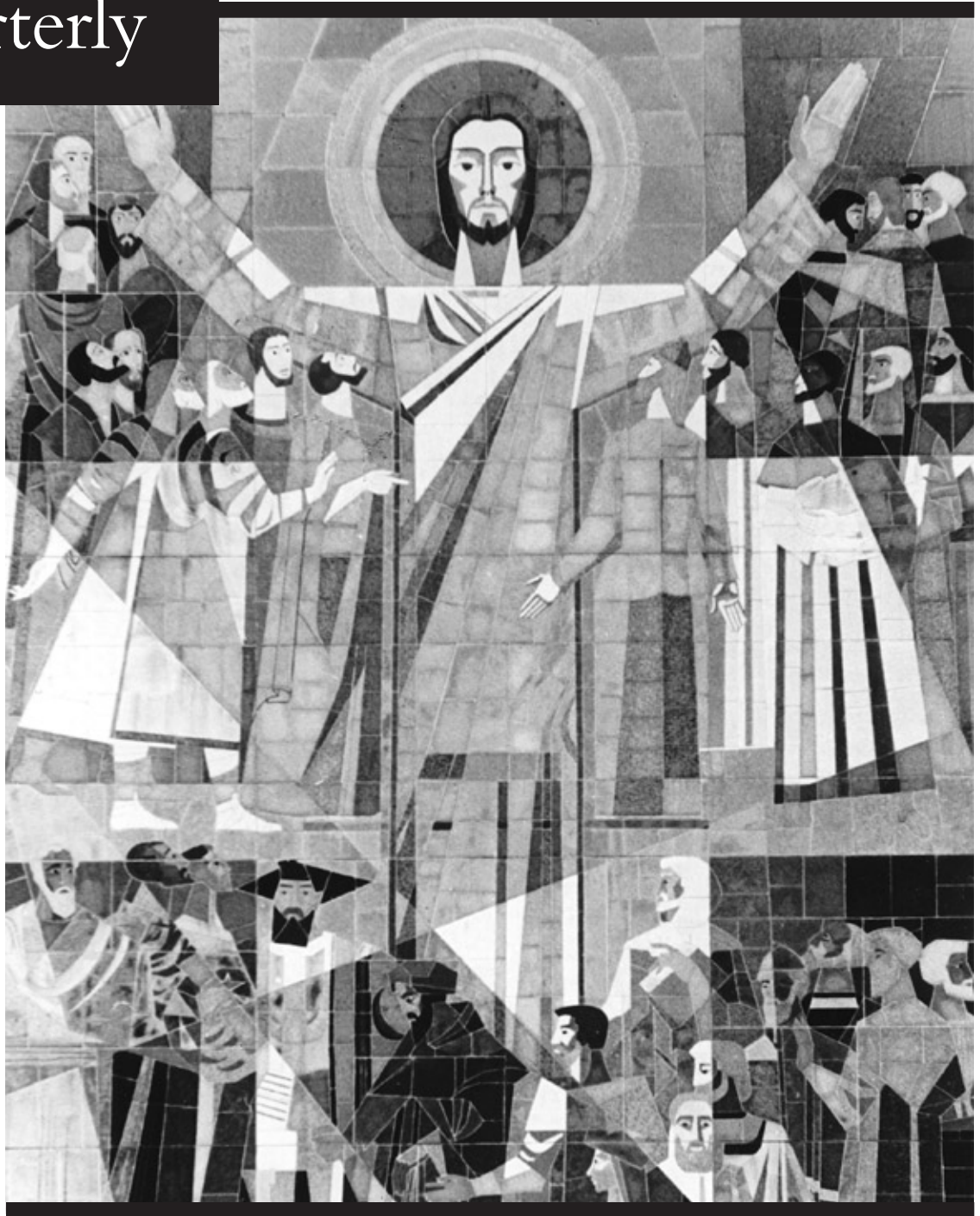


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Scholarship Inspired by the Holy Spirit,
in Service to the Church

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NOTE: The Archives of the University of Notre Dame would like to preserve and make available to scholars a complete run of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter. We presently have only issues that happen to have come to us with personal papers (e.g., of Sister Rose Eileen Masterman, CSC, or Ralph McInerney). If you have back issues that you would be willing to donate, please write to archives@nd.edu

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

Brendan Bradley came running to me an hour ago, excited to announce that “Mr. Rogers says we are all one piece.” (Brendan is four years old.) He meant the late Fred Rogers, TV host and the main man of his “Neighborhood.” It seems that Fred (“Mr. Rogers” to any of you under twelve) took today’s viewers on a tour of a doll factory. Evidently concerned that showing kids how life-size, spitting-image dolls could be assembled and disassembled, Fred hastened to emphasize that people are not like dolls. They are not to be taken apart. They are, he told Brendan and all the other well-battered tots watching, even born in one piece!

The Rogers’ tale is a good place to start this reflection on denying the Eucharist to pro-abortion politicians. Each one of us is and always was “one piece,” wholly and indivisibly me or you or Ralph McInerney—or John Kerry—since the moment we came to be in mother’s womb. We are our bodies. To assault even the tiniest of human bodies simply is to assault me or you or Ralph, or John Kerry. For anyone exercising public responsibility, being “personally opposed” is beside the point. To support permissive abortion laws as such is necessarily to choose and to will that a class of human beings be deprived the legal protection of life and limb that the rest of us enjoy. It is to intend that those people be exposed to lethal violence. Doing that is a grave injustice, no matter what else the politician hopes or wishes or wants—or “personally” believes.

And we are one Body, in Christ. Where the “pro-choice” politician is Catholic, and where he or she obstinately refuses to protect the least among us, the Church’s unity is threatened. The term is “scandal,” and it divides us where we should be united. Indeed, the “pro-choice” Catholic strikes at the principle of our unity—Peter; in this case, Pope John Paul II, who has taught authoritatively that abortion is always wrong, and that moral complicity in it threatens to deprive one of heaven.

Where a prominent public official thus attacks the Church’s unity, and sets an example which could be spiritually ruinous to the faithful, our shepherds are compelled to act. In my judgment, the question raised by Archbishop (then, Bishop of LaCrosse) Raymond Burke’s denial of the Eucharist to “pro-choice” politicians is not whether he acted prudently or in a canonically regular matter. (He did.) The question is why so few of his fellow bishops have followed his lead. ✠

Reflections on *Toward Ritual Transformation: Remembering Robert Hovda*

Articles contributed by Gabe Huck, Robert W. Hovda, Virgil C. Funk, J. Michael Joncas, Nathan D. Mitchell, James Savage, and John Foley. (Collegeville, Minnesota: A Pueblo Book published by The Liturgical Press, 2003).

Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ wrote this essay for young people who did not live through the era under discussion. Father Van Hove writes from the Saint Joseph and Saint Peter Seminary in the Diocese of Brownsville, TX.

In 1983 it was baffling to me when I learned that partisans of The National Association of Pastoral Musicians would object to the publication of Monsignor George A. Kelly's *The New Biblical Theorists* whose foreword was by René Laurentin.¹ Why would musicians be interested in the historical-critical method? However today, looking back, it is easy to see. What helped was the festschrift *Toward Ritual Transformation: Remembering Robert W. Hovda*, although the book is more conspicuous for what it does not say and for what is left out of this story. On page 48 the founder of The National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Virgil C. Funk, says:

We are challenged to maintain our roots in the biblical renewal. Central to my own understanding of the liturgy was my training in Sacred Scripture. The primary sources of revelation are the Scriptures and the liturgy. We will be challenged to expand our awareness of the Scriptures, of their meaning and interpretation based on modern techniques and the tradition of the Church.

But in 1983 it was unacceptable for Kelly to call into question those “modern techniques.” And is not Sacred Tradition presumed to be a primary source of revelation, especially since the definition of the Council of Trent?

Kelly, after conversations with Manuel Miguens and even Hans Urs von Balthasar,² criticized the use or misuse of the historical-critical method by Raymond E. Brown (1928–1998). Kelly insisted Brown did not admit the weaknesses of the method,

instead allowing it to have a virtual monopoly as a way to the truth about Scripture with implications therefore for later issues concerning the development of doctrine. This created doubt among ordinary people in the church since Brown did not write only for specialists.³ Kelly, too, decided to write for the non-specialist. He understood that ours is not a religion of the professors. Kelly asserted that what Brown called “science” was no more than unprovable theorizing, perhaps akin to sophisticated science fiction. It happened that some of these doctrinal topics were of interest to the liturgists as well.

Not all the connections were made in 1983. I had not reflected enough upon the classic significance of “lex orandi, lex credendi.” By then, to me the liturgists were technicians and choreographers rather than the pure scholars who studied texts in various languages. I distinguished “liturgists” from “liturgiologists.” In this reckoning, Robert Hovda was a liturgist,⁴ and Josef Andreas Jungmann was a liturgiologist. One was not serious, while the other was. True, the older generation of pastor-liturgists such as Martin B. Hellriegel in St. Louis had fostered a noble movement. But the next generation of liturgists presented themselves to us, when we were much younger than they and eagerly watching, with a peculiar affinity for fastidious liturgical aestheticism coupled with a deep hatred for the old rites and devotions.⁵ Their punctilious attention to aesthetic details, their hyper-sensitivity to “tassels and brocade,” often their demanding and petty nature, were well known. They seemed to have coalesced into a guild more interested in celebrational style and their own egos⁶ than in the symbolic language of our Catholic identity.⁷ Jokes were made about them—comparing them to terrorists. They knew how to shop for threads. Little did I know they had also shopped for doctrines.

When he wrote about the theorists—he refrained from calling them “scripture scholars”—Kelly specifically referred to the following points,

either doctrinal in nature or with strong doctrinal implications. These, he claimed, were the victims of a great divorce promoted by many Catholic exegetes, including Raymond Brown, who by a selected method⁸ had severed the classical union between Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition:

- The stories of Christ's birth are dubious history.
- Early Christians understood themselves as a renewed Israel, not immediately as a new Israel.
- We must nuance any statement which would have the historical Jesus institute the Church or the priesthood at the Last Supper.
- In the New Testament we are never told that the Eucharistic power was passed from the Twelve to missionary apostles to presbyter-bishops.
- Only in the third and fourth century can one take for granted that when "priests" are mentioned, ministers of the Eucharist are meant.
- The Twelve were neither missionaries nor bishops.
- Sacramental powers were given to the Christian Community in the persons of the Twelve.
- Presbyter-bishops described in the New Testament are not traceable "in any way" to the successors of the Twelve.
- The episcopate gradually emerged, but can be defended "as divinely established by Christ" only if one says it emerged under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not Christ.
- Peter cannot be looked upon as the Bishop of the early Roman Church community. Succession to his Church just fell to the Bishop of Rome, the city where Peter died. However, that concentration of authority produces, says Brown, "difficulties such as those we are now encountering within Catholicism."
- Vatican II was "biblically naive" when it called Catholic bishops successors of the Apostles.
- It is dangerous to assume that second century structures existed in the first century.⁹

But the liturgists, at least the ones most in fashion, had already separated themselves from their roots in Catholic dogma. To realize this took me quite a while. Perhaps here we have the real meaning of "ritual transformation"—the concoction of a new religion?¹⁰

The Liturgical Conference's "Liturgical Week" in August of 1969 in Milwaukee was more like collective madness than liturgy—I was there—yet this embarrassing history is passed over in silence. On page 8 in *Toward Ritual Transformation* we learn only that Robert Hovda, starting in 1965, was with The Liturgical Conference for fourteen years, and that the Liturgical Weeks continued into the 1970s. On the program in 1969 were Senator Wayne Morse of Oregon—who droned on and on one evening about antiwar politics—and The Black Panther Party. They were more the object of interest at this gathering about the liturgy than the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* which was still new at that moment and surely deserved wider study and appreciation.¹¹ The "social sanctification" theme developed by Gerald Ellard¹² and others in the 1940s and 1950s had become exaggerated and distorted by the 1960s. A confused notion of social justice and its relationship to the Catholic Mass was the product.¹³

The founder of The National Association of Pastoral Musicians, Virgil C. Funk¹⁴, says on page 31: "Without a basic celebrative model and a common experience, we learn by doing. *Lex orandi statuat legem credendi*: How we pray shapes what we believe. By our diverse singing, we believe in diversity of belief."

Diversity of belief? Isn't this what the Unitarians boast of? Isn't this what comprehensive Anglicanism means by "high, low, and broad"? In other words, for Funk, the connection between doctrinal orthodoxy and orthopraxis in the liturgy is explicitly and formally rejected. That the liturgy judges us, and that we do not judge the liturgy, is set aside in favor of an extreme novelty,¹⁵ a reversal of all we have known and done in the sacred liturgy. "Diversity of belief" represents the age-old contest between orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Any pretense at unity in the church is consequently annihilated. If there is no truth, then there is no heresy, echoing Karl Barth. On this question the liturgists of Catholic heritage seemed doomed in the 1970s to repeat the mistakes of the Liberal Protestants of the nineteenth century. As Kelly said years later and in another place, "Doctrinal purity and discipleship go together—injury to one weakens the other—hardly a desirable condition for the Mystical Body of Christ."¹⁶

Anglican writer Peter Toon put it well concerning

that rule of prayer, the “lex orandi”:

... as used by modern writers of the new mix-and-match liturgies the tag as a claim is true in the way they translate it only in so far as it tells us that what they pray is what they believe (which is usually a revisionist or progressivist form of Christianity). That is, they have written into their liturgies a revised form of the Christian Faith reflecting progressive thinking because that is where they are in terms of their own beliefs. Then what they pray is certainly what they believe. However, they ought not to claim that they speak for the whole Church: they speak only for themselves and their supporters.... What they really believe is *lex orandi statuat* (founds) *legem credendi*. And since they produce the *lex orandi* they also decide what is the *lex credendi*!¹⁷

Bingo. That explained why the liturgists preferred the speculations of Raymond Brown, harnessed to their agenda, rather than the dry and fixed formulations found in Denzinger-Schönmetzer or Neuner-Dupuis, the canons of the councils, the writings of the popes, or the revised liturgical books which flowed directly from The Second Vatican Council. Brown, who had achieved virtually untouchable celebrity status, could be used in a congenial way to justify their positions, or so it seemed, and the voices of resistance, such as those of Kelly and Miguens, or von Balthasar, were not to be admitted to the discussion.¹⁸ That they could be the best minds of our church did not seem to matter.

