

Dear Parents,

Let me break this summary into three parts: Leadership, Law, and St. Thomas More.

### **Leadership:**

Your students are future leaders in society and in the Church. I recommended a book (see reference below) for them to read which is really addressed to priests, but has application to each of us in our work. As leaders, we individually must have higher standards for ourselves than we demand of those who work for us. One of my favorite lines in *The Soul of the Apostolate* is, “If the priest is a saint (the saying goes), the people will be fervent; if the priest is fervent, the people will be pious; if the priest is pious, the people will at least be decent. But if the priest is only decent, the people will be godless. The spiritual generation is always one degree less intense in its life than those who beget it in Christ.” (*The Soul of the Apostolate*, page 39, Dom Jean-Baptiste Chautard, O.C.S.O., 1946)

There is a second quote from the same source which I always return to and that deals with our obtaining knowledge. “...St. Bernard’s saying, to apostles: ‘If you are wise, you will be reservoirs and not channels.’...The channels let the water flow away, and do not retain a drop. But the reservoir is first filled, and then, without emptying itself, pours out its overflow, which is ever renewed, over the fields which it waters. How many there are devoted to works, who are never anything but channels, and retain nothing for themselves, but remain dry while trying to pass on life-giving grace to souls! ‘We have many channels in the Church today,’ St. Bernard added, sadly, ‘but very few reservoirs.’” (*The Soul of the Apostolate*, pages 52-53)

Additionally, throughout the course, we run into the Ten Universal Principles which the students have in their notebooks. <https://healingtheculture.org/print-resources/>. You will find the handout in the list, which also contains several other very useful handouts that we have used including the four levels of happiness and the four levels of love:

1. Principle of Non-Contradiction
2. Principle of Complete Explanation
3. Principle of Beneficence (The Golden Rule)
4. Principle of Objective Evidence
5. Principle of Non-Maleficence (The Silver Rule)
6. Principle of Consistent Ends and Means
7. Principle of Full Human Potential
8. Principle of Natural Rights
9. Principle of the Hierarchy of Rights
10. Principle of Limits to Freedom

### **Law:**

The bulk of the class was a continuation of our discussion of conscience and law. Remember that we must always follow our consciences AND we have the responsibility of properly forming them to do good and avoid evil. This week we will continue our discussion of this topic by dealing with the difficult situations of a doubtful conscience, erroneous conscience, etc. Within

the hierarchy of law, there is first, eternal law (creation itself), followed by Divine Law (e.g., 10 Commandments), natural law (natural physical law, e.g., gravity, and natural moral law, e.g., golden rule), then Human Law (civil and ecclesiastical law). We will conclude the discussion of law as we begin the Ten Commandments this coming Sunday.

### **Sir Thomas More and *A Man for All Seasons***

St. Thomas More is clearly the most famous Englishman saint (a significant admission since I work for The Cardinal Newman Society named after probably the second-most famous English saint). To illustrate the importance of conscience, we ended our last class by watching the trial of St. Thomas More from the popular play by **Robert Bolt, *A Man for All Seasons***.

The story is that Sir Thomas, the Lord Chancellor of all of England under King Henry VIII, was required to sign an oath promising to affirm that the King is the head of his newly founded Church of England and that he agreed with Henry's divorce and second marriage. Thomas remained silent, refusing to express his opinion. His silence was deemed to be opposition to the King and for that he was condemned to death.

We played the last 15 minutes of the movie version of the play, *A Man for all Seasons*. It is available in the parish library or online. The end of the play is his trial and a very clear understanding of the importance of conscience.

"I die a good servant, but God's first!" – St. Thomas More's dying words as he was about to be beheaded.

The Lairds