



THE TWELVE STEP REVIEW

Fr. Emmerich Vogt, O.P.



Winter 2014

Dear friends,

In this season's issue we focus on some important hermeneutical principles to explain the often-misunderstood Christian principle of "turning the other cheek." It is often misinterpreted to mean that being Christian means tolerating intolerable behavior. We see from St. Augustine that it means something different.

Included in this issue are eight new prayer cards that are now available from The Twelve Step Review.

Here are some future parish missions and retreats. Please always check with

the institution first, as events change. You can refer to the last newsletter for the Lenten missions 2014. They are in the diocese of Vancouver, B.C.

* July 14-16: Retreat, Our Lady's Missionaries of the Eucharist, 640 East Main St, Birdsboro, PA 19508. Phone: 610-582-3333. Email: olme@olme.org

* August 18-21: Parish Mission, St. Joachim Parish, 4195 Lummi Shore Rd, Bellingham, WA 98226 (360) 384-3651.

* August 5-8: Retreat, Sanctuary of Our Sorrowful Mother, 318 N. 8th St, Vandalia, IL 62471. Email: osmm@sb-cglobal.net

* September 12-14: Retreat, Casa Maria, 3721 Belmont Rd, Birmingham, AL 35210. (205) 956-6760. www.sisterservants.org.

* September 22-25: Parish Mission, St. Joseph Morello Parish, 7200 Auburn Folsom Rd, Granite Bay, CA 95746. (916) 786-5001.

* September 29 - October 2, Parish Mission, St. Andrew Parish, 128 Norwich Ave. Colchester, CT 06415. (860) 537-2355. As of this date, this mission is pending, so please check.

A PUBLICATION OF THE WESTERN DOMINICAN PROVINCE

Turn the Other Cheek?

There is a principle that all seminarians learn that St. Thomas Aquinas presents in his theological work, the *Summa*. This principle gives insight as to why the teaching of Jesus about turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39) is so often misunderstood. The principle goes: *Quidquid recipitur per modum recipientis recipitur*, i.e., *Whatever is received is received according to the mode of the receiver*. We are very much influenced by our own personality, our background, the level of knowledge we've acquired, etc. And this influences how we see and understand things. For example, many years ago a young married woman came to see me in tears. She was so hurt that it took her fifteen minutes before she could sober up enough emotionally to tell me her story. In short, married only one year, her husband tells her to pack up, they're moving. She is not a part of the decision, nor is she told where they would be moving. Indeed, he actually quoted Scripture to her, "Wives, be submissive to your husbands" (Colossians 3:18), probably the only verse he knows

by heart! She desires to be a good Christian wife but feels betrayed by this lack of communication in important decisions about their life together. And rightly so. However, I could tell that there was something not right about her, because a healthy person would see right through the husband's need to control and would not give in to it. Love is not the dominance of one will over another, says St. Thomas, but rather a union of wills. Why could she not see that her husband has an issue here and that she need not give in to it? No doubt because she did not grow up in a healthy family situation. So I asked, "Was your father an alcoholic?" "Yes," she replied. And there's the problem.

PATHOLOGY SEEKS PATHOLOGY

A wise secular Carmelite once told me, "Pathology seeks pathology," i.e., it's not an accident that this woman married this type of man. A more healthy and less controlling man she most probably would not have been attracted to. That is why one often hears in Twelve

Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you.

Luke 16:27

Step meetings that it is common for nurses to marry alcoholics, so common that nurses have written a book for nurses entitled *I'm Dying to Take Care of You: Nurses and Codependence*. Some people—nurses, for example—need to be needed and so marry people who need them, confusing being needed with being loved. Here is where St. Thomas' principle shows that the mode of being a needy person influences a person's decisions. If a person has a control issue, then his mode of operating will attract him to all those verses of Scripture that support his need to control, in this instance, "Wives be submissive." Other verses, such as "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25) would not stand out for him.

Similarly, when one's mode of being is that of a doormat, the passage about "turning the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39)

Continued on the back page.

RECOVERY PRAYER CARDS

We have a series of recovery prayer cards, each one is 3" x 5". If you would like any, we simply ask for a donation to help us cover the costs of shipping and handling. Below is a facsimile of the photo on the front side with the recovery prayer the comes on the reverse side. The prayer for the "Cross of Recovery" is given on page four.

OUR LADY OF RECOVERY

O Mary, virgin most powerful and Mother of mercy
Who interceded with your Son, Jesus
on behalf of the wedding guests at Cana
intercede with Him now for me,
that I may wholeheartedly embrace
the path of recovery from the effects of sin in my life.

Recall, O Virgin most holy, the solemn moment when Jesus,
Your divine Son, dying upon the Cross,
Confided us to your maternal care.
You are my Mother; I desire ever to remain your faithful child.

Pray, O holy Mother of God, for my recovery
That I may do the will of your Son
And with faith, share my experience, strength, and hope
That from your motherly intercession
my recovery may bring Christ's peace to my soul.