No one hints in *Toward Ritual Transformation* that at the end of his life Raymond Brown explicitly reconnected his work to its Catholic nature. He wrote that there was a harmony between Scripture and Tradition. Here is what he said in his *Introduction to the New Testament*:

Indeed, the subsequent role of the Spirit in human history, in the history of the church and its pronouncements, in the writings of the Fathers and theologians enters into a Tradition that embodies the postscriptural interpretation of the salvific action God described in Scripture. The Bible has unique importance because it contains both the narrative of the foundational salvific action of God and the basic interpretation of that action, but there can be subsequent normative interpretation of that action which is not found in Scripture. Thus for example, the raising from death to glory of all the faithful disciples of Christ is an interpretation of salvation re-

vealed in the NT; and although not found in Scripture, the doctrine of the Assumption of Mary can be seen by Roman Catholics as a particular application of that interpretation -- an interpretation developing from a late NT tendency visible in Luke and John to see Mary as a privileged disciple.

Footnote 25 on the same page adds:

Of course, in a wider sense Scripture itself is tradition, viz., the written tradition of Israel and of the early church.¹⁹

Luke Timothy Johnson, who published Brown’s obituary, maintained that Brown believed himself to be faithful to the Catholic Church. “For in an era when biblical scholarship increasingly turned toward the academy, Father Brown’s work, while meeting the highest scholarly standards, was nonetheless rendered as a service in and for the church.”²⁰ Brown called himself a centrist, whatever that might eventually mean to ecclesiastical history, and he said a quiet morning Mass all his priestly life, presumably according to the norms of the missal.

The same could not be said of Robert W. Hovda who said Mass in northern Virginia in the early 1970s. While a fleeting mention is made of the community known simply as Nova (p. 11), nothing is really said about it by Gabe Huck in *Toward Ritual Transformation*. Here are some particulars of what it was really like from an eye witness who in 2004 wrote the following for this essay:

When I was a teenager, my parents wanted to get us kids (me, my two younger brothers, and younger sister) involved in church. So in the very early seventies, they began taking us to an “alternative liturgy” community—a “floating parish” that met in several places, most often in the “cafetorium” (a school cafeteria with a stage at one end) of Joyce Kilmer Elementary School in suburban Virginia.

Certain moments in my memories of Nova stand out. One couple (I remember them as young, attractive, and always smiling) planned a liturgy at which the first reading was (I’m not making this up) the bestseller *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*. Yes, in its entirety. With slides of wheeling gulls against a sheet in the background, as the lights were darkened in the cafetorium. By the end of the forty-five minutes the first reading took, about half the congregation had left, including my family. This was a little much, even for Nova.

At another liturgy, designed after much prodding by a group of teenaged sons and daughters—the Nova people were very anxious for “youth” to “get involved”—the offertory song was the Rolling Stones’ “Street Fighting Man.” This, again, caused many to have a vague sense that something was not quite right, but the liturgy went ahead.

Another time, halfway through Litany of the Saints, the liturgy designers slightly anticipated the Vatican (to say the least) by invoking as “saints” Martin Luther King, Dorothy Day, Franz Fanon, and Thomas Merton. It’s been thirty years, and I wouldn’t swear it, but Malcolm X, Bobby Seale and Che Guevara might have been on the list. I dimly remember hearing of controversy among the lay planners of this particular service over whether to include the name of anyone who had advocated violence.

Most of the youngish-middle-aged couples who made up the congregation worked for the federal bureaucracy. Many had jobs in the Pentagon and Defense Department, even the CIA. You’d think that such Establishment types would be the last people to engage in liturgical experimentation. In fact, their iconoclasm did not extend to their jobs. I remember a Lenten service at which several members of the congregation were supposed to come forward to lay symbols of our worldly attachments at the foot of a large cross (with no corpus, of course). At the foot of the cross were reverently laid—to a chorus of approving murmurs—first a large image of a dollar bill, then an American flag.

Nova didn’t have a regular pastor; instead, several visiting priests performed Mass more or less regularly. An occasional celebrant was a Jesuit who taught at my high school in inner-city Washington. One of the regulars was Fr. Bob Hovda, a liturgist at the Liturgical Office of the Conference of Catholic Bishops who was originally from North Dakota.

Fr. Hovda suffered from a voice constriction for which no organic cause had been found. He was a slight man with thinning hair, an oval face, and a grey goatee. He usually spoke in a labored, choking way, as if he were forcing the words out at great cost of effort, with many painful silences as he struggled. When he said Mass, however, his voice boomed out, unexpectedly loud and strong. He was considered prickly, and was sometimes at odds with members—not necessarily over the church’s rules for liturgy, but over what we might call aesthetic correctness. For a baptism, for example, Fr. Hovda took great pains over an arrangement of an aged-copper basin with smooth rocks and a spray of dried reeds and ferns that graced a worn square wooden table, giving a Zen effect.

One of Fr. Hovda’s chief irritations for me was the length of the Kiss of Peace, which often turned into fifteen-minute socializing sessions, as members chatted and criss-crossed the room to greet friends. It was not uncommon for a Nova Mass to last two or three hours. The Nova wives took turns baking the bread for Communion. They knew it had to be unleavened, but they thought “leavening” meant yeast only. Irish soda bread,²¹ they felt, complied sufficiently with Church directives. Of course, at the end of the service, Fr. Hovda was required to consume a half loaf or more of the consecrated Host, which could not be stored like traditional wafers, both because of spoilage and because there was no tabernacle at Joyce Kilmer School. More serious for Fr. Hovda—a recovered alcoholic who regularly attended AA meetings—were those occasions when too much wine had been consecrated.

As a typically obtuse teenage boy in the early seventies, I was unaware of much of the larger context. I was unable to appreciate how much these stolid bureaucratic parental types were, or considered themselves to be, liturgical revolutionaries.

From the distance of time, and from bare descriptions of the *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* and Rolling Stones Masses, it is easy to imagine that these people were bent on deliberate outrage and provocation. What I remember is mostly solemn, self-important silliness and extreme naiveté on the part of the members. These were grownups who saw the holy Mass as a place to act like kids again, to recreate in the secular suburban sense of the term rather than the older and more authentic sense. And they were playing in a space that traditional authority had vacated. That is a coda for much of what happened in those years.”²²

The dark side of the liturgy establishment has yet to be attested to, and it will not be found in the pages of *Toward Ritual Transformation*. Hardly had the ink dried on the revised liturgical books produced by the church when a cadre of quasi- or semi-professionals—against the explicit teaching of *Sacrosanctum concilium* #22—bypassed those books, or interpreted them very loosely, in the name of their own higher law and purpose. Their liturgy was in open competition with the church’s liturgy.

This festschrift presents the narrow bright side and remains silent about the broader dark side of

Hovda and of the circle of which he was a member.²³ The “we always know more than the official church which has not yet caught up with us” liturgy establishment with its penchant for infidelity to norms and approved texts, and its barely suppressed disdain and contempt for any authority over the liturgy except its own, is at its most transparent in the festschrift.

Nathan Mitchell puts it this way: “Recent documents such as *Liturgiam authenticam*, *Built of Living Stones*, the revised *General Instruction of the Roman Missal 2000* are all, to one degree or another, troubling or tremendous (depending on your point of view). But none of them really deserves all the time, attention, and anxiety we give to them.”²⁴ Mitchell forgets that next to the New Testament itself, the liturgical texts have been the most sacred in Christianity, East and West, and that the implementing or regulating documents are the voice of the living church helping us to understand our prayer.

The issue of “who owns the liturgy” is not addressed. Nor is there any genuine apology²⁵ for the damage done to our church in the years when Hovda and his closest associates were most active—for the senseless iconoclasm, for the disobedience to religious authority and the undermining of church norms, for a “private interpretation” of the ecumenical council itself, for the subversion of the *General Instruction*, and for the liturgical injustice done to so many “Joe Sixpack” Catholics who never got from this establishment—parallel to the church and resembling an alternate church—what the real church wanted delivered to them. The self-appointed arbiters of the reform were liturgical highjackers who deprived ordinary parishioners—and bewildered pastors—of their right to the normative worship of their own church. Disrespectful of existing piety and custom, they were technicians and choreographers rather than the genuine scholars who studied and maintained a certain humility before texts and the mystery which is the church. Accordingly, their concern for orthodox doctrine, and for the doctrinal implications of their radical changes, was almost nil—or worse, their hostility to doctrinal orthodoxy was veiled beneath a gauze of rhetoric about liturgical renewal and the need for more change.

Without acknowledging reliable writers and

publications such as Richard J. Schuler and *Sacred Music* or *Adoremus*, or authors such as Denis Crovan,²⁶ or for that matter Joseph Ratzinger, we are introduced in *Ritual Transformation* to yesterday’s enthusiasts from what can only be called the aging, graying liturgical hippies who narcissistically celebrate each other’s stories. Hovda is reported to have said more than once that “he just didn’t have anything new to say.” [p. 11]. Rather, he had said too much already.

The impenitence of this party is clearest when they insist the church has not gone far enough yet and that the reform must cut even deeper.²⁷ They take no responsibility for their role in providing the background for those young people who today are asking for the return of the old rite of 1962 before in their estimation “everything went wrong.”²⁸ The reform of the reform would not be so urgent if we had been given the authentic reform in the first place. The failure of the reform, and the failure to implement it honestly,²⁹ must be attributed to someone, yet nowhere in the festschrift is there acknowledgment that anything “they” did might have been misguided. The implication is plain, however, that they wish they had won. The contributors to this festschrift nowhere express a robust optimism that they will have successors. The most they can now hope for is a certain pluralism or tolerance for their ideas which are already in place.

Not a few young American Catholics are openly and loudly calling for traditional liturgy. In the words of Anthony Dragani:

They are tired of being reminded that the Church is undergoing a process of tumultuous change. Constantly hearing guitars playing music written within the last two decades serves as a painful reminder that the Church of today is disassociated from its past. Instead, it is comforting for many students to hear the historical music of the Church, and perhaps get a whiff of incense, imagining that the Church of today is essentially the same as it was yesterday. We want to be reminded that the Church has a glorious liturgical legacy, which is our birthright as Catholics.³⁰

It was the protestantization and secularization of the Mass which drove the next generation to this conclusion, not *Sacrosanctum concilium*.³¹ Of course nowhere in this festschrift do we hear of Catherine

Pickstock, the British scholar who praises the Medieval Catholic Liturgy for its superiority.³² They are just not that erudite. Nor is it mentioned that in the United States “Living Stones” replaced the “Environment and Art in Catholic Worship” written chiefly by Robert Hovda.³³

Why did it take so many years finally to figure out that to focus on the assembly, the notion that the church is the people, soon excludes transcendence?³⁴ The obsessive slogan “we are the Body of Christ” of the Hovda era displaced the centrality of the Eucharistic Presence in worship. Simply put, it focused more on the people of God than on God Himself. People encircled around the Holy Table were locked in a closed circle, eventually worshipping each other. As soon as the liturgy was concluded in this system, the presence of Christ vanished because the people went home, so linked to the faith of the assembly was this presence. But we know Luther thought of all this long before Robert Hovda.³⁵ The abiding presence of Christ after Mass is a Catholic truth, and the youth of today are rediscovering adoration and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.³⁶

The contributors to the festschrift are aware of the trend among the younger generation. It is just that those practitioners who taught a whole generation to hate their own liturgical past and to replace it with the superior culture of “balloons, banners, and Wonder Bread,” disagree. Funk says “Some young people are naively longing for an imaginary ideal time before the reform experienced by their parents. This transformation has moved from singing that is fresh and new, to singing that is political, to singing that is downright offensive.”³⁷

I have worked with Catholic seminarians over the last few years. I would have to say that there is a drift toward the revival of the missal of 1962. The traditionalism espoused by certain sophisticated students is based on a felt preference and their own extensive reading, as well as on official assurances from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger³⁸ and Cardinal Francis Arinze. Students who are content with the missal of 1969 are in favor of a strict interpretation of the current *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*. The rediscovery of liturgical Latin—at least the revival of it in chant—during this new millennium seems imminent. My position is identical to that of Denis Crouan—use

the official books and interpret them intelligently, faithfully, and seriously.

An example of this was the installation in the St. Louis Cathedral of Archbishop Raymond L. Burke on January 26, 2004. The new rite does convey transcendence and beauty, if only we choose it.³⁹ Despite this, some seminarians and young people do not agree, and they continue to insist on a return to the missal of 1962.⁴⁰ But whether we choose the missal of 1962 or the missal of 1969, it is the church’s liturgy which should guide us, and we should not ever be at war with those books.⁴¹ Students have a right to their convictions on this question, but the liturgical establishment represented by the Hovda legacy would certainly do its best to undermine that right.⁴²

Youthful “traditionalism” is not confined to Catholics. Colleen Carroll recently pointed out that traditionalism and religious orthodoxy are increasingly popular among young Jews and Protestants, too. Often it is a healthy search for the heritage denied them by the “manufacturers of new liturgy.”⁴³

But Hovda called for radical changes in the opposite direction. “We know how much we owe to people who volunteered when no one else was around or stood up to offer their services, but we have relied far too long on volunteers, goodwill, private feelings of call, and rites of public commissioning or ordination to supply what only talent and training and time can supply. This means radical changes in recruitment, training, lifestyle, as well as qualifications not just for musicians but for all of our specialized ministries, including bishops and priests.”⁴⁴ One is tempted to ask, “How radical is radical?” Good Catholics have always accepted the ministry of weak and imperfect priests because Holy Orders is a gift of the Lord to His Church. Talent and training are secondary. Average Catholics worldwide, who know their catechism, would welcome a mediocre priest rather than have no priest at all to celebrate the Mass and to anoint the sick. We do not need a Hovda-style attack upon decent priests when he says “Clerics whose world is the ecclesiastical island, and who are therefore drained by its inconsequential demands, consumed by its spiritual narcissism, breathless from its ritual busy work, will never be able to preside in (or even to understand) the Sunday assembly which such a faith community must

have for its survival.”⁴⁵ Ritual busy work?

Hovda’s sacramental theology is disjunctive from our past rather than showing the “organic development and evolution” out of older forms requested by *Sacrosanctum concilium*. The real dogmatic core of the Catholic Mass is that it is the One Sacrifice offered by a priest *in persona Christi* and the ordinary means of grace for our salvation.⁴⁶ All of the mysto-poetry about “bringing our broken hearts to the assembly” is secondary and more or less the fabricated lingo of the liturgists. For them, the object of faith is displaced and actually reinvented. The vocabulary of Catholic piety is scrapped in favor of a much more protestant-friendly lexicon. From them, one hears little of Mary and the saints or the doctrine of mediation. This explains why some of them were so enthusiastic about new biblical theories such as “we must nuance any statement which would have the historical Jesus institute the church or the priesthood at the Last Supper.” Why? Because “we” do not believe in that any longer.

