

THOMAS MORE NEWSLETTER

SOCIAL ACTION GROUP

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Editorial
Issue
IDENTIFICATION



**FAITH!
AND!
ACTION!**

We need **FAITH**. We need **ACTION**. We need a bond between these two to keep each of them authentic.

The reason the Thomas More Centre exists, particularly in its young people aspect, is because those who make it up have received a tap on the shoulder from the Lord, and the Lord has said "FAITH AND ACTION", each word in caps.

It's easy to hear the Lord say these emphatic words: listen to John Paul II! Does he write on faith alone, or on works alone? No.

The "why" of the Thomas More Centre had its historical beginnings in the 1930s with a young man named Bob Santamaria. For him the "AND" in "Faith AND Action" is like a triple carbon bond, not a weak, watery hydrogen bond which gives up when the heat is on. Faith AND action together.

This month we focus on the need to have **ACTION** which has faith as its yeast, and **FAITH** which is not dead but expresses its vitality in action.

You are invited to join us watching Lord or the Rings under the stars and to be a star on our soccer team.

Welcome to all those who are new to the Thomas More Social Action Scene.

Michael Casanova

Catholic Social Teachings APPLICATION

Discussion Questions

1. What advantages are there in having good works infused with faith?
2. What is wrong with faith that doesn't move into action?
3. Should faith dabble in politics or economics, or mind its own business?
4. What is John Paul II's attitude to FAITH AND ACTION?

TMSAG meetings, March.

Hawthorn
Tues 4, 7:45 pm
Corner House - 182
Power St, Hawthorn

Albury
Wed 5, after Ash Wed
evening Mass
St Pat's, Albury

Ballarat
phone Anthony,
9326 5757

Flinders
Wed 26, 7:30 pm
Our Lady's Parish
Hall
1 Foote St,
Dromana

University Groups:
Monash;
Deakin;
La Trobe;
Melbourne;
phone Rosy, 9326 5757

ACU Patrick
phone Pat, 9326 5757

Preston
Wed 18, 7:30 pm
St Raphael's Pres,
17 Hardy St

Werribee
Fri 28, 7.30pm
35 Nangiloc Crescent,
Werribee

For further details, phone 9326 5757

Catholic Social Teachings READINGS

We need both faith and action.

We know we need faith. Council of Trent said faith is the beginning, root and foundation of all justification. Faith and understanding is essential for acting rightly. For us, faith and the Church become "the yeast that leavens the entire loaf of the temporal order." (Ecclesia in Oceania, Nov 2001, 43) Without this yeast, some other yeast will leaven our actions and we may end up with sour dough, and not the wholesome type from health food stores. Without faith, our sincere compassion for drug addicts, for instance, may turn to the mistake of injecting rooms.

We know too that we need action. At least we know this if we are listening correctly to the Scriptures, to the lives of the saints, to the Pope:

"It is the fundamental call of lay people to renew the temporal order in all its many elements ..."
Ecclesia in Oceania, Nov 2001, 43

"Faith without action is useless."

John Paul's faith is unquestionable. Look at his faith. It is accompanied by an active, authentic solidarity with all of humanity. Note the number of encyclicals he has written, not on faith alone, but also on the need to transform the social order. If he, whose primary role concerns strengthening the brethren in the faith, puts so much effort into social issues, how much more should we be fruitful in social action, whose primary role is to transform the temporal order?

"A Christian community is never meant to be just a comfortable place for its members. (Ecclesia in Oceania, Nov 2001, 13)

We are familiar with the Letter of St James, which says that faith without works is dead. Do you know that James also says, "You believe in the one God – that is credible enough, but even the demons have the same belief, and they tremble with fear. Fool! Would you not like to know that faith without deeds is useless?" (James 2:19-20)

Would you like your faith to be living, authentic? There are two seas in Israel. The first is the Sea of Galilee. Water flows into it, and water flows out again, and this sea is full of life. The second is the Dead Sea. No water flows out of it.

So it is with FAITH and ACTION. Only those whose faith has not only an inlet but also an outlet of faith-filled action have the living faith their vocation calls them to, rather than a faith that is useless.

