

RENEWING FAMILY FAITH

Why Catholic/Life in Christ/11.On Earthly Goods, Love for the Poor, and Work

We Believe

We Celebrate

We Live

We Pray

OUR STORY

St. Thomas More

St. Thomas More didn't seem to do "holy" things. He was a most cheerful man who enjoyed having friends visit him in his house. He had lots of friends who came from many countries to stay with him. He was the Lord Chancellor of England, the man with the most power after the king.

But Thomas was unhappy at having to spend so much time at court. He never thought that all the outward display of learning, wealth, or power was what really mattered, though he had all of these things himself. He saw that there was a lot of dishonesty in the court, and his friend Erasmus told him that he ought not to have anything to do with politics for this reason. But Thomas wrote back, "If you cannot deal with vices as you would like to do, by getting people to stop them altogether, that is no reason for turning your back on them; you must handle everything as gently as you can, and what you cannot put right, you must try to make as little wrong as possible."

King Henry wanted to make himself the head of the Church so that he could decide

Continued on the back...



Courtesy The Catholic Community Forum

St. Thomas More

Two Paths

A television documentary 'Affluenza' begins, like a soap opera, with background organ music. A doctor is examining a woman whose symptoms include a terrible emptiness that hasn't been relieved by a new car, a new house, a boat, or a recent raise. As the organ music swells, the doctor announces: 'Affluenza!'

"After this mock opening, psychologist Jessie O'Neill, once a victim of runaway materialism who now specializes in its treatment, tells viewers that affluenza can make a factory worker spend a chunk of every paycheck on the lottery, a corporate executive see little of his family in order to earn eight million dollars instead of seven million dollars a year, a secretary use food money on fashion sales, or a teenager steal for a pair of sneakers. Affluenza can also show up in more subtle ways:

- Having little life outside of work
- Being preoccupied with your external appearance
- Feeling unfulfilled despite having many things
- Imagining that a new outfit, another vacation, or renovating the house will make you happy

"In truth, none of us is immune to the seduction of trying to slake what is really a spiritual thirst with things that money can buy, though doing so is like drinking salt water from the sea. It turns immediate gratification into a life-threatening condition.

"A far different path is the life of faith. To believe in Jesus is to trust him as Savior and follow him as Lord. That puts us on a quest entirely different than that of acquiring things, because Jesus wants to transform our purpose in life from one of getting to one of giving. When that happens, material possessions take on a new meaning. Paradoxically, they mean less and more at the same time. They mean less because they no longer have a possessive hold on us, and are no longer seen as necessary to satisfy our heart's desire. But they also mean more, because the eyes of faith, seeing their true value, can honor them as blessings entrusted to us by their rightful owner, who wants them to be used in ways that accomplish his purposes.

"Following Jesus places us sharply at odds with prevailing values."

Reflect

From Arthur Simon, *How Much Is Enough? Hungering for God in An Affluent Culture*, Baker Books

- What are some sources of strength for you as you move against the cultural stream?
- Who or what encourages you most in your faith life?

BLESSINGS

O Lord, baptize our hearts into a sense of the needs and conditions of all.

George Fox, 17th Century

Our Story

Continued from the front...

what was right and wrong. Thomas could have agreed with him, but he thought that the king was doing wrong, so he resigned. The king tried to make Thomas agree with him, promising him all sorts of rewards, but Thomas could not do that. Therefore, the king ordered Thomas to be beheaded. Just before he died, he said to the onlookers, "I die the king's good servant, but God's first."

Kate Dooley, O.P.

TABLE TALK

- How is your study or work part of God's ongoing creation? How does what you do reflect gospel values?
- What satisfaction do you derive from your study or work?

Pondering the Word

"For the Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost."

Luke 19:10

Who are the lost? Reflect on Jesus seeking and saving the lost.



What am I looking for in someone I want to date?

How can I learn to relate well with someone I'm interested in?

Courtesy Rainbow's End Youth Services

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PARENTING

Common Good

Public life is not merely an option for those who feel drawn to it, but an arena into which God calls us. We are to show hospitality to the stranger as if to God. For Jesus, who identified himself with the hungry and the prisoner, the stranger is one of those who suffer most, who is among the needy of our society. It is through the stranger that we



know and serve God. "How does God's love abide in anyone who has the world's goods and sees a brother or sister in need and yet refuses help?" (See 1 John 3:17.) We are not first individuals who choose to come together to form society, but interdependent social beings whose individuality emerges in relationship to others. Jesus' "kingdom" envisions a community working for justice, peace, and love by establishing a civic life accountable to people's needs.

For a Christian, it is important to live this vision of the kingdom. For parents, it is a challenge to teach this common good vision to their children.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Doing Good

One barrier in this task for the common good is the sharp distinction we make between public and private life. Individualism is stressed more than public responsibility today. But persons who serve the common good need to love the world. When we love something, we take it seriously. God loved the world enough to send his Son. That love for the world continues to be expressed through the efforts of God's people.

Share your vision for the common good by listing groups and organizations that work for the common good, including those in your local area. Plan on using your time and gifts in public service for the common good. Share how you see this reflecting your faith.

"Work can be a means of sanctification and a way of animating earthly realities with the Spirit of Christ."

Explore the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. See paragraphs 2427-2428.

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.

Alfred North Whitehead