

CHILDRENS CORNER

Speaking of her memories as a grade four girl in her parish school, Marianne recounted the influence of a Sister who was a wonderful Religion teacher. It was quite a few years ago. "She helped us to pray the Rosary in such a vivid way that we felt as though we were actually there in the mysteries as we prayed them. And we ourselves were there with Our Lady, speaking the Hail Mary to her."

Lord, grant us the gift of teachers like that today!

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THE STAR

ROSARY NEWSLETTER

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EDITORIAL

Dear Rosarians,

I wish you the blessings of Eastertide and beyond. With Easter we are in the territory of the Glorious mysteries. But let us not forget that Easter Sunday belongs to the Paschal Triduum, the big three-day celebration of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Vigil. Our Easter issue this year invites Rosary reflection on the intimate connection between the Cross and the Resurrection. The Resurrection is the necessary fruit and result of Our Lord's Passion and death.

Did preachers a generation or two ago harp too much on sin? Was there too great an emphasis on the "Thou shalt not..." with warnings given constantly about occasions and consequences of sin? Some years ago at a discussion group I remember a thoughtful old Latvian physicist daring to suggest that one of the greatest changes signalled by the Vatican Council was the addition of the words, ... *and what I have failed to do* in the "I confess" form of the penitential rite at Mass. He saw in that small addition a new and strongly positive emphasis in being sorry for not doing good.

Yes, there is a way of harping on sin which puts people off. Can we find, then, questions about sin that are actually interesting and helpful? For example, What is the ultimate cause of sin? How could it have entered into our world? What is the meaning of original sin, and how does it differ from personal sin? How do the many human emotions come into it? The *theology* of sin isn't so boring after all. Reflecting on sin is a wise thing to do IF that guides us back to virtue. That is the main reason for thinking and talking about sin.

Our Easter issue has some items that may seem more sombre than usual. Our journey through the bible catechism of St Thomas sees us arriving at his questions about unbelief. Here his studied selections of bible passages, as authoritative, reveal the kinds and gravity of sinfulness associated with unbelief. And our ongoing translation of Thomas' divisions of 1 Corinthians (on sacraments) brings us to marriage, starting with behaviour that seriously infringes it.

Our present number of **The Star** must not give the impression that either St Paul or his devoted disciple, St Thomas, were given to harping on sin. They were not. The mercy and goodness and power of Christ the Mediator was their ultimate interest, even when they taught about sin and punishment.

The Sorrowful mysteries of Holy Week and Good Friday have shown us Christ the "Suffering Servant" emptying himself and descending into our human world of sin and punishment in order to atone for it. And like the debtor-servant in St Matthew's gospel (18:21-35) we are hopelessly in sin-debt, quite unable to work our way out of it. So Jesus pays the price in his blood. Literally, he re-deems us. We are brought back because we are *bought back*, in Jesus. The more deeply we understand what sin is and how it happens and its effect upon us, the more we can appreciate the Lord Jesus' almighty "rescue package" of love. This signals an indescribable transformation in human nature - to be pondered in the Glorious mysteries. "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life." (Rm. 6:4).

*On the third morn from death rose he,
Clothed with what light in heaven shall be,
Our unswerving faith deserving, alleluia.*

(Breviary hymn, Eastertide)

Fr Ben Hensley OP

Promoter of the Rosary Confraternity



"All the World's a Stage..."

I went to the theatre to see a performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*. It was most enjoyable, with the singing, the acting, stage effects and rapport with the audience – one of harmony and peace. Many senior citizens were there, including disabled. The staff, ushers and others could not have been more efficient and helpful. It was so well done that people would want to come again.

What the about the sacred? Of course there are mystery plays, events of the Rosary, especially the Passion, some of which are famous such as the Oberammergau Passion Play in southern Germany. It all comes from the sacred liturgy which at this time is very rich in pageantry and drama. Everyone has a role to play, even those who are there not just as onlookers but as members of the crowd. But also in the individual sense between ourselves and God, because this is what the liturgy is about. In the Eucharist with the priest as "another Christ" we are made present to the events of Christ's life, death and resurrection, together with the whole company of heaven. For us these are the events of our redemption by Christ our Redeemer.

We believe with St John the Evangelist that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." (Jn. 1:14)

The world stage of course is not all peace and harmony, but we have the beatitudes to tell us about what God wants for his people.

As for the sacred and the secular together, we read in Ephesians that "his purpose he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth." (Eph. 1:9,10).