Pearls of Wisdom from Thomas More Summer School 2003

*beatitudes are
"certain excellent works of virtue
under the impulse
of the Holy Spirit
whereby we approach the goal
of eternal happiness
and have a foretaste of it
even in this life"*

*St. Thomas Aquinas, I-II, q.68, a.1.
Fr Withoos, "Beatitudes and Penance"*

*we need
action
formation
as well as
faith
formation*

**Claudio Betti, Italy,
"Transforming
the World"**



Catholic Social ACTION

- Defence of the basic right to life from conception to natural death;
- promotion of the family;
- liberation of people from modern forms of slavery (drug abuse and prostitution)...;

(Vatican's *Doctrinal Note on some questions regarding the participation of Catholics in political life*, Jan 2003)

If we are committed to these things, then to keep our faith alive and fruitful we need: A) regular personal prayer; B) personal action in response to the needs of people around us; C) comradery and teamwork in FAITH AND ACTION. Faith that is to be alive with effective action needs company ("Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in their midst.").

Some people originally feel the "FAITH" aspect of their call more ("FAITH and action"). Others originally feel the "ACTION" side more ("faith and ACTION"). Yet all are called to "FAITH AND ACTION", because there is only one caller – the Lord.

We have begun our Thomas More Social Action Groups to answer this call to FAITH AND ACTION. In our Thomas More Social Action Groups we want to emphasise the whole call. Thomas More Social Action Groups are for young people (Approx 18 to 35) who have felt prompted by a living faith to the actions of faith, and we would love the company of others in living our "FAITH AND ACTION" calling.

If you are not a member, why not join? If you like, we can come over and meet at a time convenient to you, to talk about Faith, Action, and the Thomas More Social Action Groups over coffee – our shout! Ask for Anthony, Rosy or Michael, 9326 5757.

Action for March: Peace overseas, peace at home.

This year we will among other things be involved in coordinated campaigns to defend life (Victoria's embryo stem cell inquiry), create an economy at the service of the human person (promoting a bank inquiry, publicising research on family breakdown.)

But to start the year, we focus on peace.

We are called to pray for a peaceful resolution of

the Iraq situation, and Archbishop Hart has provided us with a prayer (page 5).

We are called to be peacemakers at home too – how can our prayers for Iraq be genuine if we fail to lift a finger to alleviate troubles outside our own door? What concrete action can you take to reduce someone's sense of isolation? Visit someone in a nursing home? Help out on a soup-van?

Moonlight Cinema – March 8th The Lord of the Rings: Two Towers

Last year a group of us went to see Lord of the Rings at the Botanic Gardens. It was excellent: good movie, food and drink, bats flying around adding to the atmosphere. If you would like to join us this year, here are the details:

**Royal Botanic Gardens Melbourne (Enter via D-Gate Birdwood Ave, South Yarra);
Adults \$14; Concession \$9.50; Tickets on sale from 7:00 pm or book through Ticketek or online www.moonlight.com.au**



This is the last show for the season so expect large queues. Meet at 6:45pm at D-Gate. BYO assorted food, drinks, blankets, picnic rugs, pillows etc.

"Melbourne Catholic Soccer League"

Following last year's battles on the soccer field between Thomas More and Corpus Christi, a new soccer league has been formed, with the support of Archbishop Hart. There are four teams: Corpus Christi seminarians; Catholic Youth Ministry; Yarra Theological Union; and Thomas More (us!).

This is a great way to build friendships and bring people into the circle of faith. There is still time to join. **WE NEED YOU!!!!** Final date for all players to be paid in full (\$20 to cover jumpers and costs) is the close of business, March 3rd, 2003.

The first two playing dates have been organised:
March 9th: 1.30pm Thomas More Vs YTU; 3.30pm Corpus Christi Vs CYM
April 6th: 1.30pm YTU vs. CYM; 3.30 Corpus Christi Vs Thomas More

THOMAS MORE SOCIAL ACTION GROUPS: MEMBERS AND MEETINGS

Members commit to

- A) **FAITH:** personal prayer;
B) **ACTION:** at least one hour of faith inspired action between group meetings;
- C) **SOLIDARITY:** friendship and support for other TMSAG members, because solidarity spreads... if it starts at home.

