

St. Thomas More Society of San Francisco

www.stthomasmore-sf.org

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Chaplain Msgr. Labib Kobti

April 11, 2011

Dear Members and Friends of the Society:

As Holy Week approaches and the 2011 Lenten Season draws to a close, the Executive Committee of the St. Thomas More Society extends a very Happy Easter to all of our members and their family and friends.

We especially extend our thanks and appreciation to Don Carroll of the Law Offices of Carroll & Scully for his dedication and hard work in again offering the Society's annual Lenten Series, which concludes this Thursday April 14 (see below). We also thank Thomas K. Hockel and his firm, Kelly, Hockel & Klein for immeasurably contributing to the success of our Lenten Series by allowing us the use of the Firm's centrally-located conference facility.

And many thanks to those of you who have taken a moment to send in your 2011 Dues. As a result of your thoughtfulness, the Society is thriving and on a very sound footing going forward.

APRIL LUNCHEON

Our April lunch meeting will be held on **April 28, 2011** (the week after Easter) **beginning at 12 noon**. We are pleased to announce that our luncheon speaker will be **Rev. Cornelius M. Buckley, S.J.**, who will address the many challenges facing Catholic lawyers in today's society. Fr. Buckley presently serves as a Chaplain at St. Thomas Aquinas College in Santa Paula. He is well-known locally for his years of service in the Bay Area, including his service as a Professor at the University of San Francisco and its St. Ignatius Institute, and as a President of St. Ignatius College Prep.

Lunch will be held at **The Family, 545 Powell Street, San Francisco** (corner of Bush and Powell). Parking is conveniently located nearby at the Sutter Stockton Garage or at Union Square.

A **Luncheon Reservation Form** is attached to this letter to make your reservation. We ask that reservations be made in advance, as this greatly assists your Executive Committee and The Family staff to better serve you. *You do not have to be a member of the Society to attend our events.*

The Society is pleased to host potential new members at our cost. If you wish to bring a potential new member, please so indicate on your Luncheon Reservation Form. The Reservation Form also offers you the opportunity to sponsor one or more law students or members of the Clergy at \$20 per person.

OUR 2011 LENTEN SERIES CONCLUDES APRIL 14

Only one opportunity remains for you to attend this year's Lenten Series – The Passion Narratives of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John – presented by Don Carroll. The Series concludes this Thursday, **April 14, from 12:10 to 1:00 p.m.** at Kelly, Hockel & Klein PC, **One Sansome Street, Suite 1800** in The City.

Come and show your support for Don's tremendous effort! Attendance is free, and it's OK if you haven't been able to attend any of Don's earlier sessions. As always, bring a bag lunch, and feel free to bring a guest. The dress code is business casual.

AN INVITATION FROM ARCHBISHOP GEORGE NIEDERAUER

The Most Reverent George Niederauer, Archbishop of San Francisco, has extended his invitation to all members of the Society to attend the annual Chrism Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral on April 19 (the Tuesday of Holy Week) at 5:30 p.m.

A copy of Archbishop Niederauer's invitation letter is attached. The Executive Committee urges the participation of all members and their families and friends.

REMINDER: ANNUAL DUES AND NEW MEMBERS

The St. Thomas More Society depends each year on Member Dues to support its various programs. The **2011 Membership Form** (also attached to this letter) may be used for that purpose and to update your membership records.

The Form may also be used by new members – feel free to copy it, email it, and pass it around! Please note that dues for attorneys retired from practice are now *reduced* to only \$50 per year. The Society appreciates your continued support.

MEDIA NOTE

The Executive Committee acknowledges the concern of those members who contacted us following the March 18, 2011 publication of an article entitled, "St. Thomas More: A Good or Bad Role Model for Lawyers and Judges?" in the *Daily Journal*. The author was a former officer of a St. Thomas More group (not affiliated with us) in Southern California. A little over a week later, the *Daily Journal* carried two Letters to the Editor responding to the March 18 article, and we attach copies of those letters for the convenience of those who may not have seen them.

* * *

We are looking forward to seeing you this Thursday, April 14, for the closing session of our Lenten Series, and again at our April 28 lunch meeting. Look for updates in our monthly newsletters and emails. And be sure to visit our website at www.stthomasmore-sf.org.