This is what Hovda thought about the Mass:

The rediscovery of initiation⁴⁷ as the root of all ministry tells us, as musicians and other ministers involved in the service of the churches, that we are finally beginning a very slow process of outgrowing that unspoken but implicit division of the Church into a gnostic elite of leaders with God-connections that are inaccessible to most and the majority of the faithful, who must experience the holy secondhand. That division was a temporary reversion, a bit of atavism in our history, but it lasted a long time. The great identification with Jesus Christ and with the priesthood of Jesus Christ is again, now, baptism and not holy orders. So the entire assembly is the primary minister in liturgy, and the variety of specialized ministries, which we are in the process of rediscovering again in our life as Church, are all in the service of the assembly, dependent in many ways on that assembly. Sacraments are no longer things that the priest brings to the rest of us but rather symbolic actions that we all do together. We need offices of ministry for the doing of them, to be sure, but they are our common action, with the different roles that a liturgical assembly requires.⁴⁸

Robert W. Hovda remained an adherent of the

Protestant Reformation. He entered the Catholic Church juridically, but did he really understand it or accept it doctrinally?⁴⁹ Perhaps he had no encouragement, or perhaps his seminary education was insufficient or ill-timed, or perhaps he made the wrong friends. He seems never to have grasped that the source of all our unity as Catholics is the covenantal and ecclesial offering, *in persona Christi*, of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, the central act of worship in the Roman Catholic Church, as Vatican II emphasized over and over again. This ancient doctrine has been brilliantly developed over more than fifty years by the great theologian Henri de Lubac, but Hovda never mentions him, nor does anyone else in this festschrift. There can be no eucharistic communion with those who, by a Lutheran rejection of the sacrificial office of the Catholic priesthood as it is defined by the Council of Trent, put the reality of the Sacrifice of the Mass in issue.

Nowhere in *Ritual Transformation* do we hear this kind of language. Robert Hovda may have been a technician of the liturgy, but his baptism-based understanding of the priesthood of all believers⁵⁰—the exaltation of the assembly’s role and what he called the “rediscovery of initiation”⁵¹—locates him within the Reformation’s tradition, not that of Trent or Vatican II. The idea that the words of consecration change the assembly, the minds and hearts of the believers into the Body of Christ, and not the bread and wine which remain only a symbol, is the genuine Protestant Principle.⁵²

Unlike Raymond Brown who at the end of his life began “connecting the dots” for his nonprofessional readers, Robert Hovda remained the offspring of the Reformation and he made no apparent effort toward such needed Catholic connections. ✠

FOOTNOTES

¹ George A. Kelly, *The New Biblical Theorists* (Ann Arbor: Servant Publications, 1983). It is noteworthy that Ralph Martin published *A Crisis of Truth: the Attack on Faith, Morality, and Mission in the Catholic Church* the previous year, 1982, also by Servant Press. In those bad days it was hard for orthodox writers to break into print either professionally or otherwise. This was never the case for Robert Hovda who wrote “The Amen Corner” for *Worship* during the last nine years of his life. He died in 1992 after forty-seven essays had been written. See John F. Baldovin, ed., *Robert Hovda, The Amen Corner* (Collegeville: A Pueblo Book published by The Liturgical Press, 1994). It took another nineteen years before the crisis in biblical studies was put into focus, this time by insiders. See Luke Timothy Johnson and William S. Kurz,

The Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship: a constructive conversation (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2002), esp. Kurz, 161–162. More narrowly responding to the abuse of method—and its entanglement with ideology in the recent fascination with the gnostic gospels—is Philip Jenkins, *Hidden Gospels: How the Search for Jesus Lost its Way* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2001). Compare also Roland E. Murphy, “What Is Catholic about Catholic Biblical Scholarship?,” *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 28, no. 3 (Fall 1998), 112–119.

² George A. Kelly, “A Wayward Turn in Biblical Theory,” address given at the Conference on the Bible and the Church, November 12, 1999. Online edition. Also in *Catholic Dossier* 6, no. 1, (January/February 2000), 38–42.

³ Raymond E. Brown’s little book *Biblical Reflections on Crises Facing the Church* (New York: Paulist Press, 1975) was a case of his stepping outside his field. He adopted a polemical tone and generated anxiety in orthodox Catholics who wished to see church doctrine defended rather than dismantled. Had Brown given sufficient assurances back then, he would have won over more friends.

⁴ Hovda himself preferred the expression “pastoral liturgist.” See Baldwin, *Hovda*, Preface by John F. Baldwin, vii.

⁵ The gratuitous attack upon the rosary in *Ritual Transformation*, 7–8, is tasteless. (Even more tasteless is the use of the “S” word on page 7.) One can only contrast it with the magisterial contribution to the subject of the Most Holy Rosary by Pope Paul VI in 1973 in *Marialis cultus*, as well as with the 2002 apostolic letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* of Pope John Paul II, with special reference to his historic addition of the Luminous Mysteries. On March 14, 2004, Pope John Paul II led an international rosary via television in connection with European University Day.

⁶ The unintended fallout from the Mass “versus populum” was the projection of the priest into the role of entertainer, facilitator, talk-show-host, lecturer, professor, or center of focus. In this system, the priest assumes an exaggerated visual importance—he and the people speak less to God and more to each other, making it impossible for the priest to carry out the demand in John 3: 30, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Today students who have read Klaus Gamber and Joseph Ratzinger are reconsidering the orientation of priest to altar. See also Letter of Jorge A. Cardinal Medina Estévez, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, Vatican City, to The Most Reverend David D. Foley, Bishop of Birmingham in Alabama, 25 September, 2000. Prot. No. 2086/00/L.

⁷ James F. Hitchcock’s *Recovery of the Sacred*, appearing in 1975 and reprinted in 1995, was ignored by this group. Recovery is well worth re-reading to get a sense of the liturgical crisis in the United States, even if some examples are dated.

⁸ Besides Manuel Miguens, not all Catholic exegetes agreed with Brown’s academic approach. Stanislaus Lyonnet and Ignace de la Potterie were two. For more on this question, see Johnson/ Kurz, *Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship*, passim.

⁹ In this connection let us ever remember the chilling words of the Anglican biblical scholar and translator, J.B. Phillips: “I do not write for scholars; they can look after themselves. For twenty-five years I have written for the ordinary man who is no theologian. Alas, today, he frequently gets the impression that the New Testament is no longer historically reliable. What triggered off my anger... against some of our ‘experts’ is this. A clergyman, old, retired, useless if you like, took his own life because his reading of the ‘new theology,’ and even some programs on television, finally drove him, in his loneliness and ill-health, to conclude that his own life’s work had been founded upon a lie. He felt that these highly qualified writers and speakers must know so much more than he that they must be right. Jesus Christ did not really rise from the dead and the New Testament, on which he had based his life and ministry, was no more than a bundle of myths.” J.B. Phillips, *The Ring of Truth*, Foreword (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 9.

¹⁰ C.S. Lewis once made a distinction between “thick” and “thin” religion. “When C.S. Lewis was converted from atheism, he shopped around in the

world’s religious supermarket and narrowed his choice down to Hinduism or Christianity. Religions are like soups, he said. Some, like consommé, are thin and clear (Unitarianism, Confucianism, modern Judaism); others, like minestrone, are thick and dark (paganism, ‘mystery religions’). Only Hinduism and Christianity are both ‘thin’ (philosophical) and ‘thick’ (sacramental and mysterious). But Hinduism is really two religions: ‘thick’ for the masses, ‘thin’ for the sages. Only Christianity is both.” Peter Kreeft, “Comparing Christianity & Hinduism,” *National Catholic Register* (May, 1987). Online edition. Hovda tried to collapse the “thick” into the “thin” and ended with a brand of American enthusiasm, Reformation-style.

¹¹ For more on the final Liturgical Week see Richard John Neuhaus, “What Happened to the Liturgical Movement?,” *Antiphon* 6, no. 2 (2001), 5–7.

¹² See entry for “Gerald Ellard” in *How Firm a Foundation: Voices of the Early Liturgical Movement*, compiled and introduced by Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ (Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, 1990), 109–112. Also James G. Knapp, “The Social Dimension of the Liturgy in the Writings of Gerald Ellard, SJ” (STL thesis, Regis College and The Toronto School of Theology, 1982).

¹³ Gabe Huck, “A Tree Planted by a Stream,” *Toward Ritual Transformation: Remembering Robert W. Hovda* (Collegeville: A Pueblo Book published by The Liturgical Press, 2003), 6.

¹⁴ Funk was trained by Eugene A. Walsh, SS (1911–1989). See Arthur Jones, “Funk—the Man Behind the Music,” *The National Catholic Reporter* (August 24, 2001), 4. Funk and Tom Conry offer reflections on the life of Walsh in *Toward An Adult Faith: Talking About the Big Questions: Eugene Walsh*, by The Pastoral Press, a division of Oregon Catholic Press (1994). Tim Leonard wrote a biography of Walsh from the same press called *GENO: An Autobiography of Eugene Walsh, SS* (Pastoral Press, 1988). *The Complete Works of Eugene A Walsh, SS*, have also been published by The Pastoral Press. It is a compilation of over forty previously published booklets and unpublished tapes and manuscripts in six volumes. Here we have Johnson’s “second generation” at its clearest. See #34 below.

¹⁵ Hovda once said “No. ‘Good morning, sisters and brothers’ is as worshipful an orientation after the opening song of the Sunday assembly as the sign of the cross and the scriptural greeting.” See Baldwin, *Hovda*, 121. I know someone who left the Catholic Church and joined the Eastern Orthodox Church in part because once the priest omitted the sign of the cross and the greeting in this manner. Omitting the invocation of the Divine Trinity seemed to him a blasphemy. Serious Christians have joined the Orthodox Church in recent years, including Jaroslav Pelikan and Franky Schaeffer. Perhaps they were seeking traditional liturgy with its timeless beauty and classic grandeur.

¹⁶ George A. Kelly, *The Second Spring of the Church in America* (South Bend: St. Augustine’s Press, 2001), 30.

¹⁷ Peter Toon, “Lex Orandi or Lex Credendi,” *Lex Orandi* 9, no.1 (Spring 1992). Online edition.

¹⁸ Yes, dear reader, in those days Hans Urs von Balthasar was ignored. Balthasar and others founded *Communio International Catholic Review* in 1974 in order to have a voice.

¹⁹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 34 and 34, n. 25. Brown’s methodology was known to be restricted to the “scientifically” verifiable according to the historical-critical method. This narrowness placed his concern for Catholic identity out of focus and it is a pity he did not live longer to say more about his commitment to Tradition as expressed on page 34 of the *Introduction*. Concerning this, an Evangelical scholar, Andreas J. Köstenberger, wrote: “Brown seeks to justify his church’s Tradition (with a capital ‘T’) as ‘normative interpretation of [God’s salvific action] which is not found in Scripture’ (p. 34). As a result, he is able to support doctrines such as the assumption of Mary as a legitimate application of the New Testament teaching on ‘the raising from death to glory of all the faithful disciples of Christ’ (p. 34). A further outgrowth of Brown’s particular confessional stance is his limited engagement, even

acknowledgment, of evangelical sources.” Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Faith and Mission* 15/2 (1998), 97Ð98.

²⁰ Luke Timothy Johnson, Obituary for Raymond Brown, *Commonweal* 125, no. 15 (September 11, 1998), 7.

²¹ Irish soda bread uses self-raising flour (which means additives), and it uses baking soda, and sometimes sour milk (which is preferable to water), and salt. There is probably enough flour to keep the matter valid, but it is certainly illicit. Hovda was annoyed when too much was left over after Mass.

²² The writer is happily married and is an exponent of traditional liturgy.

²³ Hovda was first invited to The Catholic University of America in Washington by Gerard Sloyan. The rector of Theological College (1969–1972), Eugene A. Walsh, SS, was also part of the liturgy circle and contributed to the situation in the Washington, D.C., area in the period of the 1960s and the 1970s and after.

²⁴ Mitchell, “Being Beautiful, Being Just,” *Ritual Transformation*, 87. Huck refers to *Built of Living Stones* as “a document utterly lacking in vision and poetry.” Huck, “A Tree Planted by a Stream,” 9.

²⁵ The closest thing to an apology may be Nathan Mitchell’s embarrassment (p. 78) when he remembers Peter, Paul, and Mary’s music at “coffee-table-masses” in the 1960s.

²⁶ See Denis Crouan, *The Liturgy Betrayed* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2000) and *The Liturgy After Vatican II: Collapsing or Resurgent?* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001).

²⁷ Hovda, “The Sacred: Silence and Song,” *Ritual Transformation*, 20–21.

²⁸ Some older intellectuals take the same position. Paul Piccone, editor of *Telos*, is perhaps the most impressive.

²⁹ Funk on page 30 admits to poor implementation, but “who is responsible” remains unaddressed.

³⁰ Anthony T. Dragani, “A Growing Thirst for Traditional Liturgy,” *The University Concourse* 4, no. 6 (April 12, 1999), 1–8. Online edition.

³¹ The institutional liberals, on the other hand, had problems with *Sacrosanctum concilium* from the beginning. See Kathleen Hughes, RSCJ, *The Monk’s Tale: a biography of Godfrey Diekmann, OSB* (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 1991), Foreword by Frederick R. McManus, xii. What a far cry this is from the “examination of conscience” called for by Pope John Paul II forty years after the promulgation of the document. See the apostolic letter “*Spiritus et Sponsa*,” December 4, 2003.

³² See Catherine Pickstock, *After Writing: On the Liturgical Consummation of Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998).

³³ Huck, “A Tree Planted by a Stream,” 1 and 9.

³⁴ See Susan Benofy, “Radical Relocation of Transcendence: Changes in the Communion Rite 1977 Ð 2002,” *Adoremus Bulletin* 7, no. 3 (May 2002). Online edition.

³⁵ Hovda entered the Catholic Church from Protestantism without waiting the prescribed canonical year before enrolling in the seminary at St. John’s, Collegeville, Minnesota. One of his still-living classmates recounted the fact for this essay. The same classmate recalls that in those days of the late 1940s the seminarians with liturgical interests tended to be elitist, sometimes shunning the company of those deemed less avant garde.

³⁶ See Benedict Groeschel and James Monti, *In the Presence of the Lord: the history, theology, and psychology of eucharistic devotion* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1997).

³⁷ Funk, *Ritual Transformation*, 30. Funk seems unaware of Johnson’s “first generation,” “second generation,” and “third generation” analogy. It is useful to explain liturgy as well as biblical scholarship. See Johnson/Kurz, *Future of Catholic Biblical Scholarship*, 10–14; 32–33.

³⁸ Three of Cardinal Ratzinger’s books have had an impact on liturgical thinking: *Feast of Faith, A New Song for the Lord*, and *The Spirit of the Liturgy*.

One of the items reconsidered by these studies is the Mass “*coram*” or “*versus populum*.”

³⁹ Benofy points out that so-called reformers such as Hovda and Huck try to reinterpret transcendence itself. See her “Radical Relocation of Transcendence.”

