

**St. Thomas More Society
of San Francisco**
www.stthomasmore-sf.org

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Regis Servus Dei Prius

March 11, 2016

Dear Members and Friends of the Society:

Last Saturday, the women of the Society sponsored a volunteer morning at St. Anthony's in the City. Led by Karen Kimmey, and with some help from volunteer lawyers at the Farella Braun and Wendel Rosen offices, we transformed St. Anthony's main meeting room into a clothing store for homeless women. Volunteers stocked and sized shoes, handbags, accessories and undergarments, and sorted, sized and hung on clothing racks a variety of dresses, pants, tops and coats. The tables and racks were then arranged as a small store, complete with viewing mirrors. This week, sixty homeless women will be invited to shop at the store. The sale event will coordinate with a variety of other social service concerns to provide the women with resources for medical and child care, housing, etc.

The St. Anthony's coordinator explained that setting up the location like a store allows the women to browse and try on items providing a level of dignity that often is missing from such events. The dignity aspect of charity has been one of the themes of Don Carroll's Lenten Series this year. For the last three Wednesday lunch hours, Don has led Society members in a discussion of the scriptural passages cited by Pope Francis in calling for the current Year of Mercy. Don has challenged us to incorporate dignity with our charity: if we give money to a homeless person, also give the respect of personal conversation. Ask his or her name, give them yours; ask about their day; shake hands or make other contact. Let that person know that you care not just about his or her plight, but about them personally, as a child of God. Give them the

same dignity and respect that Jesus would. Don's Lenten Series concludes this week, Wednesday the 16th:

Brown Bag Lenten Series

Date: Wednesday, March 16, 12:00 – 1:00
Place: Law Office of Kelly, Hockel & Kline
44 Montgomery Street, 15th Floor
Led by: Don Carroll

Bring a lunch and join other members of the Society if you can. It makes no difference if you haven't attended all or any of the previous sessions – there is still something there for you.

And there is still one more Society sponsored service opportunity to assist the poor before Easter. On Saturday March 26 (Holy Saturday), we will assist with the serving of the daily meal at St. Anthony's Dining Room. The Dining Room serves about 3,000 meals each and every day. We need volunteers to serve the meals to the guests at their tables from 9:15 to 1:45. I can't think of a better way to spend part of the time between Christ's death and resurrection than by using a few hours of it to serve the poor. The opportunity is open to anyone over the age of 13, so if you have a teenager who you would like to experience the joy of personal charity, bring him or her along. Email me at mgraham@wendel.com if you would like to help on Holy Saturday.

The Pope Francis Legal Clinic is also looking for lawyer volunteers.

The clinic (opening as soon as facility construction is complete) 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. Please contact Nicomedes Herrera at nico@herreralegal.com.

March Luncheon

We are honored to have Sheikh Aladdin El Bakri of the San Jose Islamic Center as our speaker at the Society's March luncheon:

Date: March 24 (Thursday)
Place: The Family Club
545 Powell Street, San Francisco
Cost: \$52; \$42 (less than 10 years in practice); \$25 (law students and clergy)
Speaker: Sheikh Aladdin El Bakri

Iman El Bakri will address Islam, Muslims and America. Please join us.

Law School Scholarship

At the March luncheon, we will be awarding the annual St. Thomas More Society Law Student Scholarship. The 2016 recipient is Tarah Powell-Chen of the University of San Francisco School of Law. In addition to being a second year student, Tarah volunteers for a variety of causes, both legal and non-legal, including service to the poor at Glide Memorial Church and Homeless Shelter. Congratulations Tarah!

Speaking of the Scholarship, it is member's dues that make the Society Scholarships possible.

2016 Society Dues

Your dues to the Society help pay for all of the Society's activities and costs, so if you haven't yet paid them, use the attached form and send your payment to Treasurer, Andres Orphanopoulos. Annual dues are \$75.00 for attorneys with five or more years of practice, and \$25.00 for retired lawyers or those with fewer than five years of practice. Law student membership is free.

Red Mass and Banquet

The Society Board will soon be setting the date for the 2016 Red Mass in October. The Red Mass is the high point of the year for the Society and Catholics in the legal profession. Please plan on attending both Mass and the banquet with your fellow lawyers. And please mention the Red Mass (and St. Thomas More Society) to other Catholic lawyers you know. Professional fellowship within our common faith is a special gift – share it with others whenever you can.

I want to thank Society Chaplain, Fr. Roger Gustafson for agreeing to contribute a monthly message to the newsletter. As you probably know, Father Roger practiced law prior to his ordination. His messages each month are thoughtful and inspiring, as is his following article.

JUSTICE AND MERCY: TWO LENTEN THEMES

During Lent, we focus on the three pillars of fasting, praying, and almsgiving. But Lent also is good time to reflect on the meaning of justice and mercy. Listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah:

Your fast ends in quarreling and fighting, striking with wicked claw. Do you call this a fast, a day acceptable to the LORD? This, rather, is the fasting that I wish: releasing those bound unjustly, untying the thongs of the yoke; setting free the oppressed, breaking every yoke; sharing your bread with the hungry, sheltering the oppressed and the homeless; clothing the naked when you see them, and not turning your back on your own.¹

The Church's doctrine on social justice is a central and essential element of our faith. It is rooted in Scripture and draws upon Catholic Social Teaching that has developed through papal encyclicals of the past hundred or so years, beginning with *Rerum Novarum* written by Pope Leo XIII in 1891.²

The seven principles of Catholic Social Teaching include: (1) a respect for life and the fundamental dignity of the human person; (2) a call to family, community, and

¹ Isaiah 58: 4-7.