For the Executive Committee:

Sincerely yours,



Adrian G. Driscoll
President

Enclosures:

2011 Membership Form
April Luncheon Reservation Form

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO

2011 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.*

Date: _____

Name: _____

Firm, Company or Court: _____

Street Address or P.O. Box: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Fax: _____

Email: _____

Home Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

Home Telephone: _____

Parish: _____

Preferred Address for Society Mailings: Business _____ Home _____

Law Student? _____

Year Admitted to Bar: _____ **Retired from Practice?** _____

Please accompany this application with current dues. Annual dues are \$100 for attorneys over five (5) years in practice; \$50 for attorneys retired from practice and attorneys with five (5) years or less in practice; and \$25 for law students. Please make checks payable to **St. Thomas More Society**. Thank you!

Return application and check to:
Isabelle L. Ord, Treasurer
DLA Piper LLP (US)
555 Mission Street, Suite 2400
San Francisco, CA 94105
Tel: (415) 836-2536
Fax: (415) 659-7336
isabelle.ord@dlapiper.com

ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY APRIL 28, 2011 LUNCHEON RESERVATION

_____ I plan to attend the St. Thomas More Society Luncheon at **12:00 noon** on **Thursday, April 28, 2011** at The Family Club, 545 Powell Street, San Francisco, CA (Corner of Bush and Powell).

Please reserve _____ places at \$45 per person (over 10 years in practice).

Please reserve _____ places at \$38 per person (10 years or less in practice).

Please reserve _____ places at \$20 per person (law students and clergy).

Member Name: _____

Member email: _____

Names of other attendees for whom payment is submitted:

_____ I am bringing the following potential member as a Guest of the Society:

_____ I would like to sponsor one or more law students or members of the clergy at \$20 per person and include \$_____ in my check for such purpose.

The total amount of my enclosed check is \$_____.

Please make checks payable to the "*St. Thomas More Society of San Francisco.*"

Please RSVP and send checks to:

Isabelle L. Ord, STMS Treasurer
DLA Piper LLP (US)
555 Mission Street, Suite 2400
San Francisco, CA 94105
Tel: (415) 836-2536
Fax: (415) 659-7336
Email: isabelle.ord@dlapiper.com

St. Thomas More Society of San Francisco



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

ONE PETER YORKE WAY, SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94109-6602 (415) 614-5500

March 22, 2011

Mr. Adrian Driscoll
President, St. Thomas More Society
Kopers Majeski Kohn Bentley
201 Spear Street, Ste. 1000
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Mr. Driscoll,

I would like to extend an invitation to you and members of the St. Thomas More Society to attend the annual *Chrism Mass*, which I will celebrate at St. Mary's Cathedral on Tuesday, April 19, at 5:30 PM.

This is an important and beautiful liturgy in the life of our Archdiocese, celebrated each year on Tuesday of Holy Week. During this Mass the Holy Oils which will be used in sacramental celebrations throughout the coming year will be blessed: the Oil of the Sick, used in the Sacrament of the Anointing the Sick; the Oil of Catechumens, used in celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism; the Sacred Chrism, used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders.

Because the Chrism Mass is linked liturgically to the Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord's Supper, which commemorates the institution of the Eucharist and the Priesthood, the priests of the Archdiocese will renew the promises they made at the time of their priestly Ordination during this Mass.

I would be most grateful if you would encourage participation in this beautiful celebration, which displays so effectively the unity of our local Church as clergy and lay faithful gather at one altar with their Bishop.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend George Niederauer
Archbishop of San Francisco

St. Thomas More — Truly a Saint For the Legal Profession

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR COLUMN

On March 18, the *Daily Journal* published a blistering and provocative article on St. Thomas More authored by San Diego trial attorney, Dan Lawton. ("*St. Thomas More: A Good or Bad Role Model for Lawyers and Judges?*").

More was the famous 16th century lawyer, judge and chancellor of England, canonized by the Roman Catholic Church. He was an iconic lawyer and statesman idealized by many lawyers and judges in this country both Catholic and non-Catholic. In 1999, More was selected by a secular panel of British historians as the "Lawyer of the Millennium," the greatest lawyer in England in the past 1000 years. In 2000, the church also named him the "Patron Saint of Statesmen."

While space does not permit an accusation by accusation rebuttal of Lawton's assertions, suffice it to say that the overwhelming historical record and scholarly analysis completely refute both Lawton's factual allegations and his conclusions that More did not deserve such recognition.