⁴⁰ I tell them that neither the modern liturgy movement of “balloons, banners, and Wonder Bread,” nor the return of the Roman Missal of 1962, nor our best efforts, will achieve anything unaided. I have witnessed elegant Anglican worship with more clergy than faithful in attendance. All is God’s grace. The hemorrhage of possibly the majority of our youth out of a church they never really joined, so to speak, continues at an alarming rate. Secularism, which begins with the secularization of morals, is the real substitute for religion in the post-Modern world. In his writing, Robert Hovda never seemed too concerned about the problem of secularism versus Catholic identity. He did not understand that the loss of faith is the biggest issue of our day, and perhaps that is why he did not address it.

⁴¹ The matter of defective translations is a separate issue.

⁴² Recently even ultra-traditionalism has gained a certain unexpected respectability in the person of Mel Gibson whose father is a Lefebvrist and who himself prefers the Roman Missal of 1962.

⁴³ See Colleen Carroll, *The New Faithful: Why young adults are embracing Christian orthodoxy* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002).

⁴⁴ Hovda, “The Sacred,” *Ritual Transformation*, 22.

⁴⁵ Baldwin, *Hovda*, 183.

⁴⁶ The notion of the “multiple and equivalent presences” of Christ, expressed by J. Michael Joncas on page 67, distorts both *Sacrosanctum concilium*, #7, and authentic Catholic doctrine. Christ is substantially and permanently present under the Eucharistic elements—he is not present in his word, in his ministers, or in his assembly in the same way. See the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (Washington: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2003), #27, p. 20.

⁴⁷ The rediscovery of the Catholic understanding of any of the sacraments would be wonderful. But displacing holy orders, as Hovda does in this citation, is objectively to embrace Reformation theology. Hovda is effectively saying we really do not need priests, at least not in the sense of Trent and Vatican II. The Reformation holds that the church is founded and caused by baptism. Catholicism teaches that the eucharistic sacrifice causes the church.

⁴⁸ Hovda, “The Sacred,” 21. Note the tone and the attitude of the passage. Hovda condemns himself with his own words which will be reassessed, if he merits a footnote, by ecclesiastical historians of the future.

⁴⁹ Huck, “A Tree Planted by a Stream,” 12. Yes, Hovda did not leave the church—here referred to by Gabe Huck as “that pathetic institution”—but did he ever join?

⁵⁰ Those who use the terminology of “the institutional church” implicitly distinguish it from the assembly gathered on Sunday to worship. Again, the theme of the corrupt historical church is a favorite Reformation idea. If anything has been rediscovered, it is that the expression “institutional church” becomes assimilated to and then identified with the corrupt historical church—thus the dehistoricized invisible church *sola fide* unites us to Christ. Recent efforts to hyper-emphasize “The Gathering Rite” can all too easily accommodate a Neo-Lutheranism. By contrast, let us recall Cardinal Christoph Schönborn’s words: “In fact, Christ and the Church are one.” See Christoph Schönborn, *Loving the Church* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1998), 101.

⁵¹ Hovda, “The Sacred,” 21.

⁵² Nathan Mitchell puts it best: “The restoration of the assembly’s role as pivotal agent and icon in the liturgy is probably the most decisive result of postconciliar reform among Roman Catholics. For in its worship, the assembly becomes what it receives: Christ’s body given for the world’s life.” See Nathan Mitchell, “The Amen Corner, ‘Plenty Good Room’: The Dignity of the Assembly,” *Worship* 70, no. 1 (January 1996), 65.

Why Is He a Catholic? Garry Wills' Spiritual Odyssey

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Over his long career, Garry Wills has produced several influential books on the Catholic Church. In 1964, while working for the *National Review*, he wrote *Politics and Catholic Freedom* which provided a conservative interpretation of Pope John XXIII's writings. By the early '70s, he had moved to the Left and decided that the Catholic Church needed to embrace radicalism in order to transform a troubled, war-torn world. By the '90s he was taking an increasingly dark view of the Church. He saw it as riddled with corruption and felt that it needed wholesale restructuring. Indeed, his most recent works, *Papal Sin* and *Why I Am a Catholic* were so severely critical of the Church that the historian Philip Jenkins included them in his book, *The New Anti-Catholicism*.¹ At one time a Catholic apologist, Wills now describes himself as a "troubled believer" and appears to be deeply alienated from the Church.

A Catholic Boyhood

Wills was born in Atlanta in 1934 but spent most of his childhood in Michigan where he was educated by Dominican sisters. For high school, he was sent to Wisconsin to study with the Jesuits. Upon graduating, he joined sixty other young men in the novitiate for the Missouri Province of the Jesuits. For two years, Wills and his fellow seminarians were assigned pious books to read and were urged to practice various mortifications. At most times of the day they were required to address each other in Latin. Wills found the whole experience deeply unsettling. Depressed and no longer sure that he believed in God, Wills consulted his spiritual director who urged him to read G.K. Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*. He was reassured to learn that Chesterton, the great Catholic defender, had had

a faith crisis of his own as a young man.

Heartened by Chesterton and his empathetic director, Wills took his first vows with the Jesuits and moved on to the next phase of Jesuit formation, the juniorate. For the next four years he took the prescribed courses in philosophy at St. Louis University but found himself drawn more to classics. Although he enjoyed these years, his doubts about his vocation persisted so he left the Jesuits in 1957, six years after he entered.²

Through the help of one of his Jesuit professors, Wills obtained a scholarship to study classics at Xavier University in Cincinnati. From this point on, he simultaneously pursued two different careers: academia and journalism. While studying St. John Chrysostom's sermons, Wills began writing columns for William F. Buckley's new conservative journal, *National Review*.

Although *National Review* was set up as a secular magazine, Buckley, a Catholic, was very interested in finding talented writers who were knowledgeable about Catholicism. After Wills sent Buckley one of his essays, Buckley was so impressed that he brought Wills out to his office in New York City. By the end of their interview, Wills had agreed to serve as a summer intern with the magazine. In 1958, Wills began graduate study at Yale University, which was not far from Buckley's home. Living near one another, the two men became close friends and Buckley came to rely on Wills as his expert on all things Catholic. John Leonard, a former *National Review* staffer, recalled how enthusiastic Buckley and his colleagues were about Wills: "Garry was the future. He was religious. He was the genius they were waiting for. This was the real thing; this was their angel."³

Mater Si, Magistra No

By the early 1960s, Buckley found that he badly needed the expertise of Wills and other sympathetic Catholic scholars. When Pope John XXIII issued his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* in 1961, Buckley

responded dismissively, declaring that the pope was too conciliatory towards the communists and not sufficiently appreciative of the achievements of capitalist societies. Buckley predicted that the encyclical might become a source of embarrassment for the Church in the years to come in the same way as Pope Pius IX's 1864 Syllabus of Errors had proved embarrassing for many Catholics in the twentieth century.⁴ Two weeks later, Buckley ran a quip of Wills' in the magazine: "Going the rounds in conservative Catholic circles: Mater si, Magistra no."⁵ This line, which was a takeoff on the Cuban exiles' slogan, "Cuba, si, Castro, no," infuriated many Catholic editors.⁶

Buckley had already sparred with *Commonweal's* William Clancy over Catholic social teaching in the late 1950s. These flippant remarks, however, provoked a barrage of criticism. The Jesuit editors of *America* denounced *National Review* as a "neo-secularist" journal and reminded its readers that papal encyclicals should be seen as authoritative pronouncements. When Buckley responded, the editors refused to print his letter and announced that they would no longer accept advertisements from his journal.⁷

At this point, Buckley turned to Wills and the other members of his Catholic "brain trust."⁸ Wills had just finished an adulatory biography of G.K. Chesterton and was completing a dissertation on Aeschylus at Yale.⁹ At Buckley's prompting, he began to prepare an essay on encyclicals in 1962. By 1964, Wills' study, which had grown quite lengthy, appeared as *Politics and Catholic Freedom*. At one level, the book was meant to defend Buckley in his battle with the Jesuits at *America*. At another level, it was meant to refute the charges that the popular secularist writer Paul Blanshard had raised against the Church in the 1950s.¹⁰ Wills was determined to show that Catholics could be equally devoted to their faith and their homeland. Indeed, the title that he chose was meant to serve as a response to Blanshard's bestseller, *American Freedom and Catholic Power*.¹¹

To achieve his first goal, Wills traced the history of encyclicals and found that they had first been used by Pope Benedict XIV in 1740. Benedict and his successors intended encyclicals to serve as "letters of unity." They were meant to spark discussions and provide encouragement to members of the Church, but they did not have a disciplinary or juridical function.¹²

Wills was sorry that many Catholics were confused about encyclicals' true purpose. These "pious authoritarians" wanted to treat "everything as dogma."¹³ In so doing, they were minimizing the role that reason and conscience should play in the lives of believers.

Having described the true nature of encyclicals, Wills took up Pope John's writings and tried to interpret them in a conservative manner. While *Mater et Magistra* was widely seen as encouraging government programs to assist the elderly, poor and unemployed,¹⁴ Wills provided an entirely different reading. He noted that the pope had explicitly defended the right to private property and argued that the pope had not endorsed welfare states but had merely recognized that they were becoming more commonplace.¹⁵

Pope John's second encyclical, *Pacem in Terris* (1963), was generally interpreted as a call for peace among nations and an end to the Cold War.¹⁶ Wills, however, argued that the pope had shown himself to be a hard-headed realist who understood the subtleties of the political order. The pope had not condemned communism for prudential reasons. Pope John was acting much like his predecessor Pope Pius XII, who chose not to speak out about the Holocaust so that he could work behind the scenes to save thousands of Jewish lives.¹⁷ Just as one could not contend that Pius had any sympathy for Hitler because he did not publicly condemn Nazism, neither should John be seen as sympathizing in any way with Communist regimes.

For this view of Pope John as a realist in international affairs, Wills was very much indebted to Father John Courtney Murray, SJ, who had published an analysis of *Pacem in Terris* in *America* in 1963. Murray, a staunch anti-communist,¹⁸ argued that the key innovation in this letter was what he took to be the pope's endorsement of a limited state. Wills followed this line and also cautioned that the pope should not be seen as necessarily supporting the United Nations or siding in any way with the East bloc.

Having argued that liberal Catholics had misinterpreted both the teaching authority of encyclicals generally and the content of these two encyclicals in particular, Wills also wanted to refute Blanshard's charges that Catholics were opposed to liberty. Blanshard made much of Catholic teaching on church and state. Since the Church taught formally that Catholicism should be promoted as the state religion

whenever Catholics were in a majority, Blanshard contended that American Catholics did not believe in the country's practice of church-state separation.¹⁹

Since the late 1940s Murray had been urging a reconsideration of this teaching. To make his case, Murray looked at the encyclicals of Pope Leo XIII which opposed church-state separation and tried to place them in historical context. To counter Blanshard, Wills followed Murray's lead. While praising Leo XIII on many counts, including his openness to democracy, Wills noted that his writings on church-state relations were "somewhat history bound" and in need of revision.²⁰ He was pleased to report that Pope John XXIII was moving the Church to a new appreciation of religious freedom in *Pacem in Terris*.²¹

In this wide-ranging book, Wills argued that one could be a good Catholic and still not back labor unions, disarmament, the welfare state or the United Nations. Nor did one have to subscribe to outmoded papal teachings on church-state relations. Thus, a political conservative such as Buckley could be every bit as good a Catholic as a liberal Jesuit at *America*. And, contrary to Blanshard's claims, a Catholic, whatever his political sympathies, could be just as good an American as anyone else.

You Say You Want a Revolution?

When *Politics and Catholic Freedom* was published, Wills was still pursuing his dual careers: he was an assistant professor of classics at Johns Hopkins University, a frequent contributor to *National Review*, and a regular columnist for a new weekly newspaper, the *National Catholic Reporter*. The editor, Robert Hoyt, wanted Wills to be the conservative voice in an otherwise liberal operation.²² At first, Wills provided the sort of commentary that Hoyt expected: pieces praising Barry Goldwater and criticizing Martin Luther King, Jr. and Father Daniel Berrigan, SJ, the radical antiwar activist.²³

The chairman of the classics department was annoyed that Wills was producing so many columns and assumed that he was neglecting his professional responsibilities. When Wills refused to give up his column, he intervened to deny him tenure.²⁴ Losing tenure proved to be a decisive event in Wills' life. From this point on, journalism has been his primary

occupation; he has not taught on a full-time basis since then. In 1967, with Buckley's help, he obtained a job as a contributing editor for *Esquire*.²⁵ Years later, he recounted how dramatically his life had changed after joining the magazine: "I had led a very sheltered life until 1967 when I became a full time journalist... I suddenly found myself in strip joints, police helicopters, black nationalist headquarters."²⁶

As Wills covered race riots and went to Atlanta to attend the King funeral, he came to view the civil rights movement much more favorably. While ambivalent about the militants in the movement, he became an ardent disciple of King. He concluded that King was a modern day prophet who used non-violent tactics to awaken the nation to the plight of its black minority. Despite King's monumental efforts, Wills was not at all optimistic that blacks' situation in America would improve. Indeed, by the summer of 1968, he was in a truly apocalyptic frame of mind. In a short book entitled *The Second Civil War: Arming for Armageddon*, he warned that black and white extremists were stockpiling weapons and preparing for an all-out race war.