Mary Gill OPL

*Look at my hands and feet,
and know that I am truly here,
Alleluia*

An Interview with Lesa

Editor Sacramental programmes in parishes and schools help to prepare children for their first Reconciliation (Confession), Confirmation and first Holy Communion sacraments. Parents are expected to be actively involved. Printed material of various kinds and standards is usually available for parents to work through with their children. While this is positive where and while it happens, the limitations are all too obvious in cases where these sacramental moments are seen as "special events", climaxes to "one-off" programmes. In many instances it is evident that the home front provides very little drive in the pre-school and early school Catholic development of each child. Parents are falling short in carrying out the agreement made at their baby's baptism: "You are accepting the responsibility of training her/him in the practice of the faith...Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?" "We do", they say, but mostly they don't.

Among the various reasons for failure in Catholic faith and life parenting is lack of knowledge. What are the most important areas we need to attend to? How are we to go about this? Where can we get any help we might need?

The effects of inadequate Catholic parenting will be long term, threatening the continuity of our faith and way of life. Catholic schools of themselves will not save the situation.

And so, Lesa, with this in mind, and knowing that you and Tony your husband are parents dedicated and active in the Catholic parenting of your seven, I would like to hear your views on some of these issues. That can help me in my priestly concerns, encourage other parents, and spur Rosarians on to prayer for young parents and their children. You and Tony have seven children. What is their age range?

Lesa: The youngest two are six and seven and the eldest is twenty four. He is a boy and the rest are girls.

Ed: How are they going? Still practising?

Lesa: Yes, so we must be doing something right!

Ed: Any major problems along the way in bringing them up as Catholics?

Lesa: No. I wouldn't say there have been big problems, but it has not been easy.

Ed: How has it been hard?

Lesa: Well there are times when you have to take a firm stand. There are times when a great deal of self-discipline is needed. Always you have to be vigilant. My mother was a wonderful example to me in this.

Ed: Yes, in focussing especially on early childhood parenting I wanted to ask you about your own resources as a mother. What helps and influences have you been able to call on? Tell me about your parents.

Lesa: Dad was a doctor and mum was a nurse. That was a great help to me in dealing with the biological and physical aspects of parenting. So I suppose my own background was not really typical. I also admired them in their example of living their convictions, even when others around them thought and acted differently.

Ed: What were some of the other influences?

Lesa: I didn't know a lot about my faith when I left school. I knew the Church was there and that I would like to know more about it. Then there was the Rosary. Tony and I started praying the Rosary from the first day of our marriage. After a time it would fall by the wayside until we started it up again.

Then there was a discussion group for singles, 18 - 30 on the teachings of the Church, started by a priest in Melbourne. I was just over the age limit and married with four children, but they let me in. Tony minded the children each week so I could go. I found it very worthwhile. Then later Tony and I both started going to a Bible study group run by a wonderful old American Jesuit each week in Parkville. A friend came very happy to baby-sit our children which made it possible. He and other priests had a lasting influence on me. Always in our life priests seemed to be there at the right moment helping us when help was needed.

Ed: Elizabeth Anscombe, an English philosopher and committed Catholic, once wrote of the value in a parent at Mass quietly explaining in whispers to their child just what was happening at various stages of the Mass. Did you ever try anything like that?

Lesa: I know I used to get our little ones to concentrate on what Father was doing at the altar, telling them that the Mass was a sacrifice. Our church and old and beautiful one in the gothic style was a great help in explaining things of the faith and conveying a sense of God and holiness. I am not naturally a teacher in the formal sense of sitting the children down and giving a lesson. But as a parent I felt I had to know both the whats and the whys of our faith in guiding our children, even in their early years. I used to do this informally one to one often through examples. Each child is different.

Actually being an example is so important, and that requires a great deal of self-discipline sometimes. Having your own self-discipline can get through to the children.

Ed: What about prayer and teaching them to pray?

Lesa: Yes I taught them formal daily prayers like the Our Father and the Hail Mary. We always had grace at meals, and I taught them to examine their consciences. It's funny because I had it on my mind for quite a time that we had no morning prayer and I prayed to God to remind me to do something about it. Then my eldest when he was just 8 came out with, "Why don't we say a prayer in the morning?" Yes, prayer is our life-blood. And it's the very first step in teaching them their faith.

Ed: Is repetition needed?

Lesia: Yes, but not too much, not to rub them up in the wrong way. I was never quite as hard as I would like to have been. But what I saw outside in the wider world were the bad consequences of not giving definite direction.

Ed: What about the respective roles of mother and father?

Lesia: I think in the early years that upbringing is more the wife's domain. If the husband is the head in some way, the wife is the neck. When an important decision has to be made, the husband consults the wife. She definitely has an influence in ruling the household.

Ed: With a harmonious, home-friendly practising family you, as you have said, must be doing something right. How much of this success goes back to the Catholic parenting influences in their early life do you think?

Lesia: I don't really know that I can answer that. Olivia is here, she might have something to say about that.