Lawton accuses More of being a bloodthirsty religious zealot, unchristian in the application of the law; characterizing his famous martyrdom as an act of egotistical stupidity without purpose. His comparison of More with Adolf Hitler, John Wilkes Booth, Sirhan Sirhan and last, but not least, the Sept. 11 terrorists is an insult to intellectual honesty.

The existence of hundreds of legal societies venerating More's memory, his canonization, and the vast array of scholarship refute such a caricature. So, what is the truth about St. Thomas More?

His life can only be understood and viewed in light of his deep-rooted Christian faith and personal formation - and his profound belief that actions have eternal consequences. The critical point in understanding More, is that unless someone shares his deep and abiding faith and his love of God, it is difficult to understand why he felt compelled to make the ultimate sacrifice that he did. Moreover, it takes a well-formed conscience and understanding of the natural law to appreciate the depth of conscience that More represents and to see with stark clarity the difference between More and the Sept. 11 hijackers.

With respect to allegations of More's religious zealotry, there is no question that he played an enormous role in the political life of England from approximately 1504 until his execution in 1535. There is also no question that he was an ardent apologist for the Catholic Church against the Protestant reformers. More's own writings clearly indicate that he and the crown viewed the Protestant reformers as revolutionaries, a severe threat to the stability of civil society. See Robert Bork, "*Thomas More for Our Season, First Things*," 1999. Apart from the political and theological factors propelling the reformation, and the misconduct of those acting for the church and for the reformers, civic strife in fact occurred and tens of thousands of persons lost their lives in Europe at the time.

During his 31 months as chancellor of the realm, the evidence indicates that five or six reformers were found guilty of sedition and were executed by burning at the stake. While one may speculate as to More's personal views at such executions, or at the death penalty in general, he administered the prescribed death penalty as the chief law enforcement officer of the realm as was his express sworn duty. More neither tortured accused heretics nor presided over their trials. To accuse him of relishing the implementation of the death penalty is completely unfounded and is akin to accusing Attorney General Eric Holder of relishing death penalty cases today.

Did More's participation in the civic life of Great Britain in the 16th century, with its brutal sentences, disqualify him from being a person to emulate today? No - sainthood does not equal perfection, but is rather a public pronouncement by the church that a particular person's life demonstrated heroic virtue worthy of emulation. More is such a man; "a man for all seasons," as Robert Whittington first called him in 1520.

The reason that More is remembered today by Catholics in the legal profession is that he led a life in which his Christianity was fully integrated into his personal and

professional life. More led a prodigious life of personal prayer, he was a dedicated family man, even going so far as to educate his daughters at a time when such was unheard of; he cared for the poor, he had a profound respect for the common man in a medieval time; and he was a brilliant expositor of the truths of the faith. (See Akroyd; Gerald Wegemer, *"Thomas More, A Portrait of Courage"*; and John Guy's *"Thomas More"*). He ultimately gave up position, power, reputation and even his life, rather than compromise the integrity of his conscience or primacy of his faith in the face of the enormous power of his tyrannical king.

More's conflict with King Henry VIII presented a climactic and stark collision of temporal and spiritual values. More cleverly parried such a collision for months, but when the final irreconcilable conflict arose, it posed no dilemma for this saint. Infidelity to conscience was not a choice. The magnificence of More's choice is magnified by the level of his worldly sacrifice, the incredible amount of personal virtue, which he demonstrated in response to his persecution, and the clarity and grace in which he made his final divine submission - his mortal life in exchange for eternity.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of More's martyrdom was that it so emulated Christ himself - More not only willingly laid down his life, but like Christ, he had the power to take it up again, at any time during his 15 month imprisonment, by recanting and taking the oath. Most martyrs, having made their life-sacrificing decision for Christ, are not granted months to reiterate their choice. More endured long months in the Tower of London, in which he had to resist the human temptation to avoid the excruciating death of a traitor, which usually meant being hung, drawn and quartered.

More's application of conscience to his personal and professional decision to resist Henry VIII was a model for everyone, especially officers of the court. The \$64,000 question for all of us in the 21st century, and for all centuries is: "Are there governmental actions that cannot be tolerated, which are fundamentally inconsistent with our humanity?"

While More was asked in the 16th century to comply with legislation that compromised his faith, we lawyers and judges in the 21st century are facing even greater pressures to compromise where forces are seeking to divorce the law from morality. Where More wrestled with the role of church and state, we instead grapple with titanic forces of life and death, euthanasia, abortion, marriage, and attacks from every quarter on the very concept of God-created human dignity. See Thomas Jefferson, Preamble to the Declaration of Independence.