Two years later, Wills published *Nixon Agonistes*, which gained him national attention for the first time. In this detailed and carefully researched work, Wills traced Nixon's life from his childhood up through his election to the presidency. The portrait he drew was not particularly flattering: Nixon was depicted as an awkward, ambitious man who was determined to succeed by outworking his rivals. In the end, Wills judged Nixon to be a liberal of the nineteenth century sort who believed that anyone who worked hard enough would find success in *America*.²⁷

Many reviewers considered *Nixon Agonistes* a very perceptive appraisal of Nixon.²⁸ For conservatives, however, the book clearly demonstrated that Wills was no longer one of them. Since becoming a full-time journalist in 1967, Wills had written a series of articles which did not mesh well with conservatism, but Buckley had continued to publish him occasionally in *National Review*. Yet in this book, Wills had criticized Nixon, the anti-communist movement of the 1950s and America's role in the Vietnam War. This was too much even for Buckley to bear. Buckley and his allies had to publicly separate themselves from their erstwhile ally. Frank Meyer, a senior editor

of *National Review*, offered a withering appraisal:

[This book's] avowed subject is Richard Nixon; yet its real subject is America today—an America about which there is nothing good to be said, an America seen from a point of view similar to, if not identical with, that of the revolutionary forces intent upon our destruction....The book echoes with the curiously mixed accents of [John] Ruskin, Tom Hayden and Malcolm X.²⁹

As Wills shifted to the Left politically, his view of the Catholic Church took a similar turn. In 1972 he published *Bare Ruined Choirs*, which provided a very different perspective on the Church than the one he had offered eight years earlier. Of course, Catholicism had been transformed in the 1960s, but not as radically as Wills. In this book, he argued that the Church had unraveled entirely after the Council. He began with his fond recollections of the “changeless” pre-Vatican II Church:

Bells at the consecration...Heads buried in hands after communion....Car blessings, name-saint days, letters dated by the church feast...Scapulars like big postage stamps glued here and there on kids in swimming pools. 'JMJ' at the top of schoolwork. The sign of the cross before a foul shot....These moments belonged to a people, not to oneself. It was a ghetto, undeniably. But not a bad ghetto to grow up in.³⁰

He then chronicled the dizzying changes that occurred in the 1960s. One woman who wholeheartedly embraced what she took to be the “spirit of Vatican II” was Sr. Jacqueline Grennan, the president of Webster College in St. Louis. Sr. “Jackie” was so determined to be open to the world that she secularized Webster in 1967 and then left her community shortly thereafter. The Jesuits likewise sought to embrace secular society, but Wills thought that they acted more intelligently than had Sr. Jackie. By 1968 they had moved their flagship theological school, Woodstock College, out of rural Maryland and into a cluster of apartments in a gritty neighborhood in New York's Upper West Side. Here they could live among the poor, wear lay clothes, study theology in an ecumenical setting and pursue whatever apostolate they chose. Wills described the new Woodstock as a “priestly hippie-pad” and worried about its future prospects.³¹ It closed in 1973, one year after his book was published.³²

While the Church in America was floundering, Wills saw no effective direction coming from the Vatican. Instead, Pope Paul VI was trying to block all change so that the Church could maintain an appearance of changelessness. For example, regarding the Eucharist, Paul issued an encyclical, *Mysterium Fidei*, in 1965 which clearly reaffirmed the Church's teaching on transubstantiation.³³ The pope followed that encyclical with *Humanae Vitae* in 1968 which restated the Church's ban on artificial contraceptives. Wills was outraged by the pope's encyclical on birth control. He judged the letter a “disaster” and said that it demonstrated the Vatican's “fear of sex.”³⁴

Despite all the chaos and confusion in the Church, Wills saw no reason to despair. For while the old institutional Church was dying, a new radical Church was taking its place. Led by Daniel Berrigan and a host of other Catholic, Protestant and Jewish activists, members of this underground Church were risking their lives to bring about an end to the Vietnam War and to racism and social inequality. For Wills, Berrigan, like Martin Luther King, was a true prophet.

Wills drew a sharp contrast between Berrigan and his fellow Jesuit, John Courtney Murray, who had died in 1967. He had come to see Murray as the consummate Establishment man who wanted to separate church and state, but never dared criticize the state. He was a cold warrior who had few qualms about the Vietnam War. He was all about prudence and had no interest in prophecy.³⁵

Wills had grown similarly disenchanted with Paul VI's predecessors. Whereas in *Politics and Catholic Freedom* he had praised Pius XII for his skillful diplomacy during the Holocaust, he now sided with the German playwright Rolf Hochhuth, who condemned the pope in his play, *The Deputy*:

Defenders of Pius argue that he might have caused extra burdens, for Jews as well as Catholics—but who said preaching the gospel would make life easier;...[I]s it any wonder that the papacy becomes a moral irrelevancy? Hochhuth marks the irony that a cardinal's robes signify a readiness to witness unto death. Yet the hierarchy's transformation into ecclesiastical politicians has made its members weight every question in favor of ‘prudence’ and against courage, trying to make of the faith a safe bet.³⁶

And John XXIII was not much better. He had more charm than Pius, but he too was an ecclesiastical politician who had no interest in changing the Church or the world. Indeed, if he had lived longer, John XXIII would probably have produced a letter on birth control much like *Humanae Vitae*.³⁷

Change was not going to come from the Vatican or from Establishment insiders like John Courtney Murray. It would only come from radicals like Daniel Berrigan and Dorothy Day who had the courage and vision to “step outside” their times. Wills concluded his work by exhorting his readers to support these prophets: “It is time to join the underground.”³⁸

Telling America’s Story and His Own

Having written two major books on Catholicism in less than a decade, Wills turned to other subjects. By 1973 he was back at Johns Hopkins as an adjunct professor of humanities. He was now a “celebrity intellectual” thanks to the popularity of his books, essays and columns.³⁹ Having written about Nixon, in the years following he would focus increasingly on the major presidents such as Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln and devote less and less energy to issues related to classics.

In 1978 Wills’ scholarly reputation reached new heights with the publication of *Inventing America: Jefferson’s Declaration of Independence*. Widely praised for providing a very close reading of the document itself and the sources which were thought to have inspired it, the book received awards from the Organization of American Historians and the National Book Critics’ Circle. Many reviewers were persuaded by Wills’ argument that Jefferson drew not so much on the liberal individualist John Locke as on Scottish communitarian philosophers such as Francis Hutcheson.

In the following year, Wills, now 45, decided to write his memoirs, which he titled *Confessions of a Conservative*. He began his account in 1957 when he was in graduate school and was about to meet Bill Buckley. He then provided an engaging account of his involvement with Buckley and the other *National Review* editors such as Frank Meyer. He noted the increasingly sharp disagreements he had with the rest of the staff over the Vietnam War and the civil rights

movement which came to a head in 1970 with the publication of *Nixon Agonistes*.⁴⁰

Having written candidly about the *National Review* phase of his life, Wills then cut off his memoir and switched into an increasingly abstract mode to explain why he should still be considered a conservative. In discussing the American political system his tone was much more sanguine than it had been ten years earlier. Gone were the jeremiads about impending race war and cultural collapse. He still believed that the American system was bureaucratic, somewhat undemocratic and resistant to change, but these features no longer bothered him. Following St. Augustine, he argued that people are flawed and that governments are without exception imperfect entities. For this reason, politicians should have modest goals: they should not attempt to erect an ideal state or theocracy in the City of Man. Instead, they should allow the wheat and the weeds to grow together and wait for the harvest time when God will sift them out.⁴¹

While societal change should not be swift, Wills argued that gradual change does need to occur from time to time. He relied on America’s prophets to move society forward: “Such ‘fanatics’ are mocked, threatened, jailed, beat up, shot at—think of William Lloyd Garrison, Frederick Douglass, Bill Haywood, Eugene Debs, Margaret Sanger, Mary Church Terrell, A.J. Muste, Dorothy Day, Chesar Chavez. Political change does not come easily. . . It begins with individual risk and heroism.”⁴² It was these “fanatics” and “crazies” like Alice Paul—who chained herself to the White House to promote the woman’s suffrage cause—who brought pressure on politicians to face issues that they would rather avoid.⁴³

While Wills’ memoir was praised in a number of magazines, including *Time*, *Commonweal* and the *New Republic*, conservatives reacted angrily. They rejected his claim to be an Augustinian conservative. In their view he had abandoned conservatism a decade earlier and out of sheer hubris refused to acknowledge that he had changed his mind on many things. Werner Dannhauser, writing in *Commentary*, wondered why Wills “identifies all good-doing with the Left.” He could not understand why there were not any conservatives in Wills’ pantheon of prophets.⁴⁴

In the following year, Wills left Johns Hopkins and assumed an adjunct professorship in American

Studies at Northwestern University; he has remained there ever since.⁴⁵ From his office in Evanston, he has continued to produce books at a prodigious rate. He has completed studies on John F. Kennedy, George Washington, the Federalist Papers, John Wayne, Macbeth, Ronald Reagan and the Gettysburg Address, for which he received a Pulitzer Prize. In 1990 he explicitly addressed religion for the first time in almost two decades when he wrote *Under God: Religion and Politics in America*.

This book developed from Wills' coverage of the presidential campaigns of 1984 and 1988 and ranged over a host of topics. He considered all sorts of events relating to church and state from the Scopes trial to Operation Rescue to ministers seeking the presidency. As with his previous books, Wills was pursuing multiple targets. One group that he felt needed correcting were his secularist colleagues in the media. Most reporters were not able to fathom the profound religiosity of America, a land where revivals were always occurring. As a believer, Wills had experienced first-hand the condescension of some of his agnostic co-workers:

Religion writers in most papers are kept in their Saturday-edition ghettos. In covering six presidential campaigns, I do not remember seeing a single religion reporter on any campaign plane....Religion embarrasses the commentators. It is offbounds. An editor of the old Life magazine once assigned me a book on religion with the remark that I was the only "religious nut"...in his stable of regular reviewers.⁴⁶

Although disturbed by the media's slant, Wills did not want readers to think that he sympathized with the Religious Right. He was still on the Left politically and did not want to be associated in any way with conservative Christians. To demonstrate his separation from them, he addressed two controversial church-state issues: pornography and abortion. With regard to the former, he understood the concerns expressed by religious activists about the photography of Robert Mapplethorpe which they considered obscene and Martin Scorsese's *Last Temptation of Christ* which they considered blasphemous. While they were free to censure works of this nature, he was opposed to any effort to censor them.⁴⁷

Similarly with abortion, Wills felt that pro-life Catholics were free to express their views, but they

should not be trying to muzzle co-religionists like Mario Cuomo who disagreed with them. He was very upset by the "punitive" actions taken by Bishop Austin Vaughan and Cardinal John O'Connor against Cuomo and Geraldine Ferraro. He recounted in detail Cuomo's controversial speech at the University of Notre Dame. Cuomo said that he accepted Church teaching regarding the evil of abortion, but felt that he could not impose his religiously based views on a pluralistic society. Although some pundits hailed Cuomo for his subtlety, Wills was not impressed. He thought Cuomo was acting as the docile layman who uncritically accepted the teachings put forth by the hierarchy:

Why should he accept 'doctrine' in this case? After all, popes have no special expertise for telling when life begins. They are not applying the Bible or some theological truth....But he does not argue the matter; he merely accepts (privately) and sets aside (in public) the datum that the fetus is a human life from conception.⁴⁸

No doubt Wills was in search of another prophet, who would willingly take on the leaders of both church and state. Cuomo was not such a figure; he was another prudent Establishment man, who wanted to circumvent the bishops. Wills admitted that it was "unrealistic" to expect that a Catholic politician would challenge the bishops, but still he hoped for more from Cuomo.⁴⁹

In this work, Wills did not devote much space to Catholics, but the ones that he examined all fell short. The bishops, the Vatican and the Democratic politicians disappointed him. The only figure with any prophetic qualities was the Baptist minister, Jesse Jackson. Wills respected Jackson's work with Martin Luther King in the 1960s and approved of his campaigns for nonviolent social change in the 1970s and '80s.⁵⁰ Although troubled by Jackson's references to Jews as "Hymies" and by his friendliness with Louis Farrakhan, Wills still believed that Jackson for the most part ran inclusive, Gospel-based campaigns in 1984 and 1988. Wills thought Jackson's finest moments came at the 1984 Democratic Convention. He cited approvingly a Mississippi delegate's judgment that Jackson "held church" the night of his address.⁵¹

Saints and Sinners

Apart from *Under God*, Wills had not devoted much time to religion in his writings since 1972. In the late '90s, however, he focused again on Catholicism. In 1999, he wrote a biography of St. Augustine for the Penguin Lives series. In less than 150 pages, he discussed Augustine's scholarly works and described the many competing Christian and pagan groups that flourished in North Africa during his lifetime. Wills portrayed Augustine as a compassionate pastor who was not all that concerned with sins of the flesh. The only sin that Augustine could not tolerate was dishonesty. In Wills' rendering, Augustine frequently encountered intrigue and deception at even the highest levels of the Church. Through all his struggles, Augustine remained a truth-teller.

Wills' study received very favorable reviews. Indeed, *Commonweal's* Glenn Tinder's only complaint was that the book was too short!⁵² In the following year, Wills provided a lengthier book on the Church which revisited some of the themes addressed in his Augustine biography. This work, *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit*, would prove much more controversial. In *Papal Sin*, Wills set out to demonstrate that popes had repeatedly used half-truths and outright lies to protect the Church's reputation. Proceeding topically, he devoted chapters to controversial issues facing the Church, beginning with the Holocaust.

Although he once defended Pope Pius XII's handling of the Nazis, by this time he viewed the Vatican's silence as one of the worst marks against the Church. Pope Pius' behavior was shameful and dishonest and the behavior of Pope John Paul II has been equally scandalous.⁵³ For by canonizing Maximilian Kolbe and Edith Stein, the Vatican was attempting to make the world think that Catholics were also the victims of the Holocaust. Both cases were very disturbing to Wills. Although willing to grant that Kolbe died a heroic death, Wills argued that some of Kolbe's writings had an anti-Semitic tenor to them. The pope overlooked this point and decided to honor him as a "martyr for the faith." Wills contended that Kolbe was arrested for his political views and gave up his life to save that of another man, but did not die for the faith.⁵⁴

He expressed the same sort of criticisms with regard to Edith Stein, a Carmelite nun who had converted from Judaism and was gassed at Auschwitz in 1942. He thought it was obvious that the Nazis killed her because she was Jewish: "How did the Vatican make the ludicrous case that Stein died for being a Catholic, not for being a Jew?"⁵⁵ Clearly, the Vatican was using Stein to blunt further criticism of Pius XII. Even the miracle that the Church relied on was suspect. The case, which involved a toddler who had swallowed a whole bottle of Tylenol and survived without any permanent damage, did not persuade Wills. While the *New York Times* reported that she had swallowed the equivalent of sixteen lethal doses, Wills characterized it as a "jiggered" miracle.⁵⁶ He noted that one of the doctors caring for the girl said that children routinely recovered from Tylenol overdoses.⁵⁷

Wills then discussed at length the popes' condemnation of birth control and their defense of clerical celibacy. He had covered much of this material in *Bare Ruined Choirs*, but this time he added chapters on women's ordination, abortion, the clerical sex abuse scandals and the prevalence of homosexuals in the priesthood. On all of these subjects, the Vatican authorities had made errors and then engaged in deception to avoid scandal or confusion among the laity.

With regard to homosexuals, Wills took pains to clarify that he saw nothing wrong with homosexual behavior involving adults. He argued that the scriptural condemnations of sodomy only referred to pedophilia and pederasty.⁵⁸ What troubled him about gay priests was that they were "living a lie."⁵⁹ They were forced to hide their orientations from their superiors, their congregations and even their family members.