² The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* ("CCC") devotes an entire section specifically to the topic of social justice (nn. 1928-48). Similarly, the 2004 *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* ("CSDC") provides a detailed overview of the concept of social justice.

participation in society; (3) the protection of human rights and the exercise of social responsibility; (4) a "preferential option" for the poor and vulnerable; (5) the dignity of work and rights of workers; (6) a call to solidarity to act as one human family in friendship with one another; and (7) collective care for God's creation.

Social justice is based on the rights that flow from and safeguard human dignity. Because we are created in the image and likeness of God and have been "equally endowed with rational souls, all men have the same nature and the same origin" and therefore are equal in dignity (CCC n. 1934). Based on this principle of equal dignity, God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favoring anyone. The earth's resources therefore are to be shared fairly by all people under the guidance of justice tempered by charity (CSDC n. 171). This Catholic principle is called "the universal destination of goods" and requires that the poor be the focus of particular concern.

As a result, the Church teaches that we must assist our fellow human beings in their various needs with works of corporal and spiritual mercy. God "wills that each receive what he needs from others" through "generosity, kindness, and sharing of goods."³ Indeed, "everyone should look upon his neighbor (without any exception) as 'another self.'"⁴

³ CCC n. 1937.

⁴ *Gaudium et spes* (GS) n. 27.

■ Father Roger Gustafson, Chaplain

Where there are “*sinful inequalities*” among people resulting from unjust social structures,⁵ we also must “strive for fairer and more humane conditions.”⁶ Social justice inclines us to work with others to help make social institutions better serve the poor and the common good. Indeed, as St. Gregory the Great pointed out: “When we attend to the needs of those in want, we give them what is theirs, not ours. More than performing works of mercy, we are paying a debt of justice.”

On every level, we must work together for a just world. But justice is a stepping stone to the higher value of mercy, which is “the true fulfillment of justice,” as Pope Francis has said. The Holy Father wants us to be a people of mercy. “I believe that this is a time for mercy,” he said to Vatican journalist, Andrea Tornielli. “The Church is showing her maternal side, her motherly face, to a humanity that is wounded. She does not wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, she looks for them on the streets, she gathers them in, she embraces them, she takes care of them, she makes them feel loved.”⁷

Pope Francis has set the agenda for the Universal Church. We are to be merciful and just, as our God is merciful and just with us. In these last few weeks of Lent, I urge you to consider how God has acted mercifully towards you and, then, pledge with every parishioner in our Archdiocese not only to act justly, but also to love tenderly, and walk humbly in this Jubilee of Mercy.

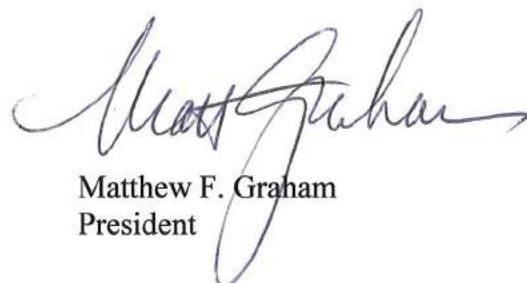
⁵ CCC n. 1938 (emphasis in original).

⁶ GS n. 29.

⁷ Pope Francis, *The Name of God is Mercy* (New York: Random House 2016), 6.

I'm finishing this Newsletter after last Sunday's Mass. The Gospel was the story of the prodigal son – my favorite of Christ's 46 parables. My favorite line in the parable is the sometimes overlooked "*While he was still a long way off*, his father saw him and was moved with pity." Not "when he reached the front gate...," nor "when he was halfway home...," but "*while he was still a long way off... .*" This certainly applies to this month's lawyer-saint, St. Germanus of Auxerre (380-448). He was a very successful and wealthy civil lawyer who rose to prominence through a variety of appointments to greater and greater positions of authority, ultimately to his appointment of duke of the province and command of all the military troops in that country. Regarding his faith, it is said that "he was careful to shun gross vices, but his religion seemed confined to principles of integrity, and his virtues were merely human for he was unacquainted with the true spirit" of Christianity. His passion for hunting (and for his relish in performing certain pagan traditions of the hunt) led to conflict with the local bishop, St. Amator, whose life Germanus then "grievously threatened." But Germanus soon thereafter underwent a complete conversion. He renounced all the pomp and vanities of the world, distributed all his possessions to the poor, and embraced a life of poverty and austerity. Upon St. Amator's death (not caused by the aforementioned "grievous threatening") Germanus succeeded him as Bishop of Auxerre and served in that position for 30 years until his own death. Germanus' work during these 30 years is truly inspiring. (A more complete story of his life can be found at www.bartleby.com/210/7/262.html.) Using his family lands he built churches, monasteries, convents, schools and seminaries, worked tirelessly in the service of the poor and afflicted, and spent several years in Britain fighting the heresy of Pelagianism. While in Britain, he called upon his former legal and military skills to forge a peace between the Britons and warring Picts and Scots, and later to save the Britons from the armies of the Roman general of Gaul who sought to punish them for a previous revolt.

Happy Lent,



Matthew F. Graham
President