



## Young Apostles Program Debuts

by Robert King, OP

Discernment, the ability to pinpoint God's voice amid the mess of messages the world sends us, is the first and most critical skill a Christian adult needs. It also is a skill which neither secular nor Christian schools have taught particularly well in recent years. This means that those Christians heading into adulthood, from teenagers to college students, are not prepared for one of their most important tasks: discerning the particular role God is calling them to play in his plan.

In the last issue of *The Scribe*, I described a youth program for spiritual gifts discernment which we have been developing. But in working on the program, we discovered that the void in a young Christian's life involves more than simple ignorance of his or her charisms; it involves the whole process of discernment and decision-making in their life. So we broadened our scope, and have developed the *Young Apostles Retreat*. *Young Apostles* is a weekend retreat for youth (mainly high-school students) designed to help fill this void, to teach youth the skill of discernment.

The process is one familiar to many youth ministers: a weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, combining teaching, small group and large group activities, experiences of prayer as a community, and an opportunity to offer one's life—and especially one's discernment—to our Lord. But the content and the goal of the retreat is

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## Disciplines of Hope: Foundations for troubled times

by Sherry Weddell

Over the past two months, I have had numerous conversations with friends and acquaintances around North America about the war in Iraq and our responsibility as Catholic Christians. Catholic public forums such as magazines, newspapers, websites and blogs have been filled with heated debate over the exact content of the historic "Just War Theory" and the moral responsibility of Christians in the current situation. A number of my friends believed that regime change through military means was a clear moral duty. Others were just as certain that it was unjustified aggression. Some were deeply conflicted and unable to come to any firm conclusion.

For lay Catholics who accept the Church's teaching that we have been anointed by Christ to be secular apostles—to evangelize and renew the temporal order—it has been especially difficult. As laity, we can and should receive guidance in principles from the Holy Father and our bishops, but no one can take from us our ultimate responsibility for governance in this area. The complex and ambiguous arenas of war and peace, diplomacy and government, terrorism and security are ultimately a lay responsibility.

In Colorado Springs, where thousands of local parishioners, family members, and friends were sent to Iraq (some of whom have died), the war is directly and personally challenging to the whole community. But all American lay men and women bear some responsibility for governance—whether they vote or hold public office, whether

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The anchor, adopted as a symbol of hope in salvation, ranks among the most ancient of Christian symbols. (cf. Heb 6:19)

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## Happenings...

We are steadily breaking new ground in dioceses around the country, especially in parts south and east. Notably, we will be in the **Memphis** area this month, and **West Virginia** in July. September will find us in **Atlanta**, and October in **S. Carolina, Alaska, and New Hampshire**. See our calendar page for these and other upcoming events.

On Friday, July 25th, Fr. Michael Sweeney will be featured on the **Catholic Answers Live radio** show, broadcast from San Diego. Listeners will have the opportunity to call in and ask questions. The hour-long show starts at 6 pm EST, 3 pm PST, broadcast locally or over the Internet through EWTN at [www.ewtn.com/radio/](http://www.ewtn.com/radio/).

A new tape series is coming out this summer on **Friendship with Christ**, Fr. Michael's latest mission. Christ said, "I call you friends." Fr. Michael explores the implications of

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**"A s he is, so ae we in this wold"**

1 John 4:17b

this relationship and it's meaning for every aspect of our growth in holiness. Look to our website, [www.siena.org](http://www.siena.org), for ordering information later this summer.

A **small group version** of the **Called & Gifted Workshop** is almost ready. It will cover approximately 8 to 10 weeks and comprises both the initial workshop material as well as the follow-up extended discernment process. Written materials will be used in conjunction with audio tapes.

Our **largest workshop** to date in the U.S. took place in Colorado Springs this February--over 320 participants. Only two workshops have been larger, both this past summer in Indonesia where groups of 400-500 gathered. This local success we attribute to the determined efforts and pastoral support of the **Holy Apostles** staff and volunteers.

A **Spanish teaching team** is now gathering forces in the Denver area. Currently working on a translation of the **Discerning Charisms Workbook**, they will eventually be available to travel to put on live presentations of the **Called & Gifted Workshop** in Spanish. Also, many thanks to **Sr. Maria de Jesus Ybarra, OP** for translating the **Resource Guide**. Strong interest abounds for Spanish teaching resources just about everywhere.