Wills was similarly troubled by the Church's opposition to abortion. Here he repeated some of the arguments that he had presented in *Under God*, but this time he came out more strongly in favor of abortion. He claimed that the scriptures do not refer to abortion and that neither Augustine nor Thomas Aquinas opposed it in the early weeks of pregnancy. For these reasons, popes had no justification for condemning it. For Wills, abortion should never be "proposed as an ideal" and a woman should not undertake one without first engaging in "moral decision making." Nevertheless, he did not appear to favor any legal limits on abortion.⁶⁰

Having addressed modern Church controversies, Wills then examined conflicts in the ages of Cardinal Newman and Augustine. Starting with the nineteenth century, Wills depicted Newman and the English layman Lord Acton as “truth-tellers” who battled heroically to stop the bishops at the First Vatican Council from declaring the pope infallible. Outnumbered and outmaneuvered by Pope Pius IX and his zealous supporters, Newman and Acton and their allies did not have a chance. Augustine, too, had a difficult struggle against St. Jerome who was “one of history’s great liars.”⁶¹ Jerome wanted to downplay passages in the scriptures which seemed to indicate discord among the apostles. Augustine, however, would not let Jerome get away with any sort of deception.

Wills tried to find an optimistic note with which to conclude this deeply pessimistic book. Declaring that the Church’s heroes were not only in the past, but were active at the present time, he remarked:

Where is the church of Pentecost? It is...where Sister [Helen] Prejean is telling people that capital punishment is revenge and not a Christian action, where Daniel Berrigan is caring for those stricken with AIDS...where Philip Berrigan is telling us that no one has the right to build weapons to destroy the world.

He saw signs of hope among young Catholics as well: “The campus churches I know have young people readier than I and my friends were at their age to work on soup lines, to minister to the inner cities. The Spirit is in them.” And there were encouraging developments among other religions: [T]he Spirit, which breathes where She [sic] will, [is] in every Christian sect and denomination. In fact, She breathes through all religious life, wherever the divine call is heeded.”⁶²

“I’ve Never Felt Closer to It Than I Do Now”

In some respects *Papal Sin* was the mirror opposite of Wills’ much earlier work, *Politics and Catholic Freedom*. In 1964 he was writing as a Goldwater loyalist, trying to demonstrate that people could oppose the United Nations, labor unions and minimum wage laws and still be Catholics in good standing. Thirty six years later, he was committed to

a very different set of political principles. Still, he was just as determined to show that his political views and his faith commitments were not in conflict. Simply because he disagreed with Church leaders on abortion, homosexuality, women’s ordination and various other issues did not mean that he was not a faithful Catholic.

Some reviewers were quite pleased with the thoroughness and intensity of Wills’ critique of the papacy. The liberal philosopher Richard Rorty hailed it in the *New York Times* Book Review as a “devastating, no holds barred indictment.” He was just left with a couple of questions: what would Wills’ “free and democratic Catholic Church” look like and would it still be a church?⁶³ The Jesuit historian John O’Malley also thought the book had considerable merit. In a review for *America*, O’Malley noted that Wills “sometimes overstates his case” and “loses focus,” but still deemed *Papal Sin* “a serious book by a serious author that must be taken seriously.”⁶⁴

Most Catholic reviewers were much more critical than O’Malley. Eamon Duffy, the Cambridge University church historian, offered a scathing critique in *Commonweal*:

There is something repellantly illiberal about Wills’ angry liberal certainties, his wholesale and unqualified conviction that every right-thinking Catholic must agree with him...History for Wills...is an arsenal of cautionary tales demonstrating again and again how all these mean old guys got it wrong. The history of the papacy in particular is an endless saga of tyranny, crassness and self-interest.⁶⁵

Duffy was frustrated that Wills relied so heavily on Cardinal Newman. He noted that Newman’s position on papal infallibility was much more nuanced than Wills had indicated. He ended his review by declaring that Newman “would have hated this book.” Clearly, Duffy did.

Kevin Cherry, writing for *National Review*, was even more negative. For while Duffy thought that Wills’ account of the Church’s handling of the sex abuse crisis was on the mark, Cherry had nothing positive to say. He considered it a fundamentally dishonest work, arguing that Wills relied on a very selective reading of his sources. Cherry was particularly disturbed by Wills’ claims about Edith Stein’s canonization, describing them as “absurd.” Cherry

concluded on a caustic note: “Why does Wills continue to call himself a Catholic? Why would he want to continue his association with an institution that is (in his mind) misogynistic, homophobic, anti-semitic, deceitful and plainly evil?”⁶⁶

Having been pressed about his ties to the Church, Wills responded in 2002 with *Why I Am a Catholic*. Noting that he had received far more mail regarding *Papal Sin* than for anything else he had ever written, he indicated that his correspondents fell into three categories. There were the non-Catholics like Rorty who were puzzled by the book and wondered why he remained in such an obviously dysfunctional institution. Then there was an “accusatory group.” These angry critics—“some of whom had not even read the book—informed me that I hate the church, that I stay in it only to harm it, that I should get out before I do it irreparable damage.” However, the vast majority—over ninety percent—of the correspondence that he received “began or ended with a thank-you for expressing what the correspondents felt, for letting them know that they are not alone.”⁶⁷

It was in response to all of these readers that he undertook his “unintended sequel” to *Papal Sin*. Characterizing himself as a “troubled believer,” he made clear that he was not a disbeliever. Despite the charges of some critics, he had no anger toward the Church: “My experience of the church has been of a supporting and nurturing body, and I have never felt closer to it than I do now.”⁶⁸

Wills’ second memoir followed the idiosyncratic form of his previous one. As with *Confessions of a Conservative*, he began in an autobiographical vein. In a forty page section, he described his childhood, his time with the Jesuits and his work with *National Review*. The narrative then ended abruptly around 1970 just as it had in his *Confessions*.

The Bad Popes

At this point he switched gears and provided what he termed an “excursus”—a 230 page history of the papacy. He began with St. Peter and noted that he had no more authority in the early Church than did St. Paul. He argued that the text which is often used to support Peter’s primacy had been misunderstood. When Jesus said, “You are

Peter and on this Rock I will build my church,” He was referring to himself.⁶⁹ Jesus saw himself as the rock, the stone that the builders rejected. Thus, while recognized as the leading disciple, Peter was not entrusted with any special powers. He was one of several bishops in the Early Church and was accorded only a nominal precedence over his confreres. Wills said that Peter’s office served as a “symbol of unity” for Christians.⁷⁰

In the first centuries after Peter, popes remained relatively weak figures. Even the most prominent among them such as Leo the Great (440–461) and Gregory the Great (590–604) were clearly subject to the emperors. It was only in the eleventh century that the papacy became a formidable institution. As popes gained power, the Church’s problems worsened. Wills blamed the schism with the Orthodox in 1054 on the papacy and noted that popes were instrumental in organizing forces for the Crusades.⁷¹

Within two hundred years the papacy’s fortunes started to spiral downward. Wills discussed at length the Avignon papacy (1309–1378) and the dispute over who was the rightful pope in the years after the papacy returned to Rome. From there, he traced the reigns of the worldly, avaricious Renaissance popes such as Alexander VI (1492–1503) who relied on indulgences to finance their lavish building projects. These popes, who mishandled Luther’s protests and foolishly denied Henry VIII’s request for an annulment, were in large part responsible for the second great break in Christendom, the Reformation.⁷²

In the early modern period the papacy found itself dominated by absolutist Catholic monarchs. When the French Revolution broke out in 1789 the Church suffered grievously because of its association with the monarchy. By the early nineteenth century, however, the French Revolution had spent itself and Napoleon had been exiled. It was at this juncture that Wills thought that the Church had an opportunity to renew itself. Instead, reactionary popes such as Pius IX (1846–1878) condemned democracy and remained tenaciously loyal to the old monarchies. Even Leo XIII (1878–1903) who is often praised as a defender of labor unions and racial minorities, was criticized by Wills.⁷³ In *Politics and Catholic Freedom*, Wills had noted that Leo was open to democracy but had old-fashioned views on church-state

relations. In *Why I Am a Catholic*, he characterized Leo as a fundamentalist who opposed scripture scholarship and tacitly backed the forces persecuting the Jewish officer, Alfred Dreyfus, in France.

The popes of the twentieth century did not come off much better. It was only in the 1950s that the darkness began to lift. With the election of Pope John XXIII in 1958, a new spirit of openness was at last developing in the Church. This was a very different John XXIII than the one Wills presented in *Politics and Catholic Freedom* and *Bare Ruined Choirs*. In those works he was a conservative who opposed communism and contraception with equal vigor. In this latest book, he appeared as a courageous progressive who brought about the “Great Rebirth”: Vatican II.

Also rehabilitated in this work was John Courtney Murray. In *Bare Ruined Choirs*, Murray had been compared quite unfavorably to his fellow Jesuit, Daniel Berrigan. Wills did not indicate whether he had changed his mind about Murray’s writings, but he expressed sympathy with Murray for the treatment he received from the Vatican in the 1950s. Ordered by his superiors to stop writing on church-state matters, Murray became a martyr figure for Wills, a victim of Pius XII’s “reign of terror.”⁷⁴

Wills provided an upbeat, almost triumphal, account of the Council. Noting that traditional minded prelates such as Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani had repeatedly tried to control the proceedings, Wills contended that the progressive majority vanquished them on most points. He summarized the changes effected during the Council. Of most importance was the Council’s recognition of the centrality of the laity. He also pointed to changes in the liturgy which broke down the barriers between priest and people; a new emphasis on ecumenism; a new recognition of the necessity of church-state separation; and a new understanding that the pope is “within the apostolic body of bishops” and not above it.⁷⁵

As soon as the Council was concluded, however, Paul VI was already working to undermine it. In 1967 he wrote an encyclical defending priestly celibacy and “sprang it on the world” without consulting anyone.⁷⁶ Wills then revisited *Humanae Vitae*, a subject that he had thoroughly discussed in *Bare Ruined Choirs* and *Papal Sin*.

John Paul II has intensified Paul’s work against

the Council. Aided by his doctrinal advisor, Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the pope has been trying to reduce the power of bishops’ conferences, the autonomy of Catholic universities and the progress of ecumenical dialogue. This “attempted coup” is not succeeding.⁷⁷ Wills cited data indicating that many Catholics disagree with the Vatican on a host of topics and yet do not consider themselves “bad Catholics.”⁷⁸

Having stated at the beginning of his book that belief in the creed rather than the papacy was what made him a Catholic, Wills concluded with a detailed exposition of the Apostles’ Creed. He provided a close textual reading just as he had done years earlier with the Declaration of Independence. While this was supposed to be the part of the book where Wills finally affirmed his Catholic beliefs, instead he spent much of his time pointing out teachings that he could not accept. Although affirming his devotion to the Blessed Mother and his practice of reciting the rosary daily, he expressed doubts about the Virgin Birth and the sacrament of confession and referred to the Holy Spirit throughout as “She” (as he had done in *Papal Sin*). He concluded with a quotation from one of his old standbys—G.K. Chesterton—to support his claim that one can be a dissenter and a faithful Catholic at the same time: “A man does not come an inch nearer to being a heretic by being a hundred times a critic... He only becomes a heretic... when he prefers his criticism to his Catholicism.”⁷⁹

Is He a Catholic?

This book was received in much the same way that *Papal Sin* had been. Liberal journals like the *New Yorker* and the *New York Times Book Review* praised Wills for his candor. Both reviewers characterized him as a member of the “Loyal Opposition.” Joan Acocella, reviewing it for the *New Yorker*, was awed by his scholarship: “[I]t is a great satisfaction to have the Church’s history analyzed by a mind so critical but still so in love.”⁸⁰ Jack Miles, a scripture scholar writing for the *New York Times Book Review*, was impressed with the “clarity and energy” of Wills’ narrative.⁸¹ Favorable notice also came from the normally critical *National Review*. Jeffrey Hart, one of the magazine’s senior editors, said he found the book “moving, valuable and persuasive.” He was

particularly pleased with Wills' "masterful" account of the Apostles' Creed.⁸²

The notices in Catholic magazines were more negative. Reviewers for *Commonweal*, *Crisis* and *America* were all critical. Thomas Hibbs of Boston College considered much of the book a "diatribe," redeemed in part by an "elegant" discussion of the Creed.⁸³ Peter Steinfelds, writing for *Commonweal*, was quite disappointed. He had been hoping for a much more autobiographical work. He felt that he had learned little about how Wills' faith had affected his life. Wills' brief explication of the Creed was not enough for him: [H]e has still left unanswered the obvious question raised by the fact that non-Catholic Christians also affirm the Creed."⁸⁴

Jack Miles made the same observation in his review. A one-time Jesuit who had joined the Episcopalians, Miles thought Wills would fit in comfortably in the Greek Orthodox Church, perhaps more comfortably there than in the Catholic Church. Philip Jenkins, another Episcopalian, made the same point, but much more emphatically. Jenkins described Wills' most recent works as "anti-Catholic" and said he was baffled by Wills' determination to keep calling himself a Catholic:

He calls for an end to the priesthood in anything like the sense in which it has been known for many centuries... In his ideal Church, women would be ordained, priestly celibacy would be abolished, papal supremacy would end, and no more would the Church make Mary "an empress."⁸⁵

This perfect church sounded very familiar to Jenkins. It closely resembled his own Episcopal church, where "priesthood does not exist... women are ordained, Mary is not venerated, and Church authorities make little attempt to regulate the sexual lives of the faithful."⁸⁶

Indeed, there is much to be said for Jenkins' observations. Over the years, Wills steadily reduced the authority that he was willing to allot to the papacy. While hardly a champion of papal power in *Politics and Catholic Freedom*, Wills now wants it scaled back almost to nothing. As a "symbol of unity," the pope would be merely the titular head of the Church without any real authority. Likewise, his account of the sacraments and of moral issues such as abortion

and homosexuality bear little resemblance to official Church teaching. At no point in his career was Wills a perfectly contented, mainstream Catholic. In the early '60s he was warring against unctuous liberal Catholics; by the '70s he was criticizing the institutional Church and backing Daniel Berrigan and other Catholic radicals. In his latest works, however, his criticisms are more insistent and sweeping. There are only a handful of heroes and prophets in *Why I Am a Catholic* and most of them are deceased. In the end, despite his protestations of affection for the Church, this "troubled believer" has not convincingly explained why and in what sense he is a Catholic. ✠

FOOTNOTES

- ¹ Philip Jenkins, *The New Anti-Catholicism: The Last Acceptable Prejudice* (New York, 2003), 196-201.
- ² Garry Wills, *Why I Am a Catholic* (New York, 2002), 17-38. (Hereafter abbreviated as *WIAAC*.)
- ³ Quoted in John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York, 1988), 325.
- ⁴ See Garry Wills, *Politics and Catholic Freedom* (Chicago, 1964), 3. (Hereafter abbreviated as *PCF*.)
- ⁵ Quoted in *WIAAC*, 47.
- ⁶ The Cuban exiles' chant was a play on the communists' slogan: "Fidel, si, Yanqui, no." See idem, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy, and Radical Religion* (New York, 1972), 55. (Hereafter abbreviated as *BRC*.)
- ⁷ Buckley then printed his letter in *National Review*. See Wills, *PCF*, 4-13.
- ⁸ Buckley's other Catholic mentors were Monsignors Florence Cohan (d. 2002), Eugene Clark and Donald Pryor and a layman, Neil McCaffrey. See Garry Wills, *Confessions of a Conservative* (New York, 1979), 60. (Hereafter abbreviated as *CC*.)
- ⁹ Patrick Allitt describes the book as a "hymn to G.K. Chesterton." See his *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY, 1993), 223.
- ¹⁰ For Blanshard, see John T. McGreevy, "Thinking on One's Own: Catholicism in the American Intellectual Imagination, 1928-1960," *Journal of American History* (June 1997): 97-131.
- ¹¹ Wills, *WIAAC*, 48.
- ¹² Idem, *PCF*, 96-97.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 223.
- ¹⁴ For this view, see Joseph Gremillion, ed., *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching since Pope John* (Maryknoll, NY, 1976), 5-8.
- ¹⁵ Wills, *PCF*, 155-56.
- ¹⁶ *National Review's* Frank Meyer denounced the encyclical as a "collaborationist" document. See *ibid.*, 145. See Gremillion, 68-72.
- ¹⁷ For Wills' defense of Pius XII's actions during the Holocaust, see *ibid.*, 142, 146.
- ¹⁸ See John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths* (New York, 1960), 213-237.