Holy Mary, help your children in recovery
To feel your motherly help and protection
For you were blessed by God to bear the Savior of the world,
Who lives and reigns forever.
Amen.

THE HEART OF RECOVERY

Loving heart of Jesus,
gracious companion of my recovery,
I adore You.

Lonely heart of Jesus,
humiliated and abandoned,
I offer myself to You.

Eucharistic Heart of Jesus,
fountain of every blessing,
I love you.

With sincere sorrow for my sins I offer You this poor heart of mine.

I confide my recovery from the effects of sin in my life
to Your merciful Heart. Make me humble, patient,
and pure so that I may be obedient to Your will.

Grant, dear Heart of Christ, that I may live in you and for you.

Protect me in the midst of temptation. Comfort me in my afflictions.

Give me health of mind and body, assistance in my temporal needs,
Your blessing on all that I do, and the grace of a genuine recovery. Amen.

THE SPIRIT OF RECOVERY

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill my heart with Your love
and enkindle in me the spirit of recovery.

Breathe into me, O Holy Spirit, and protect my recovery
from the effects of sin that I may be holy.

Move in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy.

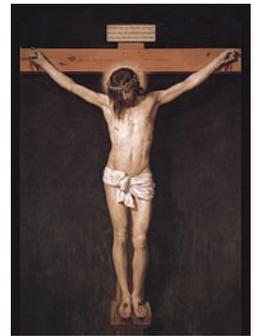
Attract my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I may love only what is holy.

Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, that I may defend all that is holy.

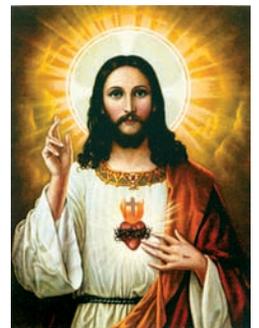
Protect me, O Holy Spirit, that I may always seek through Your inspiration
the path of recovery. Amen.



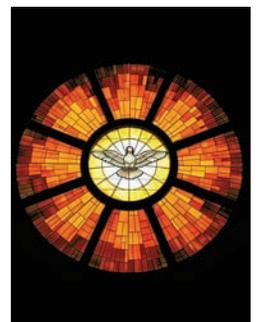
Our Lady of Recovery



The Cross of Recovery



The Heart of Recovery



The Spirit of Recovery

THE CHALICE OF RECOVERY

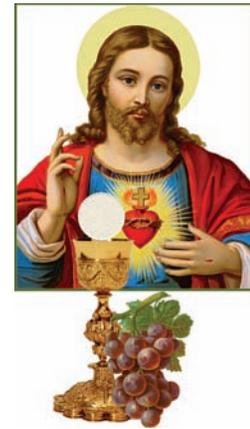
O God, my Father, to You I raise the Chalice of salvation,
that the effects of sin in my life may be washed away
by the Blood of Your only begotten Son, Jesus.
I long to be a vessel emptied of self. Accept, O Lord, my emptiness,
and so fill me with Your Light, Your Love, and Your way of Life
that these precious gifts may over-flow the chalice of my heart
and radiate into the hearts of all with whom I come in contact this day,
revealing to them the grace of Your joy
and the serenity of Your peace which nothing can destroy.
I offer this prayer through Your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.



The Chalice of Recovery

PRAYER OF RECOVERY BEFORE COMMUNION

Almighty and Eternal God,
behold I come to the sacrament of Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
As one sick I come to the Physician of life;
unclean, to the Fountain of mercy;
blind, to the Light of eternal splendor;
poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth.
Therefore, I beg of You, through Your infinite mercy and generosity,
strengthen my recovery from the effects of sin in my life
by healing my weakness, washing away my uncleanness,
giving light to my blindness, enriching my poverty, and clothing my nakedness.
May I thus receive the Bread of Angels, the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords,
with such reverence and humility, contrition and devotion, purity and faith,
purpose and intention, as shall aid my soul's salvation.
I pray this, as all things, through our Lord, Jesus Christ,
who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.



Recovery Prayer
Before Communion

PRAYER OF RECOVERY AFTER COMMUNION

I thank You, Father, Everlasting God, for having been pleased,
through no merit of mine, but of Your great mercy alone,
to feed me, a sinner, and Your unworthy servant,
with the precious Body and Blood of Your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
I pray that this Holy Communion may not be for my judgment and condemnation,
but for my pardon and salvation. Let this Holy Communion be to me an armor of faith
and a shield of good will, a cleansing of all the effects of sin in my life,
and a rooting out of all evil desires. May it assist me in my recovery
and be a firm defense against the evil designs of all my visible and invisible enemies,
a perfect quieting of all the desires of soul and body.
I pray that You bring me, a sinner, to the indescribable Feast
where You, with Your Son and the Holy Spirit,
are to Your saints true light, full blessedness, everlasting joy, and perfect happiness.
Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.



