

Library Signpost

By Rev. Benedict Ehmaan

Lent is a Time to Read for Profit

Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves break in and steal.

These are words we shall be hearing this coming Ash Wednesday in the Gospel of the Mass.

It is the Lord Himself talking. He says them to you and me. So much of the time we are indifferent to the making of spiritual investments.

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No doubt about it, we are expected by God to use the talents He has assigned to each of us, yours, your and I, mine. But one talent we all have, thanks to modern education, is the ability to read.

If, when the time comes for our account to God, the only use we can show for our reading ability was to while away the time on newspapers and comic books and slick magazines, what may we expect that God is going to say to us? Why, in a way, we even pass judgment on ourselves when we admit how stale

Authoress



Mother Ann Deangel, B.C.M.N., M.D., founder and superior of Society of Catholic Medical Missionaries, whose new book, "Mission for Samaritans," cites Catholic medical mission history and surveys world opportunities for work ahead.

and last month's papers and magazines seem to us already. What do you think they will seem like after we've crossed the Great Divide of time into eternity?

We can't say, in self-defense for such reading, that even big religious leaders like Cardinal Spellman contribute to these magazines. Don't be deceived. Those articles are "springs to catch woodcocks." If books, like Saul, have only their thousands, and the papers and magazines, like David, have their tens of thousands, it's good horse sense to put some spiritual things in where the tens of thousands may stumble upon them and some of them anyhow, be snatched up almost unaware into God's lap.

No reading session can be spent entirely on the light or frivolous, without our having something to answer to before God. Part of it, at least, should be given to reading about the things of God. First of all, the Bible. God isn't going to stand for weasel answers to cover up our neglect of His own book. We must be earnest and persistent about getting in a little of the Holy Book every day, preferably in the New Testament. The new translations that are now coming out leave us little excuse for saying that a lot of it is too tough going; and a book like Margaret Mohr's "Enjoying the New Testament" gives us even less excuse, for, believe it or not, it is possible to enjoy... yes, that's the word, enjoy... the Bible. I've met some people who found that out, and they wanted to "kick themselves" for having been so "dumb" before.

The Lives of the Saints, too, are a lot easier reading than they used to be. Writers like Gibson, Martindale, Yeo, Hollis, have mastered the best devices of modern scholarship and writing, and have used them to tell their lives in a way that will catch modern people. See for yourself. If you haven't already: Gibson's "The Secrets of the Saints," Martindale's "The Lives of St. Alayubus Gassaga," Yeo's "St. Francis Xavier," Hollis's "Ignatius Loyola." For reading about Our Lord and Our Lady (and shouldn't we all?) Franz William's two books are admirable: "Life of Jesus Christ in the Land of Israel and Among His People," and "Mary the Mother of Jesus." There is special interest in the wealth of detail which the author supplies about places, people, and social customs in Christ's time.

For spiritual guidance the following are especially helpful: "Lent," by Hilary Pepler; "My Father's Will," by Francis J. McCarraig; "The Inner Life of the Catholic," by Archbishop Goodier; "A Primer of Prayer," by Joseph McSorley; "Prayer for All Times," by Pierre Charles; "Difficulties in Mental Prayer," by Eugene Boylan; "Introduction to the Devout Life," by St. Francis de Sales; "The Liturgy of the Church," by Virgil Michel; "The Meaning of the Mass," by Paul Bussard; "Toward Loving the Passions," by C. C. Martindale.

Let's read one or two of these during Lent, alongside of our Bible, and we shall be laying up "treasures in heaven."

We All Have Pull in Heaven

By Rev. Richard Glaser

I knew the Governor, so I wrote him direct for a legitimate personal favor?

I knew the Governor, so I wrote her direct for a legitimate personal favor? I knew she therefore had honorable influence with him. So I wrote her to plead my cause with her son.

I knew, too, an old family servant whom the Governor had pensioned for life for services worthily rendered. So I wrote him to say a word in my behalf.

No, the Governor alone could grant my request and, perhaps, my plea to him would have been all-sufficient. But it couldn't hurt to use all legitimate "pull" in his mansion. It seemed wise. I did it.