**Help needed!** At the current time, we have pressing need for volunteers to help with **proofreading Spanish materials**. We need fluent speakers who have a good command of regional differences. Also, we have a great need for **graphic design** in our effort to rework our promotional materials for parishes and general publicity. If you can help, please contact us! [info@siena.org](mailto:info@siena.org) or call our toll-free number (888) 878-6789.

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one we have not seen in other offerings: to walk youth through simple, practical steps to discover God's will in their moral decisions, in using their charisms, and in the big picture of their vocations. We have already put on a "pilot" retreat (with a couple more coming up) and will be training more teachers this summer. We hope we can offer the retreat to parishes starting this September. (If you would like to hold a **Young Apostles Retreat** in your parish, please contact Mike Dillon for details, [miked@siena.org](mailto:miked@siena.org))

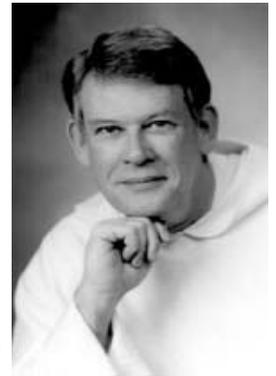
As every youth minister knows, no retreat, no matter how powerful, is more than a blip on the radar to a teenager unless there is follow-up and support. For this reason, the **Young Apostles Retreat** is intended to be integrated into the youth ministry program of a parish as it already exists. Youth ministers will collaborate with Catherine of Siena Institute teachers in adapting the retreat to the particular circumstances of each parish. The Institute will provide follow-up materials to help youth ministers keep the process of discernment going. These follow-up materials will include a guidebook for finding and training mentors for youths, a workbook for youth to discern their charisms, and a workbook for youth to develop what Pope John Paul II calls a "plan of life", an essential step in discerning one's vocation. The **Young Apostles Retreat** cannot answer all the questions youths will bring, but it can offer some tools to help them find the answers for themselves.

In the long run, our goal is to begin a small, but important, shift in our attitude toward youth ministry. Youth ministry is not about "keeping kids in the pews"—it is about helping our teenagers grow into adults who love their faith and love the world that God has given them responsibility for.

# Who's to Judge?

## Taking some responsibility

by Michael Sweeney, O.P



“Why do you not judge for yourselves what is right?” Jesus asks his disciples (Lk. 12:57). He asks them—and us—to judge “the signs of the times” (Mt. 6:13), and he has been seeking our judgment ever since. Why? Because they—and we—must discern how best to

apply the Gospel to the society and culture in which we live. For the sake of that discernment we must heed the instruction of St. Paul, “Test everything; retain what is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

To assist us in our discernment, the Church has developed a social teaching. Since the publication of Leo XIII's encyclical (teaching) letter *Reum Novarum* (subtitled, “On Capitol and Labor”) in 1891, the Popes have carefully elaborated an instruction on social and political life which is, regrettably, one of the best kept secrets in the Church. I mean to begin a series of articles which will make available some of this papal teaching. But before we begin to investigate what the pontiffs have taught, we must first reinstate in our minds and in our conversations the indispensable role of judgment.

Contemporary society fears making judgments. A reluctance to make some judgments is a very good thing. Jesus forbids us to pass sentence on one another: “Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned” (Luke 6:37a). He also warns us that the basis upon which we make such judgments will be the basis upon which we ourselves will be judged, “for the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you” (6:38b).

There are other judgments, however, that he wants from us. He insists that we judge what is right. These are not judgments that we should be reluctant to make. On the contrary, these are the judgments that are essential to our work of bringing the Gospel to our own time and place. We must be able to understand what is happening in our society and in our culture, and then determine what Our Lord wants done. We must be able to judge what we must say and do. We must judge what is true; we

must “test everything and retain what is good.”