- ¹⁹ See Paul Blanshard, *Personal and Controversial* (Boston, 1973), 187-212.
- ²⁰ Wills, *PCF*, 278. For the pope's support of democracy, see *ibid.*, 212.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 283-84.
- ²² *Idem*, *CC*, 66-67.
- ²³ See Allitt, 261-62; *Special to the N.C.R.: The First Five Years of the National Catholic Reporter* (Kansas City, 1969), 35-38.
- ²⁴ Wills, *CC*, 68-69.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, 69-70.
- ²⁶ Quoted in Allitt, 263.
- ²⁷ Garry Wills, *Nixon Agonistes: The Crisis of the Self-Made Man* (Boston, 1970), 576-602.
- ²⁸ See for example, John Leonard, "Mr. Nixon as the Last Liberal," *New York Times*, October 15, 1970; Wilson C. McWilliams, "Nixon Agonistes," *Commonweal*, April 30, 1971.
- ²⁹ Frank S. Meyer, "Attack on Middle America," *National Review*, October 20, 1970.
- ³⁰ *Idem*, *BRC*, 35-37.
- ³⁰ *Idem*, *BRC*, 35-37.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 199-200.
- ³² For the decision to close Woodstock, see Joseph M. Becker, SJ, *The Re-Formed Jesuits: A History of Changes in Jesuit Formation during the Decade, 1965-1975* (San Francisco, 1992), 129-138.
- ³³ Wills, *BRC*, 163-64.
- ³⁴ *Ibid.*, 161, 183.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 152-158. Philip Gleason says Wills "flayed" Murray in this book. See his *Keeping the Faith: Catholicism Past and Present* (Notre Dame, IN, 1987), 198.
- ³⁶ Wills, *BRC*, 257-58.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, 162-63.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 272.
- ³⁹ Allitt, 282.
- ⁴⁰ Wills, *CC*, 78-79; Judis, 324-25.
- ⁴¹ Wills, *CC*, 190-99. For Jesus' parable about the wheat and the weeds, see Mt. 13: 24-30.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 165.
- ⁴³ Wills, *CC*, 161-65.
- ⁴⁴ Werner Dannhauser, "Against the Center," *Commentary* (July 1979): 69. See also Joseph Sobran, "Up to Liberalism," *National Review* (May 24, 1979), 684-86.
- ⁴⁵ In 1988, he switched over to being an adjunct professor of history.
- ⁴⁶ Wills, *Under God: Religion and Politics in America* (New York, 1990), 19. (Hereafter abbreviated *UG*).
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 271-302
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 312.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 317.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 222-267.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 234.
- ⁵² Glenn Tinder, "In Miniature," *Commonweal*, May 7, 1999.
- ⁵³ Garry Wills, *Papal Sin: Structures of Deceit* (New York, 2000), 13-19, 64-68. (Hereafter abbreviated *PS*).
- ⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 61-63. For the debate about declaring Kolbe a martyr, see Kenneth L. Woodward, *Making Saints: How the Catholic Church Determines Who Becomes a Saint, Who Doesn't, and Why* (New York, 1990), 144-47.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 54.
- ⁵⁶ Laurie Goodstein, "Child's Close Call Aided Nun's Way to Sainthood," *New York Times*, October 11, 1998; Wills, *PS*, 48.
- ⁵⁷ Wills, *PS*, 57-59.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 196-200.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 200.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 221-228.
- ⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 288.
- ⁶² *Ibid.*, 311.
- ⁶³ Richard Rorty, "Acting Fallible," *New York Times Book Review*, June 11, 2000.
- ⁶⁴ John W. O'Malley, SJ, "Truth Be Told," *America* July 1, 2000, 24-25.
- ⁶⁵ Eamon Duffy, "Bare Ruined Choirs?" *Commonweal*, July 14, 2000.
- ⁶⁶ Kevin Cherry, "Rhetorical Sin," *National Review Online*, July 22, 2000.
- ⁶⁷ Wills, *WIAAC*, 4.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.
- ⁶⁹ See Mt. 16: 18-19.
- ⁷⁰ Wills, *WIAAC*, 57-77.
- ⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 78-141.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, 142-77.
- ⁷³ For the standard interpretation, see Frank J. Coppa, *The Modern Papacy since 1789* (London, 1998), 117-140.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 245.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 237-38.
- ⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 240.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 281.
- ⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 273.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 341.
- ⁸⁰ Joan Acocella, "The Loyal Opposition," *The New Yorker*, July 22, 2002, 79.
- ⁸¹ Jack Miles, "The Loyal Opposition," *New York Times Book Review*, July 14, 2002.
- ⁸² Jeffrey Hart, "The St. Peter Principle," *National Review*, August 12, 2002, 41, 45.
- ⁸³ Thomas Hibbs, "Structures of Self-Deceit," *Crisis* (October 2002): 46-48. Hibbs now teaches at Baylor University.
- ⁸⁴ Peter Steinfelds, "Where's the Beef?" *Commonweal*, July 12, 2002, 21.
- ⁸⁵ Jenkins, 202. For references to Mary as an "empress," see *PS*, 209, 310.
- ⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 203.

NaProTechnology and the New Humanism

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It's a combination of mystery and serendipity when what you read, sometimes a single statement, changes your life or—more modestly—changes the way you think about something. It's as if that simple sentence manages to stop you from fixating on the individual tree so you can, finally, survey the whole forest.

The latter precisely describes a recent experience of mine. A statement issued by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) in June of 2003¹ revolutionized the way I had formerly been thinking about NaProTechnology (NPT). The Academy (comprised of distinguished scientists from around the world) echoed a plea and a challenge that John Paul II has repeatedly extended to scientists and people of faith. "What is required more now than ever before," the PAS urged, is "a new humanism," a new system of thinking, believing and acting that evolves from and is nurtured by dialogue, rather than opposition, between science, ethics and faith.

What I want to explore here is how NPT, a new science of women's health care, is a prolepsis of the positive societal impact of a humanistic science. In other words, it is an already existing model of reproductive health care that *anticipates* biomedicine's role in the new humanism envisioned by the Pope and PAS membership. NPT was and is and will be a part of a much larger movement, of a more formidable objective than that of merely being an example of how faith and reproductive medicine can be in harmony. With its neo-humanist culture, NPT is, in my opinion, the flagship of natural procreative initiatives that are, even as you read, producing the "good fruit" of a truly human culture where knowledge, belief and behavior will be ordered to the good of present and future generations of the family of mankind.

To prove my thesis I want to explore with you the culture of NPT from two perspectives: the vision of its science and the vision of its faith. Both prospects share one feature: They attest how the culture

of NPT is a robust response to the call for science, ethics, and faith to build a new humanism.

Background

NaProTechnology (*Natural Procreative Technology*) is an emerging science of women's health care developed by Dr. Thomas W. Hilgers and his colleagues at the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction. This system of reproductive health care is a complex of medical and surgical interventions promoting gynecological health that obviates the need for either reproductive techniques that exclude marital intercourse or the prescription of oral contraceptives for both therapeutic and contraceptive purposes.

First, it is reproductive health care that assists and optimizes, rather than obviates and/or suppresses, the natural procreative system. It allows a woman to maintain and monitor her obstetric and gynecological health and helps couples to understand and respect the full psychosomatic truth of their fertility.

Second, it is obstetric and gynecological medicine that accurately evaluates and effectively treats a host of abnormalities (whether on an endocrine or anatomic level) which could be the causes of infertility or, in the case of a pregnant woman, the cause of miscarriage.

Third, it promotes fertility awareness that enables couples to avoid and achieve a pregnancy in a way consonant with the comprehensive meaning of their marital union.

I

NPT: The Vision of Its Science

A scientific theory about the human person and human procreation undergirds and permeates mainstream reproductive technology. It is a view freighted with materialism, pragmatism, progressivism² and individualism. The science of NPT, in contradistinction, avoids all of these reductionistic errors. As a result, the latter distinguishes itself as a medical technology that is in

dialogue with, not divorced from, ethics and faith.

The resultant contrasts between mainstream reproductive science and NPT are, theoretically and practically speaking, stark. The science behind contraception and Assisted Reproductive Technologies (ARTs) constitutes scientism; the body of knowledge that grounds NPT is genuine science. Logically, then, the culture of ARTs and contraception promotes the “isms” that collectively constitute the old reductionist humanism. The culture of NPT, in contrast, advances the new integrated humanism envisioned by the PAS. Let me unpack these rather sweeping conclusions.

The principal assumption grounding ARTs is that of a value-free or morally neutral science. Moral norms and ethical values arise not from an objective source—the nature of the human person and human dignity—but from societal consensus: the culturally acceptable, ever-shifting individualistic preferences that surface at any given point in time.³ Value-free science views human beings as “the by-products of an evolutionary process” that have no intrinsic finality.⁴ Human persons are, by nature, nothing but material beings, material entities who lack not only a moral or spiritual dimension but who also lack a nature “deeply desirous of knowing the truth”⁵ and of choosing the good.

The main premise behind the reproductive science of NPT, on the other hand, is rooted in the *imago dei* doctrine of Scripture and Tradition (human beings are created in the image of God) and in the comprehensive psychosomatic vision of the human person to which this doctrine gives rise. Accordingly, God’s purposes for male and female sexuality are connatural. Human sexuality is meant to foster a covenantal life-giving love between a married man and a woman, who “by a mutual personal gift, proper and exclusive to themselves,”⁶ mirror God’s own inner, tri-personal, love-giving life.

Moreover, the anthropological vision of NPT—the divine plan for our sexually bifurcated human race—is not only discernible by human reason and our human experience of natural (moral) law but is also supported by the best available scientific data. The law of human nature teaches (and psychological and sociological studies attest) that, first, children find a much-needed security in the knowledge that they were conceived within acts of their parents’ commit-

ted sexual love. Second, for children to be conceived, gestated and brought into and within marriage is important not just for the wellbeing of those children but also for a robust familial and social order. Third, it is critical to a sound society that parents who conceive their children within a permanent monogamous marriage are also supported by public laws that outline parental responsibilities for those children.

Many infertile couples resort to ART because they see it is a quick-fix science. It provides what looks like the most pragmatically effective way for them to have their own biological child. Moral considerations within this schematic are predictable. The choice of in vitro fertilization (IVF) or one of its variations, is presented as the “right” choice for two reasons: it works (it is pragmatic) and it is ostensibly the most expeditious way of conceiving (it is useful or utilitarian). And, since a “good” choice is one that produces “good” consequences and maximizes “human happiness,” the pragmatic choice is thought to be necessarily “ethical.”

What’s behind a couple’s choice of NPT, in contrast, is the conviction that there are such things as objective truth and objectively good and bad choices. To choose well in the arena of reproductive medicine is, first, to choose a treatment or method that fully respects what is objectively true about personhood and human fertility and, second, to choose what fully respects the couple’s dignity and their procreative capacities.

I suppose, by way of summary, you could say that the science of NPT is a both/and science. The science of ARTs, on the other hand, is a reductionistic, either/or science. Proponents of ART argue that, for ART to be a reason-based science,⁷ it must necessarily exclude an appeal to faith. ART’s designers insist that the empirical observations of reason and experience are the *sole* criteria for finding solutions to the problem of infertility.

But NPT tries to get at the objective reality of what is being studied—female fertility, the complexities of the menstrual/ovulatory cycles and conception—through “a subtle combination of faith and experience, intuition and reason, imagination and deduction, personal insight and communal wisdom.”⁸ Stated differently, while the radical empiricist science behind ARTs refuses to admit facts other than those

observationally verifiable, the science of NPT admits metaphysical truths. The latter truths, what John Paul calls the “realities of the spirit,” though not able to be viewed under a microscope, are real nonetheless and form “part of the whole truth”⁹ about human fertility and fertility treatments. In short, the science of NPT takes up the march of human reason as it ought to be: “with [its] eyes fixed on divine revelation.”¹⁰

II

NPT: The Vision of Its Faith

Out of the gate, the single most important thing I could say about the faith vision behind NPT is what it is not. It is *not* fideism.¹¹ That is, the faith which grounds NPT does not pit “faith against reason, belief against knowledge, or religious experience against critical intelligence.”¹² The science of NPT recognizes that faith is the “great friend of intelligence.”¹³ The Roman Catholic faith that inspires NaPro guarantees that the knowledge base of this reproductive technology maintains the right relationship between faith and human reason as it honors their “autonomy and mutuality.”¹⁴ The faith vision of NPT admits that, although “science and faith represent two different orders of knowledge, autonomous in their processes,” they converge, in the end, upon “the discovery of reality in all its aspects, which has its origins in God.”¹⁵ The vision of the faith behind NPT links “scientific thought with man’s power in faith to seek truth” and “to bring the whole fullness of human capabilities to realization.”¹⁶

As a result, the Catholicism behind NPT has confidence in reason and recognizes its openness to Catholic theology. The faith-vision of NPT puts reason and faith at the service of the human family. Hence, it is not a faith at risk for deteriorating into the truncated rationalism typical of scientism. What’s more, NPT is not at risk for the temptation that plagues a functional science like ART: to serve ideology (rather than humanity).¹⁷

In short, the faith behind NPT stands in the right relationship with reason envisioned by the Second Vatican Council: “If methodological investigation within every branch of learning [substitute reproduc-

tive medicine] is carried out in a genuinely scientific manner and in accord with moral norms, it never truly conflicts with faith. For earthly matters [substitute family planning and infertility] and the concerns of faith [substitute the deeper meaning of procreation] derive from the same God.”¹⁸

In sum, the faith vision of NPT, fully admitting that science must work in harmony with faith, makes an invaluable contribution to human culture and participates fully in the new humanism.

