

**St. Thomas More Society
of San Francisco**

www.stthomasmore-sf.org

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Regis Servus Dei Prius

February 8, 2018

Dear Members and Friends:

February is here and with it, Lent – which this year begins on February 14.

For those of you downtown and with busy Ash Wednesday schedules, the priests of Old St. Mary's will perform Word Services With Distribution Of Ashes at the Bently Reserve Building (301 Battery Street) at **11:45 a.m.** and **12:15 p.m.**

The services are short and a convenient way to get one's ashes and make a proper start to the period of reflection and renewal leading to Easter. I hope you will all make the most of the season!

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON

The very next day, please join us for our February Luncheon to be held on **Thursday, February 15** at the offices of **Coblentz Patch Duffy & Bass** from noon until 1:30 p.m.

The Coblentz office is at **One Montgomery Street, Suite 3000** between Post and Sutter Streets. Please be sure to RSVP as building security requires the names of all attendees!

Our speaker will be the **Hon. Carol Corrigan** of the California Supreme Court.

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I hope you can all join us. As always, please feel free to bring guests – as an added incentive, the Board will award a prize this year to the member who accosts and delivers the most new members to the Society!

New members always enjoy their first lunch free. The lunch tab for everyone else is only **\$25.00**.

RSVP: <http://www.stthomasmore-sf.org/upcoming-events/payments/>

2018 DUES

Annual dues can also be paid online – please do so!

<http://www.stthomasmore-sf.org/how-to-join/>

The Society depends on membership dues to fund all of its activities. Please do not hesitate to contact me or Treasurer Bryan Saalfeld with questions about dues or whether your membership is current.

UPCOMING EVENTS

March Luncheon. The March luncheon will take place on March 22. By popular request, our planned Lenten speaker is St. Dominic’s pastor, Fr. Michael Hurley. Many of you may recall the excellent talk he gave the Society in 2015.

35th Annual Retreat For Members Of The Legal Profession. This three-day event will take place in Los Altos from March 2 through March 4. Members of the Society who have attended in the past have found the retreat an invaluable opportunity to reflect on their lives, faith, and professional calling. Additional details can be found at <http://www.jrclosaltos.org/>.

Theology On Tap. The popular happy hour event will return in April. Watch this space...

Red Mass. It is not too soon to mark your calendars for this year’s Red Mass, which will take place earlier than usual - on **Thursday, September 27** at Sts. Peter & Paul Church in San Francisco.

As always, please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions for the Society – I look forward to seeing you all soon.

MEDITATION AND PRAYER GROUP

Another new program for 2018 is the formation of a Meditation And Prayer Group that will convene in April for a set number of evening meetings to discuss and explore different meditation and prayer techniques in Catholic and other faith traditions.

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Details to follow, but please let me know if you are interested in participating. Space will be limited to ten members.

As always, please contact me directly with questions or suggestions for the Society – I would love to hear from you. And welcome back to Father Gustafson's regular monthly column, which you can find below.

God bless,

Tony

Anthony D. Phillips
President

Chaplain's Column

Which Direction?

Almost ten years ago, Pixar and Disney released an animated film called *Up*. In the movie, nine-year old Carl Fredrickson befriends Ellie of the same age, who confides to him her aspiration to visit Paradise Falls in the wilds of South America one day and live there in her “clubhouse,” an abandoned home in the neighborhood where the two children reside in pre-war 1940.

Carl and Ellie eventually grow up, fall in love, and get married. They restore the old house and live there together. Through the heartbreak of a miscarriage and the inability of the couple to have children, the two decide to realize their dream of visiting Paradise Falls. They save for years, but repeatedly have to spend the money on more pressing concerns. In their old age, they finally amass enough, but Ellie falls ill and dies.

Carl remains in the home for many years and stubbornly refuses to leave, even when all of the other houses in the neighborhood are torn down and replaced by skyscrapers. After a judge orders him to move into a retirement home, Carl equips the old house with thousands of helium balloons, turning it into a makeshift aircraft, and flying it to Paradise Falls, keeping a promise he made to Ellie years before. An eccentric boy scout named Russell becomes an accidental stowaway, and the two embark on a great adventure.

The gospel readings for the upcoming season of Lent are filled with hidden directional cues. On the first Sunday, Jesus goes *out* into the desert to fast and pray. The next week he travels *up* the mountain and is transfigured,

giving his disciples a glimpse of his glorious resurrection. Then he drives the merchants *out* of the temple area to cleanse his father's house of their profit-making. In the last two weeks of Lent, we hear that the Son of God came *into* the world in order to be lifted *up* on the cross, dying like a seed that *falls* to the ground, so that the “ruler of this world” would be “driven *out*.”

As these scripture passages indicate, Lent is not a season of stagnation but of movement in many possible directions. On February 14, ashes will be imposed on our foreheads with the words, “repent and believe in the gospel,” another signal that our heading in life matters.

Too often our lives resemble Carl and Ellie's failure to launch on the dream that has been placed in our hearts. We procrastinate, immersing ourselves in the details, distractions, and disorientating diversions of our busy lives. Clients, law firm business, family affairs, and other pressing concerns demand our attention and govern our waking hours, and our spiritual bearing takes second place.

Lent is a time to reconsider our religious orientation. Go out to the desert for a while or travel up the mountain for some time alone with Jesus, drive out the baser instincts to profit and succeed at all costs, and let your own will fall to the ground. Only then will your most cherished dream find their fulfillment.

Whatever the direction of travel, just move somewhere in your relationship with God, because in the end we all just want to head *up*.

- *Fr. Roger Gustafson*