We must therefore challenge our society—even as we challenge each other—to go ahead and to exercise our judgment. In our present society, this may prove to be a tall order. Not only are we reluctant to judge, we are sometimes actually forbidden to make the judgments that our office requires. A case in point:

Anyone who has had occasion to fly somewhere since 9/11 is aware of the heightened security measures at airports, and the subsequent inconvenience, and indignity, of personal searches. Even if we are not targeted for search, we pass poor unfortunates who are forced to stand spread-eagle in their stocking feet being scanned with a wand, while their personal effects are strewn on a table for the inspection of a government employee, and any other passer-by who cares to look.

Flying as frequently as I do, it is inevitable that I will be searched, and whenever it occurs, I attempt to comport myself gracefully. Recently, however, I had occasion to lose my composure.

I had purchased a butane cigarette lighter in the restricted area of the Los Angeles airport, and had it with me in my carry-on luggage as I was changing airlines in Denver. (The particular virtue

of this lighter is that it will not go out in the wind.) The security guard informed me that such a lighter is illegal, and indicated that he would have to confiscate it. I suggested, instead, that we empty it so that it would not light. He merely iterated that his instructions were to confiscate such lighters. I suggested that the confiscation of an empty lighter is unreasonable, and to support my point, I asked him if he would mind demonstrating the lethal potentialities of an empty lighter. He looked at me helplessly and reiterated the policy of his department, which is to confiscate all such lighters. In the end I

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they are soldiers or diplomats, or whether they help shape public opinion as scholars, teachers, or journalists.

I do not intend to add to the national debate with this article, but I do want to focus upon a spiritual reality that many of us, caught up in the tension of the moment, seem to have forgotten. While grappling with such grave choices and their inevitable and often unforeseeable consequences, we must not lose sight of our hope of eternal life and ultimate happiness in Christ. In the midst of our cares, the Church insists that “through their participation in the prophetic mission of Christ...the lay faithful...express patiently and courageously in the contradictions of the present age their hope of future glory even through the framework of their secular life” (*Christifideles Laici*, 14).

Hope is part of the trinity of theological virtues praised by St. Paul (1 Cor 13:13). These mysterious graces enable us to successfully complete our journey through time to beatitude. In general, “a virtue is a habitual and firm disposition to do the good. It allows the person not only to perform good acts, but to give the best of himself...The virtuous person...pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1803). Simply put, virtues are habits of goodness.

Christian tradition has long distinguished between the “cardinal” or human virtues, such as prudence and justice, and the “theological” or supernatural virtues of faith, hope, and love. Human virtues are habits of goodness that we can develop by deliberate acts, discipline, and perseverance. For example, the human virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance help us navigate the complexities of temporal life with wisdom, generosity, courage, and grace.

The supernatural virtues—faith, hope, and love—enable our nature to “entirely surpass what we can be of ourselves” and thereby participate in God’s own life (CCC, 1803). Infused by God into the soul, they aim directly at supernatural happiness in God. Nevertheless, they do not grow in a vacuum but rather build upon the foundation of human virtues, which are purified and elevated by grace.

The supernatural virtue of hope speaks most directly to our need as men and women “on the way”. Hope

empowers our desire for God’s kingdom and eternal life as our happiness, to root our longing in Christ’s promises, and to depend upon the grace of the Holy Spirit. In Christian understanding, a denial of hope is a denial of the truth and the power of the redemption.

Our faith proclaims that the power of the redemption prevails over any human tyranny, sin, or suffering. The complete self-offering of Christ has untied the knot of sin and its consequences for all human beings and for our whole world. Deep involvement in human community and work is the way to holiness for secular apostles—we cannot take the path of withdrawing from the world. But immersed in the particular pain and darkness of our own life and time, it is very easy to lose track of our eternal hope.

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How then can we, as lay Christians, nourish and sustain our confidence in the ultimate triumph of Christ and his redemption in our lives and our world? We take the time to cultivate the disciplines of hope. We can lay the foundation for growth in *supernatural* hope by the disciplined development of two *human* virtues: *magnanimity* and *humility*.

Josef Pieper writes that “magnanimity and humility are the most essential prerequisites for the preservation and unfolding of supernatural hope—insofar as it depends on man. Together they represent the most complete preparedness of the natural man...The culpable loss of supernatural hope has its roots in two principal sources: lack of magnanimity and lack of humility” (*Faith, Hope, and Love* p. 102–03).