Meetings

Our groups meet at least once a month and follow roughly the following format:

- | | | |
|----|-----------------|---|
| 1. | Fifteen minutes | Prayer (eg. reflection on a Gospel passage, or the Rosary) |
| 2. | Fifteen minutes | Formation |
| 3. | Fifteen minutes | Discussion of social issue and Catholic Social Teachings |
| 4. | Thirty minutes | Coffee and Action Planning |

Our monthly newsletter provides material for our meetings and our groups will often have extra material to make action easier and more powerful.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Christ our King!
Help us now to come together in Your name –
To think like You, To work with You,
To pray through You, To live in You,
To give You all our strength and all our time.
May Your kingdom come –
In our homes, our neighbourhood and nation,
In our places of learning, labour, and leisure.

Help us to make You better known and loved and served in all Australia.
May our souls remain in Your grace today,
To face and win over Your enemies
With cheerfulness and courage. Amen.
Hail Mary...
Mary, Help of Christians, Queen of Australia,
Teach us to be loyal to your Son.
St Thomas More, pray for us.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, Christ our King!
Teach us to be generous –
To serve You as You deserve to be served,
To give and not to count the cost,
To fight and not to heed the wounds,
To work and not to seek for rest,
To spend our selves and not to seek reward

Save the knowledge that we do Your holy will.
Hail Mary...
Mary, Help of Christians, True disciple of the Lord,
Teach us to be loyal to your Son.
St Joseph, Patron of Workers, pray for us.
St Thomas More, pray for us.

OUR FIVE TMC PRIMACIES

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Defence of the human person
from conception to natural death | 2. Promotion of the family
the central unit of societies |
| 4. Commitment to the common good
the essence of nationhood | 3. Decentralisation
of government, business, population |
| 5. Proposal of Judaeo-Christian values
so Australian civic life may be based upon an authentic understanding of man | |

Thomas More Social Action Group Newsletter

Editor: M Casanova. Sub-Editors: R de Castella, C Sheehan, A Cappello, L McCormick.

If you are interested in knowing more about the work of the TMSAGs please call the Thomas More Centre on 9326 5757; email: thomasmore@newsweekly.com.au
Hard copies of the Newsletter are also available – simply call the Thomas More Centre.

Other journals available from the Thomas More Centre

are: AD2000, News Weekly and the Thomas More Bulletin.
Please call the Thomas More Centre for subscription details.

PLEASE NOTE: IN ORDER TO CONTINUE THIS WORK THE THOMAS MORE CENTRE WELCOMES DONATIONS- C/O The Director 582 Queensberry St. North Melbourne 3051

ARCHBISHOPS HART AND PELL ON WAR AND PEACE

To: All Melb Archdiocese Subject: Archbishop Hart's request for a Novena for Peace

Hello everyone.

Today Claudio Betti from the Sant'Egidio Community in Rome spoke at the Spirituality in the Workplace lecture at the Thomas Carr Centre about peace in this age of terrorism. His presentation has inspired this novena to pray for peace, for as he stated, "Only prayer can assist us for a miracle is needed to prevent this war from eventuating."

This prayer, written today by His Grace, Archbishop Hart, reflects the urgency of the situation in Iraq, as well as having faith that for the Lord, nothing is impossible. The world needs this miracle - please faithfully pray this prayer for nine days commencing on Sunday 16th February.

Forward this prayer to your friends.

God bless, Jo

PRAYER FOR PEACE

Lord, we thank you for your gifts to us. We are threatened by the possibility of war and terrorism. Grant to the leaders of nations a readiness to work for a just and peaceful settlement to the tensions in the Middle East and especially in Iraq.

Guide our minds and hearts to treat each other with dignity and respect as we work for peace in the world and in our country, Australia. Help us to value and conserve peace as a reality. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

+Archbishop Denis Hart, 14th February, 2003.

The gospel for a just war

Containment of Iraq is justified, but more evidence is needed for an attack, argues Catholic Archbishop of Sydney George Pell.

IN Matthew's gospel we read that when his opponents tried to trick Jesus on matters of tax, he replied "render to Caesar what belongs to Caesar - and to God what belongs to God".

Our elected Government decides when Australia goes to war, one of its most serious responsibilities. Decisions about war belong to Caesar, not the church. What might Christian perspectives have to offer Caesar?

The teaching in the New Testament has an emphasis on loving, forgiving enemies and a special blessing for peacemakers. But the legitimacy of political authority is also acknowledged and the duty to repress evildoers. There are real tensions here.

Many of the persecuted Christian minority in the pagan Roman Empire were pacifists, an easier position when pagan armies defended the borders and maintained internal order. The Christian position then was like that of those Australians today who are invariably anti-American, while benefiting from the American peace achieved over the past 60 years. A world without the American superpower would be much more expensive and dangerous for Australians.