Recovery Prayer
After Communion

THE GUARDIAN OF RECOVERY

Angel of God, my Guardian dear,
to whom His love commits me here,
ever this day be at my side
to light and guard, to rule and guide.
Fold thy wings round me
and guard my recovery from the effects of sin in my life.
My defender and my patron, defend me against the enemies of my recovery
who prowl around seeking the ruin of my soul.
In acknowledgment and return for your loving ministry to me,
I offer you the infinitely noble heart of Jesus,
and firmly resolve to obey your inspirations
to most faithfully serve Jesus, my Lord and God. Amen.



Guardian of Recovery

would give such a person the impression that to be a good and faithful Christian, one must tolerate abuse. But nothing could be further from the truth.

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES

In the seminary we take a course called “hermeneutics.” It is the study of interpretive principles. When one interprets a text, he needs to understand what kind of text he is dealing with: is it a poem, is it historical, is it a fable, etc. Otherwise one can misinterpret the text. For example, for a person studying Shakespeare, it is important to have an adequate understanding of Elizabethan English, which differs from contemporary English. An example would be the verb “to suffer,” which today means “to endure pain or hardship,” but which in earlier centuries could have the meaning of “to allow, to permit.” This sense survived in contemporary English, as in the phrase “suffer the little children” of the King James Bible, but has mostly been lost in contemporary English. These interpretive principles are important.

One of St. Thomas’ interpretive principles is that God communicates to us the way we communicate. How do we communicate? Certainly not in any scientific mode. Thus I could tell you that I could not sleep at all last night, so I got up, made myself a delicious mug of fresh coffee and went up the hill and waited for the sunrise. And was it glorious! The colors! In truth, however, it would be unscientific to say the sun rose. Rather, the earth descended beneath the sun; after all, it’s not the sun that revolves around the earth but the earth that revolves around the sun. Nevertheless, we do not communicate in such scientific ways. Therefore, we should not expect God to communicate to us in scientific terms. The Bible does not speak to us in a scientific manner—as if God were interested in communicating scientific facts to us.

When Christians interpret Scripture from a scientific viewpoint, they make Christians out to be morons. This is evident in those Christians referred as “creationists,” for they interpret the creation story of Genesis in a scientific manner. Ridiculous. Equally ridiculous are those Christians who interpret Jesus’ admonition about the handling of serpents in a literal manner. A “serpent-handling” West Virginia pastor died last year after his rattlesnake bit him during a church ritual. The sad fact is that Pastor Mark Wolford had apparently watched a snake kill his father years before, again making Christians out to be morons.

If I say to you that I so wanted to see the opening of a new movie that I went the very night it opened, and I tell you,

“The place was packed. I hardly got a seat—there were a million people there!” And yet the theater only holds 300. Was I lying? No. It’s called hyperbole, a rhetorical device used to evoke strong feelings or to create a strong impression, but is not meant to be taken literally. And so God communicates to us using hyperbole, as when Jesus says, “And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell” (Matthew 5:30). This is hyperbole. No sane Christian would take this literally.

And so it is with “turn the other cheek.” How has Christian tradition understood this text? Let’s take an example from St. Augustine. Augustine wondered at first if Jesus meant what He said literally. So he searched the Gospels and discovered that Jesus Himself did not obey the commandment literally. After Jesus was arrested and brought to the house of the high priest, when He was struck while being interrogated, Jesus did not turn His other cheek. Instead, He said, “If I have spoken wrongly, bear witness to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?” (John 18:23). Augustine also notes that after the Apostle Paul was arrested and struck on the mouth at the command of the high priest, he did not obey Jesus’ command to turn the cheek. Instead, Paul said, “God shall strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” (Acts 23:3). St. Paul defends his rights as a Roman citizen.

If by the example of St. Paul as well as that of Jesus Himself it is clear that the com-

mand is not to be taken literally, what is the reason for Jesus’ teaching? St. Augustine says, “turn the other cheek” means that one should never return evil for evil. One should not imitate the behavior of one’s assailant. Rather, one should forgive the evildoer and pray for his salvation. According to St. Augustine, Jesus’ command to turn the other cheek points to the uniquely Christian motive: love. But one should never tolerate intolerable behavior if at all possible. *

THE CROSS OF RECOVERY

○ God, who made holy the standard of the life-giving Cross by the Precious Blood of Your only-begotten Son, grant, I beg You, that in honoring the same holy Cross, I may rejoice in Your ever-present protection. Grant me the strength to bear the cross of recovery, that the effects of sin in my life may be purified by the self-denial the cross entails.

O good Cross, made beautiful by the body of the Lord, may I truly desire you, ardently love you, unceasingly seek you. Be now ready for my eager soul. By purifying me from the effects of sin in my life, graciously restore me to my Master, so that He, who redeemed me through His Cross, may receive me through my cross, borne out of love for Him alone.

I pray this through the same Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns, world without end. Amen.

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