Magnanimity is *the aspiration of the spirit to great things*. St. Thomas Aquinas called it the “jewel of all the virtues” because the magnanimous person has the courage to seek out what is great and become worthy of it. Magnanimity is rooted in assurance of the highest possibilities of our God-given human nature.

When I first encountered the idea that “aspiring to greatness” was a Christian virtue, I had difficulty taking it in. Aren’t Christians supposed to be humble and to avoid trying to be something special, to minimize and even belittle our abilities and achievements, to avoid ambition, and to prefer anonymity? Even the idea of having charisms distresses some Catholics. Believing that God might do something really important and supernatural through them somehow seems to lack humility. One 84-year-old Scot told me in his lilting brogue, “I couldn’t

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# God's Will and Murphy's Pub

by Robert King, O.P.

I was sitting with Andy in Murphy's Pub on 45th Street in Seattle because it's a good place to get to know somebody. A mutual friend in California insisted that we should get to know each other, so Andy and I were having a beer and a burger, and going through all the normal who-in-the-world-are-you banter: Where did you grow up? Did you really think "Chicago" deserved Best Picture? Isn't the weather here great? And, of course, what do you do for a living?

Actually, he already knew I was a Dominican friar and that I teach for the Catherine of Siena Institute. Part of why our friend wanted us to meet was so that Andy could start discerning his charisms. And, in fact, that's how the question of work came up in the first place. He was describing some of the gifts inventories he'd taken when he was a Protestant, and how he'd never seen the relevance to his life as he actually lived it. He wanted to know how he could really do God's will. So I asked him how he earned his bread and he told me he was a lawyer for social workers, especially child-care workers, insuring that they could intervene in abusive situations and give the parents the help they needed to become better parents.

I said, "And you think this isn't doing God's will?"

He hemmed and hawed, and then started in about his love of movies and how there were so few really good films out anymore, and how it was almost impossible to find a critic who could really say why a film was good or bad. This is a subject dear to me as well, so we had some delightful conversation analyzing the recent Academy Awards. I suggested he could write film reviews, maybe even try his hand at a screenplay. "Yeah, I'd love to," he said, "but...."

"But...?"

"But it just seems so secular, and I want to do God's will."

Sometimes I catch myself thinking or saying something like that: it's secular, it's worldly, therefore it can't be God's will. It's a close cousin to another mistaken attitude: "It feels too good, therefore it must be a sin." And both sorts of thinking make the same mistake: they pit



Medieval Feast (source unknown)

God's creation against God's will. And yet, they are so deeply ingrained that, in the moment I am enjoying something most—watching a great movie or swapping jokes with an old friend—I still have to fight off the guilty sense that I'm neglecting God, that the delights of this world impede my intimacy with God.

St. Theresa of Avila, a doctor of the Church, a reformer who enforced strict discipline on herself and her sisters, had no qualms about enjoying the goodness of the world for its own sake. She taught her sisters, "God and chocolate is better than just God." God could have loved us by making us angels, by giving us a changeless life of seeing his face and receiving his love in a purely spiritual way, but he chose to make us physical, earthly beings and so we receive his love in our bodies as well as our spirits. Chocolate really expresses God's love for us in a bodily way, a physical way, a secular way.

We cannot separate chocolate (or any other good thing) from the love of God, and if we try we find that even the goodness of the good thing turns bitter in our mouths. We find such bitterness in backhanded compliments, in "strings" attached to gifts, in addictions and compulsions. All these are twisted uses of good things, and any time we twist some good thing to any other goal than love, it turns bitter. This is what theologians call the fruit of sin—the bitterness that results from misusing something good.

But the things of this world are meant to be good and

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have charisms; it wouldn't be humble!"

To allay such fears, we can recognize that humility is magnanimity's necessary partner, the attitude before God that ***recognizes and fully accepts our creaturehood and the immeasurable distance between the Creator and his creation.*** But neither does humility stand alone: without magnanimity, we don't see the whole of our dignity as human beings. Magnanimity and humility ***together*** enable us to keep our balance, to arrive at our proper worth before God, to persist in living our secular mission, and to persevere in seeking our eternal destiny despite apparent frustration and failure.

