phrase "balancing work and family" has become little more than a cliché. Billable hours requirements continue to rise. Rainmaking rapidly is becoming a prerequisite for promotion to partnership. Young mothers still too often feel forced to bring their children to work while they slave over legal documents late into the night. The insanity continues, and many attorneys go on living life hunched over their computers and chained to their desks.

This week I attended a private screening of a new Christopher Columbus movie to be released on March 11, called *the Young*

Messiah about the life of Jesus as a child. Among other people, I attended the premiere with a young parishioner. On our way out, he ran into a former co-worker at his firm. After chatting with her for a few minutes, he told me that he had worked with her every day for five years and never knew that she, like him, was a devout Catholic.

Would it be impossible to seek out other Christians in our law firms and start a weekly Bible study before business hours? Would it be impossible to look up from our computers at lunchtime, walk to the nearest Catholic Church, and attend Mass? Would it be impossible to draw a line in the sand and refuse to work on Sundays? Would it be impossible to volunteer for a ministry or service project at church that does not involve pro bono legal work?

Overwork by attorneys is a serious and pervasive problem, leading to high levels of stress, burnout, divorce, and substance abuse. Lawyers, for example, are 3.6 times more likely to suffer from depression than non-lawyers. By profession, we have the fourth highest incidence of suicide.

We become so enveloped in our work, precisely because we so infrequently look up from our computers, sit up straight, and breathe the fresh air of life that so many others enjoy. Saint Paul's advice to the early Christian communities, without a doubt, applies equally to busy lawyers today: "Whatever you do, work heartily, *as for the Lord and not for men*, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. [Remember you are serving the Lord Christ" (Col. 3:23-24) (emphasis added).]

In fact, having been hunched over my computer for an hour now typing this article, I think I will take a walk.

■ Father Roger Gustafson, Chaplain

For those interested in attending a Retreat for Lawyers, Board Member Ethan Niedermeyer (who attended last year) recommends the following:

33rd Annual Retreat for Members of the Legal Profession

Fri, March 11 - 4:00 pm through
Sun, March 13 - 2:00 pm

El Retiro San Inigo
THE JESUIT RETREAT
CENTER OF LOS ALTOS

**Where is God? - 33rd Annual Retreat
for Members of the Legal Profession**

Silent Retreat for Women and Men

Fr. Jim Conroy, S.J.

In the Book of Isaiah, the prophet called the servant in Chapters 52-53 the *Beloved of God*. Spend a quiet, peaceful weekend reflecting more deeply on your experience as servant in your professional life. Become more attuned to how God's presence is with you at all time and places.

***Check-in available from 4:00-6:00 PM;
Opening reception begins at 6:00 PM***

Full Registration Fee(s)

\$290.00 Private Room

\$290.00 Shared Room

More information at:

<http://irc.retreatportal.net/calendar/viewEvent.aspx?programcode=16SON01397>

This newsletter wouldn't be complete without some mention of 2016 Society membership dues:

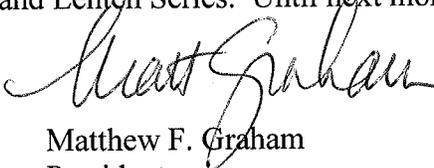
2016 Dues

The 2016 Membership Form is attached to this letter and may be used to pay your dues and to update membership records. Annual dues for 2016 are \$75.00 for attorneys with five years or more of practice and \$25.00 for retired attorneys and those with fewer than five years of practice. Law student membership is free. Your dues are essential to the Society and enable us to fund events, attract quality speakers, and award scholarships, so please get them in.

We are continuing our efforts to attract new members, particularly among younger lawyers, and we encourage you to help us recruit new members to join the Society. Feel free to start by forwarding this newsletter to someone you think may be interested in joining. Remember that lunch is free for prospective members, so bring along a colleague, a friend, a parishioner, or even opposing counsel.

Finally, I'd like your suggestion for nomination for this year's St. Thomas More Award, given to a member of the community who exemplifies the Society's goal of practicing the ideals of service and sacrifice in the pursuit of justice as reflected in the life and death of St. Thomas More. Please email me at mgraham@wendel.com if you have anyone in mind. A list of past recipients can be found on the website.

Hope to see you at the February lunch and Lenten Series. Until next month.



Matthew F. Graham
President

**ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO
2016 MEMBERSHIP FORM**

*Use this form to pay your annual dues and update your membership record.
New members may use this form to join the Society.*

Name: _____

Firm, Company, Court, or School: _____

Area(s) of Practice: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Parish: _____

Year Admitted to Bar: _____ Retired from Practice? _____

Law Student? _____ Note: Law students membership is free.

Would you like to participate in our Mentor Program as a mentor or mentee?

Please accompany this application with current dues payment. Annual dues for 2016 are \$75.00 for attorneys with five years or more of practice and \$25.00 for retired attorneys and those with fewer than five years of practice. Law student membership is free. Please make checks payable to St. Thomas More Society.

Return form and check to:
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