Olivia: I just remember that going to Mass and praying was what we did. It seemed so normal. Prayer too was a normal habit we were encouraged to develop.

Ed: Have you gone the same way, Lesia, with the younger ones as with the older children? Has there been any modification in your Catholic upbringing of them in the years of mothering?

Lesia: No, not really. Perhaps if anything my part in their Catholic upbringing has intensified as my faith has come to mean more to me.

Heaven and earth rejoice, O Christ, Alleluia, Because you have risen from the dead, Alleluia!

1 CORINTHIANS - St Thomas' Divisions

Chapter 4: 14 – (continued)

Having sought to restrain the Corinthians in their rash judging and their readiness to look down on the Apostles, he now begins to correct them.

First, he sets the scene with words of admonition 14-15

The true aim of his words 14a

The proper way for him to admonish them 14b

States the reason 15

Then he starts their correction with his own example 16-17

He encourages them to follow his own example 16

Removes any excuse of ignorance about himself 17

Puts a sting in the correction 18-21

A rod called for to deal with arrogance of some, doubting his visit 18

Announces forthcoming visit: advent 19a – to assess 19b – reason 20
The manner of his correction is up to them 21.

Chapter 5

After dealing with what belongs to baptism, St Paul now turns to the question of marriage

First he makes clear its very opposite, viz. fornication 1-20

He sets forth the sin 1-5

The guilty one's sin & its gravity: known-worse than pagan-evil explained 1

The sin of those tolerating it 2-3

Rebukes their permissiveness: pride – injustice – negligence 2

He supplants their negligence, pronouncing judgement on the sinner 3-5

His ministerial authority 3

How he can guide the judgement 4

The community of the faithful deliberating together 4a

Mindful of his will and authority 4b

Christ the principal authority 4c

Sentence carried out: punishment--effect--fruit 5

He analyses the whole issue for them, going into their guilt and the sinner's 6-6:20

Explains each sin

First, that of those harbouring the sin by neglect Ch.5:6 – Ch.6:13a

He argues against the Corinthians' neglect in acting 6-13

They did not exclude the guilty one 6-8

He censures their behaviour 6

Arrogance the root cause predisposing them 6a

Explains how it causes 6b

He shows what they now need to do 7-8

Direction given to them: to expel—its effect 7

States the reason: Christ's Passion—conclusion 8

Reproves their false understanding of his earlier letter 9-

Returns to the content of that letter 9

Excludes their wrong interpretation 10

States his real intention 10a

Draws the conclusion 10b

Explains for them the correct meaning of his words 11-13

His intention: re brothers, in name 11

His reason

Distinction between brothers & unbelievers 12a

Argues from a likeness 12b

Responds to a tacit question 13a

States his conclusion 13b

Chapter 6

Having exposed the sinfulness in their failure to judge, he turns to further faults in their recourse to judicial settlement Ch.6:1-13a

Reproof regarding the judges before whom they appear 1-6

He cites them for disorder in their judicial preference 1

Reason: how they were undermining the authority of the saints 2

The authority of the saints over worldly matters 2

The authority of the saints over the supra-mundane world 3

A remedy brought for their sin: stated 4 – further developed 5-6

Reproof regarding the judgements themselves 7-8

What is sinful in these sorts of judicial proceedings

What is licit but unfitting: reproves 7- prevents excuse 7b

What is thoroughly illicit: clearly unjust 8a- deceptive 8b

Clarifies what he has said 9-

Concerning what is altogether illicit

Puts the question

Sin and the Kingdom? 9a

Solves the question 9b-

Shows the danger confronting the sinners 9b-10

Shows how the danger is avoided 11

Concerning what may be licit but unfitting and harmful 12-13a

His intention stated concerning subjection to power 12

Reason: how all things are licit, & not all things fitting 13a

WHOLE BIBLE CATECHISM (Continued)

From St Thomas' *Summa Theologica* II/II

On the vices opposed to Faith

On Unbelief in General - Question 10

Article 4 Whether every act of an unbeliever is a sin?

It is said of Cornelius while yet an unbeliever, "*Your prayers and your alms have ascended as a memorial before God.*" (Acts 10:4)

Therefore not all acts of an unbeliever are sin, but some are good. (St Thomas)

Article 6 Whether the unbelief of pagans or heathens is graver than other kinds?

"*It had been better for them not to have known the way of justice, than after they had known it, to turn back.*" (2Pt. 2:21)

Heathens have never known the way of justice, whereas heretics (especially) and Jews have abandoned it after knowing it in some sense. (St Thomas).

Article 7 Whether one ought to dispute with unbelievers in public?