God alone can provide for the needs of His creatures, so every Catholic prays to Him first, in adoration and supplication. But in our Father's house there is Mary whom He honored above all His creatures by inviting her to become the mother of His Divine Son; and at whose request, Christ performed His first earthly miracle in Cana of Galilee.

In our Father's house there are the Saints — servants of God who are pensioned for eternity for services worthily rendered.

Mary, His Mother and ours! The Saints, His brothers and sisters, and ours.

Pull in Heaven? Why it's tremendous! It's there waiting for us, if we but ask. To us Catholics it would seem wasteful, it would seem unrenounceable, it would seem downright nonsense not to use all possible heavenly pull to back up our requests to God Almighty.

"Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us!" "All ye holy Saints of God, pray for us!"

There is equally sound logic behind every Catholic belief and practice. Our purpose in publishing these articles here each week is not necessarily to persuade readers that our beliefs are right, but rather to persuade them that they are not unreasonable, not superstitious, not evil.

It is only by treating each other with mutual understanding and trust that democracy can be made to work in our community, our country, our world.

The Library Cavalade

Blessed Bard

By John O'Connor

This coming Thursday is the feast of Thomas Aquinas, patron of the schools and Doctor of the Church. Thomas' interests were wide; his talents diverse, his activities many. And his life was devoted entirely to his Savior.

We have heard that he "taught Aristotle"; that he was one of the ablest controversialists of all time. And yet this huge Dominican, the genius of the highest of sciences and humblest friar of the monastic life so loved his God that his heart, filled to overflowing with adoration and joy, cried out in song in hymns of praise to his Redeemer.

For Thomas was a poet as well. In his major works he was devoted to reason and revelation. Writing solely of the things of the spirit and the reason that distinguishes man from beast, Thomas still had time to express emotion and adoration in terms of measured grace. And Gilbert Chesterton, himself a poet, points out that this was characteristic of the age in which Aquinas lived. Talents were not narrowed to one field.

All sanctity is courtesy, and his sacred poetry was really a secretion; like a pearl in a very tightly closed oyster. He may have written more of it than we know; but part of it came into public use through the particular circumstance of his being asked to compose the Office for the Feast of Corpus Christi; a festival first established after the controversy to which he had contributed, in the mural he laid on the altar. It does certainly reveal an entirely different side of his genius; and it certainly was genius. As a rule he was an eminently practical prose writer. He maintained controversy with an eye on only two qualities: clarity and courtesy. And he maintained these because they were entirely practical qualities; affecting the probabilities of conversion. But the composer of the Corpus Christi service was not merely what even the wild and woolly would call a poet; he was what the most fastidious would call an artist. His double function recalls the double activity of some great Renaissance craftsmen, like Michelangelo or Leonardo da Vinci, who would work on the outer wall, planning and rebuilding the architecture of the city; and then return into the inner chamber, to carve or model some cup or chalice for a

reliquary. The Corpus Christi office is like some old musical instrument, quaintly and carefully inlaid with many colored stones and metals; the author has gathered remote texts about pasture and fruition like rare herbs; there is a notable lack of the loud and the obvious in the harmony; the whole is strung with two strong Latin lyrics.

It must be stressed that Thomas wrote his hymns when hymn writing was at its peak. The Sanctus and the Benedictus were both written between 1150 and 1160. And unlike the poet or the usual composer of hymns, Thomas had an incredibly difficult problem: he had to convey his burning love not alone in a metrical manner but he had to give the exact theological meaning to every word when dealing with the Blessed Sacrament lest he slip away from the orthodox toward the heretical.

A portion of one of his works, the Festum Regis, is used in many church services, particularly at Benediction. Another is the famous one beginning: Adore te devote, homo Dei.

"Hidden God, devoutly I adore Thee Truly present underneath these veils; All my heart adores Thee before Thee, since all before Thee melts and falls.

Not to sight, or taste, or touch by creed, Hearing only do we trust in cure; I believe, for God the Son hath said: Word of truth that ever shall endure.

Though I look not on Thee, Thou, my Lord, and thee, my God, I call: Make me now and may believe thy promise, Hope in Thee, and have Thee over all."

March Mission Intention: New York — (NY) — Remembrance for "The Missions Which Have Suffered Most From the War" is the mission intention of His Holiness Pope Pius XII for the month of March. It has been announced here by Most Rev. Thomas J. McDonnell, National Director of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

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