I would like to share with you five spiritual disciplines that I have found most helpful in nurturing hope.

***1. Root yourself in the Church's teaching about the transforming power of the virtues through study and prayer:***

In addition to Sacred Scripture, the Catechism, or the writings of Pope John Paul II, great contemporary Christian authors have written about the virtues. In this area, an indispensable guide is Josef Pieper, a wonderful lay Thomist philosopher. Several years ago, I hosted a dozen adults in studying Pieper's remarkable book, ***Faith, Hope, and Love***. I was astonished to see introverted computer geeks moved to tears by the Church's teaching on the virtues. Also, Pieper's classic work, ***The Four Cardinal Virtues*** (prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance), is the perfect companion book.

Those of you who have attended a ***Called & Gifted Workshop*** may have already heard me talk about C. S. Lewis's magnificent text, ***The Weight of Glory***. Preached as a sermon at Oxford in June 1941 in the midst of World War II's tragedy, ***The Weight of Glory*** contains some of the most moving meditations on Christian hope ever penned. Over the years, I have read it so often that I have almost memorized it. Lewis' words have been a continually bracing and encouraging reminder of the eternal issues at stake in my daily decisions.

***2. At the end of each day, release the fruit of your work to God and turn your attention back to the present moment.***

In my early days of teaching, I would find myself reliving a workshop for days trying to determine if *I* had been a "success" or a "failure". Today, whether the event seemed to go well or poorly, my discipline at the end is the same: after the last person has left, I prayerfully release the whole event and all that transpired into the hands of God, asking that He make it fruitful for his purposes. I then resolutely turn my attention to the next thing in front of me. In ***The Screwtape Letters***, C.S. Lewis writes that God's "ideal is a man who, having worked all day for the good of posterity (if that is his vocation), washes his mind of the whole subject, commits the issue to Heaven, and returns at once to the patience or gratitude demanded by the moment that is passing over him."

If a presentation was unusually energizing or especially difficult for me, I may have to release it several times. But, with time, this discipline has become easier and helps keep me grounded in the present moment where, as Lewis notes, "all duty, all grace, all knowledge, and all pleasure dwell." Besides short-circuiting endless navel-gazing and my need to control, letting go is an act of intentional faith and humility: it reminds me that all eternal fruitfulness comes from God.

***3. Immerse yourself in natural beauty regularly.***

For many of us, natural beauty is a school of hope. Poet Gerard Manley Hopkins observes in "God's Grandeur" that "...nature is never spent; there lives the dearest freshness deep down things." Long walks through gardens or fields at dawn are an essential source of personal and spiritual nourishment for me. The freshness of a wildflower field or the dazzling gold of autumn aspen can awaken not only gratitude for what surrounds us but hope for the eternal and even greater beauty for which God has created us. Lewis remarks:

"At present we are on the outside of the world, the wrong side of the door. We discern the freshness and purity of morning, but they do not make us fresh and pure. We cannot mingle with the splendours we see. But all the leaves of the New Testament are rustling with the rumour that it will not always be so. Some day, God willing, we shall get ***in***" (***The Weight of Glory***).

***4. Create something.***

Whether it's baking a loaf of bread, tending a garden, or bringing a new life into the world, striving to make something new and beautiful places us squarely in the divine mysteries of creation and redemption. Much discouragement stems from the apparent insolubility of so many secular dilemmas with which we wrestle. Part of the artist's vocation is to remind us that many of these unsolvable problems can still serve as a medium for some new creation—something to serve as an instrument through

which the Holy Spirit transforms our earthly situation in totally unanticipated ways.

One of the most fascinating characteristics of the saints is their originality. They routinely see and respond to realities seemingly invisible to the conventional minds of their time and place. When we seek to create something new, we are developing habits of mind that nurture magnanimity and prepare us to cooperate with supernatural grace. As A. D. Lindsay wrote in his essay "The Two Moralities":

"The difference between ordinary people and saints is not that saints fulfill the plain duties that ordinary men neglect. The things saints do have not usually occurred to ordinary people at all...Gracious conduct is somehow like the work of an artist. It needs imagination and spontaneity. It is not a choice between presented alternatives but the creation of something new."