G.K. Chesterton prophetically said in 1929: "Blessed Thomas More is more important at this moment than at any moment since his death, even perhaps the great moment of his dying, but he is not quite so important as he will be in about a hundred years' time."

GREGORY N. WEILER, PRESIDENT ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF ORANGE COUNTY

CHARLES S. LIMANDRI, FORMER PRESIDENT ST. THOMAS MORE SOCIETY OF SAN DIEGO

Context Forgotten

Dan Lawton's critique of Thomas More is misguided, uninformed, and misleading (*"St. Thomas More: A Good or Bad Role Model for Lawyers and Judges?"* March 18).

Lawton relies on Peter Ackroyd's 1998 biography of More. (*"The Life of Thomas More"* (Doubleday 1998)) Very well - except that Ackroyd's conclusions belie the claims and interpretations advanced by Lawton. Serious scholars, Ackroyd included, relegate charges that More tortured heretics to the status of rumors and stories circulated by the virulent anti-Catholic polemicist John Fox. Ackroyd's book is barren of any suggestion that there is truth in them, pretty much giving them the back of his hand: "From John Fox's *Book of Martyrs* and other post-Reformation sources we learn that [More] tied heretics to a tree...and whipped them; we read that he watched as 'newe men' were put upon the rack in the Tower and tortured until they confessed; we learn that he was personally responsible for the burning of several of the 'brethren' in Smithfield. Stories of a similar nature were current even in More's lifetime and he denied them forcefully." (p. 298)

Ackroyd also places More's endorsement of "burning" - the standard punishment also used by Protestants at the time - in context with the upheavals of Europe as it moved from the Middle Ages through the Reformation: "[More] approved of burning, therefore, and in that respect was no different from most of his contemporaries.... Lollards were burned in the fifteenth century, and it has been calculated that in the hundred years before More's chancellorship there were in the region of thirty fires. So his actions were not exceptional, and it might be argued that his severe stance was a

reaction to the menaces of the period." (p. 303)

In historical terms, "menaces of the period" is aptly put. More was trying to save the integrity and authority of "Christes vniuersall Catholike Churche," which at that time had been the basis of all culture and society in England for 1,500 years. More, like millions of others, believed that that authority came directly "by the mouth of our Sauour himself, personally present vppon the earth." (Ackroyd, p. 397.) To More, and to millions of others, that it should be destroyed because "the King wants to change his woman" would have been the end of all that was worthy in England. Lawton's observations, then, tell us nothing important or useful about More because they ignore the reality of his external world. Ackroyd, unlike Lawton, understands and therefore appreciates More's greatness because his critique is of an historical figure *in context*.

Accordingly, Lawton's equating More's acts and motivations with the acts and motivations of the Sept. 11 jihadists and Hitler is so silly as not to merit serious treatment (though Lawton's logic apparently holds that the individual who will sacrifice his *own* existence in the service of his conscience, is no better than he who indiscriminately murders thousands or millions of innocent *others* in pursuit of his deranged objective).

Similarly, to compare the burning of heretics in late-medieval England with the stoning of adulteresses in 2011 is casuistry; we are appalled today at stoning not because we are shocked that it existed 500 years ago, but because it is being employed today in a post-Enlightenment world.

More's aesthetic, his insights, and his breadth of mind are revealed in his many scholarly and literary works, and not least, his poetry. He was well ahead of his time concerning the education of women, and his writing on women is itself the subject of scholarly inquiry. (See Lee Cullen Khanna, "*Images of Women in Thomas More's Poetry*," 10 *Albion J.* 78 (1978).)

But arguably his greatest achievement is his character, commensurate with the dilemmas he faced at one of the most turbulent times in history. Winston S. Churchill described it aptly: "The resistance of More and Fisher to the royal supremacy in Church government was a noble and heroic stand. They realized the defects of the existing Catholic system, but they hated and feared the aggressive nationalism which was destroying the unity of Christendom. They saw that the break with Rome carried with it the threat of a despotism freed from every fetter. More stood forth as the defender of all that was finest in the medieval outlook. He represents to history its universality, its belief in spiritual values, and its instinctive sense of other-worldliness." ("*A History of the English Speaking Peoples*," Vol. II, 64-65 (Dodd, Mead & Co. 1961).)

STEPHEN G. MASON

LOS ANGELES