The theory of a just war, first spelt out by St Augustine in 5th-century North Africa, has been in continual development since then, with politicians and military thinkers, sometimes more than theologians, wrestling with the basic Augustinian requirement that a just war required a just cause, legitimate authority and right intention.

Today, just war theory canvasses what activities are legitimate in wartime as well as the criteria necessary to go to war, where three other preconditions are often added. Going to war should be a last resort, waged with the probability of success, and should not produce still greater evils.

In 1994, the Catholic Catechism limited the legitimate use of military force to defence against aggression. This did not deal with the possibility of military intervention against ethnic cleansing, terrorism and guerrilla warfare. A significant prudential challenge now comes from the necessity of impeding terrorist networks' access to weapons of mass destruction produced by rogue states.

Have the US, Britain and Australia given sufficient

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cause according to such an updated list of criteria for a just war? Not yet. Our leaders have yet to give us clear evidence of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction and terrorist links.

President George W. Bush is threatening a pre-emptive strike by the allies, with or without the UN's sanction, to prevent possible future attacks caused or abetted by Iraq.

A unilateral pre-emptive strike, without international sanction, would be a two-edged sword, a dangerous doctrine, destabilising the international order. We are told inaction could be more dangerous, but clearer evidence of this is necessary.

The US has traditionally opposed pre-emptive strikes since 1837, when the British navy seized the US ship *Caroline* and sent it over the Niagara Falls, because it was deemed a threat to British interests through its support for Canadian rebels.

Daniel Webster, then US secretary of state, stated that pre-emptive action could only be justified where there was "a necessity of self-defence, instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment of deliberation". This was a simpler age.

Many of us remember the photos of the Soviet missile silos in the Cuban crisis in 1962. Similar evidence would now seem to be necessary, demonstrating that Iraq is aiding Muslim terrorists or that it is producing or stockpiling weapons of mass destruction; that it has not disarmed. The evidence Colin Powell will produce at the Security Council this week will be crucial.

Hussein is a tyrant to his own people, an oppressor of the Kurdish minority who has used weapons of mass destruction against Iran and the Kurds. He has defied for 12 years the 1991 UN peace condition that he disarm. It is claimed Hussein pays financial subsidies to Palestinian suicide bombers, and until recently subsidised the Abu Nidal terrorist group. A branch of al-Qaida is fighting a guerilla war

against Hussein's enemies, the Kurds, in northern Iraq. Experts insist there is much more evidence. Enough of this should be made available.

Another important criterion for the just war is that non-combatants should not be harmed.

The 20th century saw a terrible deterioration here. In World War I civilian casualties were 5 per cent and in World War II 50 per cent. In Vietnam, civilian casualties rose again to 60 or 70 per cent. An overwhelming imperative for the allies must be to avoid civilian casualties in Iraq.

Due process is always important in Australian courts and due process is important internationally. This means working through the UN, an imperfect instrument of conflicting national interests, where many nations have poor human rights records. But the UN is all we have.

Important democracies like France and Germany remain unconvinced, despite the fact that Hussein has defied 17 UN resolutions and that resolution 678 of 1990 authorising the use of military force still stands. September 11 and Bali remain grim warnings.

While international support cannot decide the morality of invading Iraq, legitimate moral authority is one criterion for a just war. More public evidence is needed to demonstrate that the allied cause is just and to obtain Security Council backing.

Even people of good will who agree on the just war criteria will differ sometimes in their practical conclusions. Governments decide, but citizens should debate the morality of their decisions.

To my mind, it is morally justifiable for the Australian navy to enforce the embargo on Iraq and for Australian troops to pressure the Iraq dictator to comply with the UN peace conditions he accepted in 1991. These are honourable activities. But the public evidence is as yet insufficient to justify going to war, especially without the backing of the UN Security Council.

The Australian, Tues 4 Feb, 2003

A PRAYER FROM ST THOMAS MORE

Lord, grant me a holy heart
that sees what is true and pure
and is not frightened at the sight of sin
but creates order wherever it goes.

Grant me a heart
that knows nothing of boredom,
weeping and sighing.

Let me not be too concerned
with the bothersome thing I call "myself".

Lord, give me a sense of humour
and I will find happiness in life
and profit for others

-St Thomas More (1478-1535)