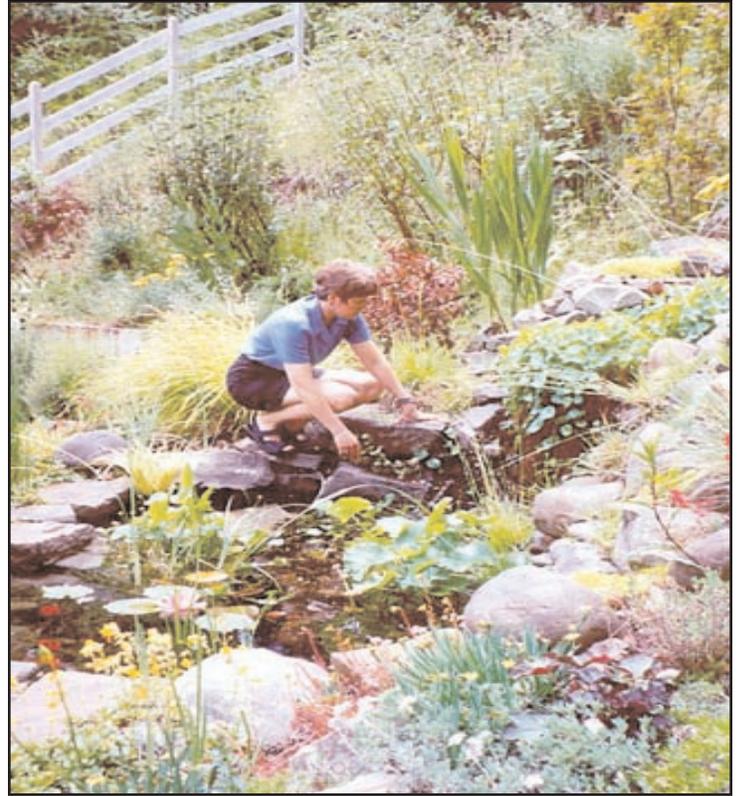
**5. Seek out, rejoice in, and share with others the veiled or obscured signs of God's grace at work**

God's grace is at work in ways that often remain obscure or unrecognizable. Grace-filled events are not often covered by CNN. Only prayerful minds and hearts filled with hope can identify such signs and recognize their significance. In the course of doing gifts interviews, we routinely hear amazing stories of God's grace at work in the lives of lay Catholics. These same people, however, have often never told their experience to anyone before. But humility notwithstanding, we have a prophetic responsibility for spreading the word about the wonderful work of God that is occurring in our generation.

Nurturing a capacity for hope can be a real battle. Some of us struggle with deeply ingrained habits of mind so adverse to hope that we come to expect and will "discern" inevitable defeat in the midst of any victory. Sorrow and suffering have distorted our perception of reality. We may recite the Nicene Creed every Sunday—"we believe in the resurrection of the dead"—but our hearts remain firmly convinced that futility, not resurrection, is the real end for which we are destined.

I know from personal experience that the healing of such habits of despair and the wounds that fuel them can be a long and difficult process. Your way may be very different from mine. The disciplines of hope that are most healing for you may be different from the ones that have brought peace and restoration to my life. But none of us will experience the healing for which we long without actively embracing ways of grace that nourish our confidence in Christ and the power of his redemption.

A friend of mine is fond of quoting Ignatius of Loyola's typical response to difficult circumstances: "Courage and energy!" Disciplines of hope restore our



courage and renew our energy. They bring back our balance and refresh our hope in God's mercy and omnipotence. They help us put events in perspective and clear our mind of crippling anxiety. They help us grow in magnanimity, humility, and hope. They equip us for the most critical work of secular apostles: judging complex real life situations and discerning where the good is to be found in the midst of darkness and confusion.