"*Saul increased much more in strength and confounded the Jews*", and that "*He spoke... to the gentiles and disputed with the Greeks.*" (Acts 9:22,29)

Article 8 Whether unbelievers ought to be compelled to the faith?

"*Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in.*"

(Lk.14:23)

Now people enter the house of God, i.e. the Church, by faith. Therefore some should be compelled to the faith. (St Thomas).

[Among unbelievers there are some who have never received the faith, such as heathens and Jews. These are by no means to be compelled to the faith in order that they may believe, for belief is voluntary - St Thomas]

On Heresy - Question 11

Article 3 Whether heretics ought to be tolerated?

"*A man that is a heretic, after the first and second admonition, avoid: knowing that he that is such a one, is subverted.*" (Titus 3:10,11)

On Apostasy - Question 12

Article 1 Whether apostasy belongs to unbelief?

"*Many of his disciples went back*" (Jn. 6:67) i.e. apostatised, of whom Our Lord had said previously (6:65), "*There are some of you who believe not.*"

On Blasphemy - Question 13

Article 1 Whether blasphemy is opposed to the profession of faith?

St Paul writes, "*I formerly blasphemed and persecuted*" and then adds, "*I did it ignorantly in my unbelief*" (1 Tim. 1:12,13)

Article 2 Whether blasphemy is always a mortal sin?

"*He who blasphemes the name of the Lord, dying let him die.*" (Lev.24:16)

On Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit - Question 14

Article 3 Whether the sin against the Holy Spirit can be forgiven?

"*Whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.*" (Mt. 12:32)

[So great is the downfall of this sin that it cannot submit to the humiliation of asking for pardon – St. Augustine]



THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST'S GLORIFICATION

"Christ's glorification is the one article of the Creed that is to be held responsible for the Christian temperament. Our Christian outlook is what it is because we hold it as an obvious fact that Our Lord and Chief is in the glory of the heavens. Such was the mentality of the Apostles. The holy men whom the Son of God had chosen to be the foundations and the preachers of the new Kingdom went all over the world witnessing to the twofold vision of the abasement of Christ on the Cross and the glory that followed: 'The ancients (elders) therefore that are among you, I beseech who am myself also an ancient (elder) and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as also a partaker of that glory which is to be revealed in time to come.' (1Pt. 5:1). They announced to the world One whom they conceived as filling heaven and earth with the splendour of His personality. Their distress was great that men could not behold Him whom they saw so clearly with the eyes of the spirit, that Jesus, whom God had exalted and who is the judge of the living and the dead. They suffered in their hearts for their newly-converted flocks, lest the dark horrors of persecution might obscure for them the vivid reality of the Christ in majesty. For to keep this faith alive is the main task of the Christian ministry. Glorification of Christ is the justification of the Christian religion, even more than that religion's inward merit and perfection. To give Christians confidence in their faith, through the greatness of the splendours of eternity, is the main task of apostolic people of all times:

"You are of God, little children, and have overcome him [Anti-Christ]. Because greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.' (1Jn. 4:4). Through our faith in Christ's glorification we are given the power to rise superior to any might or pride that may try to raise itself up in this world against God."

Anscar Vonier O.S.B., *The Victory of Christ* (1934)

[Dom Anscar Vonier was born on Nov. 11 1875 in Southern Germany. An exiled community of French Benedictines were living on the site of the ancient monastery of Buckfast in England. The young Martin Vonier joined them and received the habit at the age of 17. He was elected abbot at the age of only 30. Immediately he took in hand the work of rebuilding the abbey church; a work that had been planned by his predecessor. He was a truly remarkable man and his theological and spiritual writings even today can be read with great profit.]

This Resurrection icon, opposite, is a modern version of an ancient tradition. It represents the promise of salvation with Our Lord standing over the entrance to hell, the gates of which have been burst asunder through his triumph over death. With one hand he releases Adam from the dead; with the other he raises Eve. The presence of the prophets in the background signifies that their prophecies are now fulfilled." (John Stuart, *Ikons*, p.90). Adam and Eve and the theme of original sin is not a topic that enters readily into our celebration of the Paschal Triduum and Easter, I suspect, but it can be a fruitful one.

Bits and Pieces

Your prayers are asked for a new Rosary venture in Adelaide. Paul and Bev Garton, parishioners in an Adelaide parish, visited Ireland recently and were much impressed with the devotional atmosphere and energy of the Irish Dominican Rosary Apostolate in Dundalk. They plan to bring the priest in charge and two assistants to Adelaide in 2009 for an intensive promotion of the Rosary in parishes and schools, culminating in the traditional May Marian Procession. A core group has been formed with parishioners, Legion of Mary members and rosarians from several different areas. Much hard work needs to be done to prepare for this visit. We need your prayers!