Hope resolutely holds that in Christ, our identity lies not in our sin or woundedness, and that our destiny is not determined by our past. Without hope, we will never acquire the eyes of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta, eyes able to see Christ and his works of grace in the people and events of this world even when hidden behind a "distressing disguise". Without hope, we will find it impossible to accept the supernatural confidence of Venerable John Henry Newman when he asserts that "God knows what is my greatest happiness and he means to give it to me." Without hope, we will turn away in disbelief when our Lord assures us that the purpose of our earthly discipleship is that "your joy may be complete" (John 15:11). Secular apostles are called to have the Easter song of hope filling our hearts even as we are immersed in the reality of a very broken world: "Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendor, radiant in the brightness of your King! Christ has conquered! Glory fills you! Darkness vanishes for ever!" (from the "Exultet", Easter Vigil).

**Editor's note:** The Weight of Glory, The Four Cardinal Virtues, **and** Faith, Hope, and Love **may now be obtained**

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we are meant to use good things to make a better good. This is what God commands the first humans at the beginning of history: to “cultivate the garden and keep it” (Gen 2:15), which means to improve on what God has made. God’s plan from the very beginning was for us to collaborate with him in making the physical world good, to turn a wilderness into a garden, and a garden into a palace.

It is exactly this task which is made so difficult and painful because of the original sin: whatever fruit we bear, we bear with pain, and the earth itself suffers the curse of sin (cf. Gen 3:16-19). But the task is not lifted from us. The world around us is damaged, and so are we, but both we and the world are good things, and our job is to make them as good as we are able. Nothing we make in this life is perfect, yet, remarkably, some of the things we do are still very good: chocolate is a human invention, as are movies and light rail and bread and wine. And in Christ, who took the fruits of our sins on himself, all the things of this world are brought back to God.

Christ also receives the fruits of our love and gives us his own love, his Holy Spirit, so that our love can be truly powerful, so that we really can make the world a better place. The good things we do and enjoy really are good, and they really are worth enjoying. They are expressions of God’s love, usually expressions of God’s love working through us.

This is what the Second Vatican Council meant when

it taught that “The secular character is proper and peculiar to the laity....By reason of their special vocation it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God’s will” (*Lumen Gentium* 31). Lay people are still responsible to cultivate and keep the garden, to work and play with the things of this world—the mundane, the earthly, the physical stuff—because this is the way God gives them to participate in his love. We are not angels; our spiritual life is lived in and through our bodies, in this world of changing, imperfect things. God loves us by sending us normal everyday things and people, and God sends us to bring his love to other normal everyday things and people.

When I finished babbling, Andy, of course, hadn’t decided whether to stay in law or move to Hollywood. Admittedly Murphy’s Pub was maybe not the most suitable location for a lecture. On the other hand, Murphy’s Pub is an excellent place for asking tough questions about life, for relaxing and enjoying some music, for tasting a fine micro-brew and a burger with bleu cheese. And although none of these things are heaven itself, they all are little glimpses of it, each in a different way. Because of Christ’s gift to us, everything good, from a hot bath to a well-made law to an Olympic athletic feat, can become an expression of God’s love made incarnate, and made incarnate through our acts of love.



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## *Discerning Marriage* *A Community of Life and Love*

by Fr. Michael Sweeney, O.P.

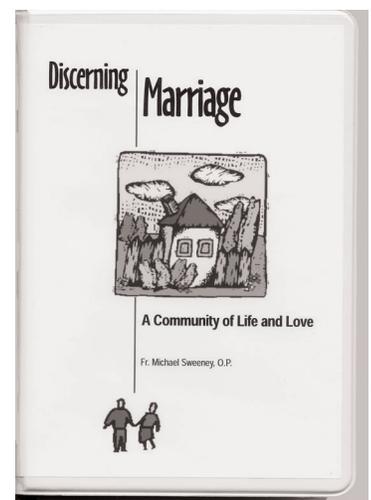
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*Judgment* continued from page 3

***Unless we make judgments, we will never have clarity with respect to our purpose for acting. Unless we are free to determine the means that we must exercise, we will never have true responsibility for what we do.***

relented, both because I did not have unlimited time to argue the point, and because I did not want to spoil the poor man's day. That he was forbidden to judge the situation was not, after all, his fault.

I do not hold the security guard responsible for the confiscation of my property. I do not hold the saleswoman in the Los Angeles airport responsible for selling me an illegal lighter in the first place. But this, in fact, is very precisely the problem: the agent and the store clerk cannot be held responsible because, as a policy, they have been forbidden to make judgments; their sole obligation is to enforce a policy, even when the enforcement of the policy may be unjust or foolish. The clerk sells whatever her company indicates should be sold, and the security agent confiscates whatever his superiors say should be confiscated.

This scrupulous assertion of the policy is, of course, the first reason that the security measures are bound to be ineffective. The competent agent, who should be making judgments as to who is a risk and what implements are truly dangerous, is forbidden to make judgments. His job is merely to implement the policy. Moreover, because the policy is influenced by politics, overriding the proper objective of security is the apparent objective of equal inconvenience for all. Had the agent not confiscated my empty lighter, so the politician thinks, he would have been showing favoritism. This would be unfair to all of those whose lighters had recently been confiscated. Similarly, the agent is forbidden to profile travelers according to race—or, from my observation, according to age, state of health, physical capacity, or any other reasonable criterion. So it is that I recently witnessed an elderly woman—I would guess in her eighties—who was made to relinquish her cane and teeter uncertainly through the security gate, because she had been randomly selected for search. The poor dear clearly lacked the capacity even to walk unassisted, let alone to hold hostage a plane full of frustrated passengers. Yet, to make a judgment that spared her the indignity of such treatment would be unfair to all of the others: equal inconvenience for all!

The purpose of airport screening is not equal treatment for all of the passengers; the purpose is, or ought to be, security. To guarantee security, proficient agents ought to have the prerogative to judge what is truly dangerous and what is not: for example, empty lighters. They ought to be permitted to judge who poses a threat and who does not: for example, silver-haired octogenarian ladies with canes. They ought, in other words, to be able to exercise responsibility for the security of the passengers. Deprived of their judgment, they have been deprived of their responsibility, and we have all been placed at risk.

According to Catholic tradition, the starting place for all moral thinking is the end (purpose or objective) of the activity. We must first clarify the end that we seek. In every social question we must first ask, "What is the end (or purpose or objective) that we intend?" and then we must settle on the means to achieve it. Determining the end necessitates judgment; choosing the means requires freedom. Unless we make judgments, we will never have clarity with respect to our purpose for acting. Unless we are free to determine the means that we must exercise, we will never have true responsibility for what we do. Our judgment is essential.

There are many instances in our society of judgments that ought to be made and policies which preclude them—in industry, in commerce, in education, in our political discourse. The first obligation, if we are to take seriously the social teaching of the Church, is to begin to identify them, for these are the areas which first require our attention.

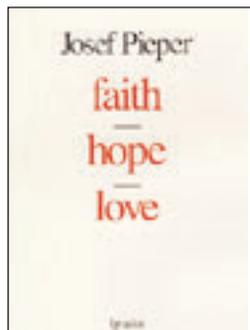


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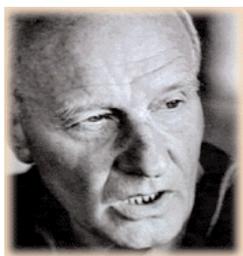
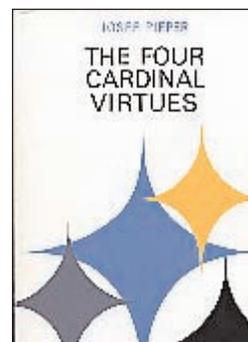


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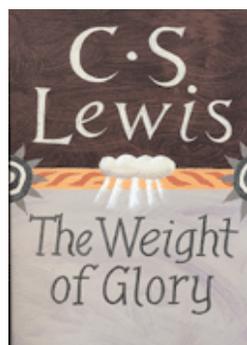
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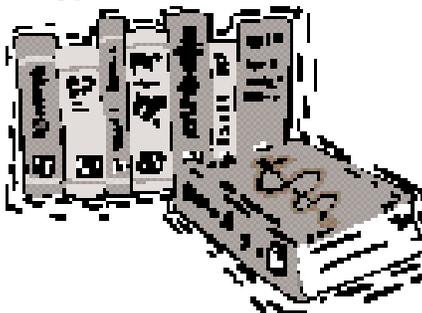
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