Codicil

As an old maxim points out, ‘The whisper of truth can have an amazing resonance.’ Proof positive is that, within the neo-humanist spheres of NaProTechnology, our national and international communities have access to a procreative culture that celebrates the priority of ethics over medical technology, the primacy of the person over things, and the superiority of the spirit over matter. In short, the hallmark of the new humanism—seizing the hidden dynamic behind reality—is interchangeable with the scientific and cultural charisms of NaProTechnology. What an achievement for our generation and those to come! What a bold, versatile, and kinetic model of procreative medicine! What a blessing for women, society, and the family of humankind! ✕

ENDNOTES

¹ “Statement of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on the Cultural Values of the Natural Sciences,” Zenit, 6/17/2003 (available at zenitenglish@zenit.org).

² “Progress at any cost” and ‘the objectification of human beings’ are the best ways to sum up the moral sensibilities of the following rosy report marking the 25th anniversary of the birth of the first IVF baby, Louise Brown. “Most infertility problems could be eradicated in ten years, according to Alan Trounson, from the Monash Institute of Reproduction and development, in Victoria, Australia. Trounson, one of the early pioneers of IVF, said that the key to many infertility related problems may be found by undertaking research on stem cells and combining stem cell technologies with existing fertility treatments. . . . Roger Pederson, a stem cell researcher at the University of Cambridge, UK, said the enormous potential of ES cells, for treatments for both infertility and disease, is ‘all a legacy of 25 years of IVF’, adding that ‘every single embryo which can be studied is a result of IVF.’” (italics mine. Available at BioNews@progress.org.uk, “Scientist Predicts Solution to Infertility,” *BioNews* [7/21/2003]: 3)

³ I was reminded of just how vacuous and downright selfish human preferences can be when I read the following report recounting a woman’s reasons for using one of IVF’s spin-offs, preimplantation genetic diagnosis: “Embryo gender selection is permitted in Spain for family balancing, as well as for medical reasons. Ms Chenery, who is now 17 weeks pregnant with

a girl, *underwent a previous unsuccessful attempt* to conceive a baby girl at the Spanish clinic in January. She is now reported to be 'delighted' and cannot understand why the procedure is banned in Britain. 'I have always wanted to experience the mother-daughter relationship, which is totally different to the mother-son relationship, and I feel as I can, then why not?', she said." I would wager that the phrase in italics is a cryptic way of describing the abortion of a previously produced embryo(s) whose ticket to extinction or cryopreservation was being of the wrong sex. (BioNews 214 available at <http://www.progress.org.uk/News/BioNewsSearch.html> 6/23/2003-6/29/2003 p. 6.)

⁴ Luke Gormally, "Luke Gormally on Human Dignity and Bioethics—Part I," Zenit, July 11, 2003 (available at zenitenglish@zenit.org).

⁵ John Paul II, "Raising the Level of Philosophical and Theological Reflection," *Origins* 28 (November 19, 1998): 404.

⁶ Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Considerations Regarding Proposals to Give Legal Recognition to Unions Between Homosexual Persons," # 2 (available at www.vatican.va).

⁷ C. S. Lewis (1898–1963) understood that, although scientific reason is valid, it is not the only kind of reasoning. He pointed out that, although "[N]oncontradiction, validity, truth, value, meaning, purpose, and obligation" are "necessary presuppositions of the scientific method" they are "not themselves scientific phenomena." (M. D. Aeschliman, "C. S. Lewis on Mere Science," *First Things* 86 [October, 1998]: 17.)

⁸ Avery Dulles, SJ, "Science and Theology," in *John Paul II On Science and Religion*, 13.

⁹ "A Papal Address on the Church and Science," *Origins* 13 (June 2, 1983): 52.

¹⁰ Stanley L. Jaki, *Scientist and Catholic: An Essay on Pierre Duhem* (Front Royal, VA: Christendom Press, 1991), 278.

¹¹ More complete citations explain the danger of depreciating reason. The first is from John Paul II: "If reason cannot attain ultimate truths, faith loses its reasonable and intelligible character and is reduced to the realm of the nondefinable, the sentimental and the irrational. The outcome is fideism. Detached from its relationship to human reason, faith loses its public and universal validity and is limited to the subjective and private sphere. In the end, theological faith is destroyed" ("Raising the Level of Philosophical and Theological Reflection," *Origins* 28 (November 19, 1998): 404). The second is from M. D. Aeschliman: "... there is an opposite temptation that [C. S.] Lewis also criticized—the temptation to *defy* science, from the standpoint of either romantic/pantheistic Gnosticism or theological fideism . . . The appeal of pantheistic Gnosticism was something that Lewis understood and withstood; it lies at the heart of occult 'New Age' spirituality, 'deep Ecology,' and a good deal of 'eco-feminism' today" ("C. S. Lewis on Mere Science," *First Things* 86 [October, 1998]: 17).

¹² John Neuhaus, "The Naked Public Square: The Passion for Truth: the Way of Faith and Reason," *First Things* 88 [December, 1998]: 73.

¹³ John Paul II, "Address to Pontifical Academy of Sciences," *Origins* 13 (Nov. 12, 1984): 542.

¹⁴ Neuhaus, "Passion for Truth," 70.

¹⁵ John Paul II, "A Papal Address on the Church and Science," 51.

¹⁶ John Paul II, "Science and the Church: A Dialogue," *Origins* 10 (Dec. 4, 1980): 397.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 396.

¹⁸ *Gaudium et spes*, #36 (cited in "The Collaboration of Science and Religion," *Origins* 21 [Oct. 10, 1991]: 283).

Dryden's Niece, Sister Mary Howard (1653–1735)

by Anne Barbeau Gardiner

James Winn, in his biography of John Dryden, writes that "there is no evidence" the poet's mother-in-law Elizabeth Cecil Howard, the Countess of Berkshire, ever "abandoned her father's faith," namely Roman Catholicism, and he suggests that the poet's "deepening connection" with this branch of the Howard family would have "brought him into contact with some people who were certainly recusants." Thus, he traces the poet's conversion to the covert Catholicism of his in-laws.¹ However, Dryden's niece Mary Howard, who was raised by these same in-laws in the 1650s and 1660s and who converted in 1671, told her spiritual director that "all her Friends in *England*, among whom she had her Education, were either Protestants, or of no Religion, and that in her Childhood, all her Acquaintance lay only among such" (33). She also said she had never given Christianity any "serious" consideration

until she visited the convent of Val de Grace in Paris. It seems, then, that Dryden's in-laws were only nominal Christians. These statements appear in Mary Howard's biography published in 1767.

Entitled *A Short Account of the Life and Virtues of the Venerable and Religious Mother, Mary of the Holy Cross*, this work of 205 pages is based on three sources: her spiritual director, the Poor Clares who lived in the same convent, and visitors who knew her. The first two-thirds of the book—the most important part—is from the manuscript entitled "An Account of the wonderful Conversion," by Bishop Bonaventure Giffard, D. D. (1642–1734), vicar apostolic in London in the time of James II. The editor (once thought to be Alban Butler, but now identified as Anne Bedingfield) says that the manuscript is in Giffard's "own Hand" and signed with his name, and that the Bishop received this information "from her own Mouth" and from others "of unexceptionable Veracity" who knew her. Now since Giffard died in 1734, a year before

Mary, he had to have written his “Account” while she was alive. He had been her “spiritual Director” in Rouen for years and was so persuaded of her “heroick” virtue that until his death, “he had no greater Pleasure than to entertain others on the Edification and Comfort he had received from her Acquaintance.” Giffard includes short reflections on the contemplative life in his narrative, referring to such Fathers and Doctors of the Church as John Chrysostom, Cassian, Gregory the Great, Bonaventure, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Denis the Carthusian [67-68, 132], making it clear that his veneration of Mary Howard is in the context of Church history. The last third of the book is also due to Bishop Giffard, for he would often ask the Poor Clares of Rouen to write down what they knew about Mary, and on his deathbed he begged his successor Bishop Benjamin Petre to deliver this plea as his “dying Request.” Thanks to him, then, we have the “authentic Relations” given both by Mary’s “spiritual Daughters” and by “Persons of Quality” who were “intimately acquainted with her” and “edified” by her “heroick Spirit” [Pp 146 ff].

During her 60 years in the convent, Mary was careful to conceal her family background. But in the 18th century, Mary Plowden and her brother the Earl of Stafford made “Inquiries” and discovered that she had been the daughter of Sir Robert Howard (29), Dryden’s brother-in-law and collaborator on *The Indian Queen* (1665). It seems she was abandoned by her father and grandparents after her conversion in France. However, the Catholic branches of the Howard family acknowledged her—“not only the *Carlisle* Branch, but also *Thomas Duke of Norfolk*, *William Earl of Stafford*, and other Noblemen of the *Norfolk* or *Howard* Family” (22). This is the same Earl of Stafford who would be executed in the Popish Plot in 1680, and for whose daughter Anastasia, Dryden would write a marriage-song. In particular, the Earl of Carlisle helped Mary after her conversion by sending her “a very rich Pair of Beads” which she sold in Paris for a hundred pounds sterling (32, 64).

Born on 28 December 1653, Mary was still a child when her mother died (33-5), and she was sent to her grandparents the Earl and Countess of Berkshire to be raised in company with another grandchild Anne Howard, four years her senior (39-40n). After attending boarding school with Anne, Mary lived until the age of eighteen in “almost constant company” with

Dryden’s mother-in-law the Countess of Berkshire. It is very likely that the poet and his wife Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of this Countess, would have known Mary intimately. Dryden’s brothers-in-law used to visit her in boarding school and later came to see her in Paris after her conversion, but she “concealed that they were her Uncles” (42).

Mary told Giffard that she had an inkling early on that she would be a nun, for when she and her cousin Anne² were told to choose a master, she chose a Latin one, “thinking within herself, though at that Time a Protestant, that if she should ever be a Nun, it would be of Service to her” (36). Giffard heard “from her own Mouth” that a gentleman riding with her on a coach to London once told her: “Madam, remember I tell you, that God has extraordinary Designs of Mercy upon you”; and later, when she was riding in the Countess of Berkshire’s coach at fifteen, a stranger fixed his eyes on her and said, “The Blessing of God will light upon you, and upon none but you, and the Queen of Heaven protects you” (41).

The turning point of her life, however, occurred in 1671, when King Charles II saw her at a Play, was much “taken with her Beauty, and inquired who she was.” She was “much disturbed” at this news, no doubt fearing that his attentions would draw scandal on her. She immediately told her uncles Philip and Edward Howard, who helped her to leave for France under the name of Miss Talbot. Her guardian on this journey was her intimate acquaintance Lady Bridget Bertie Osborne, daughter of the Earl of Lindsay and wife of the soon-to-be Earl of Danby, whose daughter Elizabeth, age 10, also came with them. In Paris the two girls were placed in the convent Val de Grace to learn French. When Mary heard the nuns singing “the Divine Offices at the Foot of the Altar, all the Powers of their Souls evaporating in Holocausts of pure Love,” she realized that she had never before given “serious Attention” to Christianity. This phrase sheds much light on the absence of religion among Dryden’s in-laws in the 1660s. Mary told Giffard she saw for the first time in these nuns “the strongest Conviction” about the “sublime Truths,” “Beauty, Dignity, and Happiness of our divine Religion” (42-45). But what triggered her conversion was doing the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, 1671: “after having finished the Round of these Devotions with the Nuns, she privately fell on her Knees, and without Reserve dedicated

herself with the greatest Fervour she was able to the Divine Service, earnestly begging God to strengthen and direct her." She was received into the Catholic Church by "an *English Benedictin Monk*," along with her companion Elizabeth Osborne. (45-47).

Now troubles began. After bringing the two girls home, Lady Osborne noticed that Mary abstained from meat on Fridays and asked, "I hope the Nuns have not made you a Papist?" When Mary replied that "God" had made her one, her guardian flew into a "Rage" and from that day gave her only meat on Fridays and locked her up on Sundays. She even "shut her up with an Earl's Son, on purpose that she might be seduced and forfeit her Virtue, or at least lose her Honour," but the two "only conversed innocently together." Mary saw her reaction as "unreasonable" because the lady seemed to her "a mere Sceptick" in Religion." (49).

"A certain *French* clergyman of Distinction" helped Mary escape and return to Val de Grace, but when Lady Osborne threatened to go to the King and promised to be more gentle, Mary returned. Things only got worse: Lady Osborne now carried "two Pistols loaded with Balls, to prevent any other such an Attempt, saying she would shoot her if she offered to leave her House: even in the Night Time she made her lie with her, and had one of these Pistols in the Bed." Some time later, she relented and took Mary to the Benedictine abbey of the Holy Sacrament, but at the last minute asked the Prioress "if her Walls were high enough," which so alarmed the nun that she refused to take Mary (50).

After this, Lady Osborne tried to distract Mary with "Plays, Balls, and Operas," but finally, in despair, let her lodge in the Monastery at Chaillot near Paris without paying her expenses. But "a young Gentlewoman of the same Age with her, who was Daughter to the first President of the Parliament, and very rich" maintained her. The two girls had met at Val de Grace and now lodged together at Chaillot for two or three years. In 1674, after her daughter Elizabeth had died of fever in Paris, Lady Osborne came to tell Mary she was going home and that if she would go with her, "she would take her to *London*, continue her former Kindness to her, and take Care of her Fortune: but if not, that she would abandon her, and that none of her Friends would ever more take Notice of her, or have any Concern for her." (This is the first we learn

of Mary's having a "Fortune" in England, perhaps from her deceased mother's side.) Mary replied that she put herself in the care of "Providence, and would never return into the World." Lady Osborne left "abruptly" and was "never known to have inquired any more after her" (51-2).

Mary seemed incapable of half-measures. Although the young Frenchwoman who had maintained her at Chaillot offered to settle on her "half her Fortune if she would continue with her," Mary wanted to undertake something far more difficult. She began to inquire about the Poor Clares of Ave Maria in Paris, who were reputed to be "the most austere Monastery of Nuns in the World." When the English monk who had received her into the Church heard about this, he urged Mary "to enter among her Country-women, telling her there was at *Rouen* a very regular Convent of *English Poor Clares*" (54). These nuns, an offshoot of the Gravelines established at St Omer in 1603, had arrived as a colony in Rouen in 1645, at the request of Queen Henrietta Maria. Lord Arundel sent his daughter there as a pensioner and she became a nun; the same thing happened to the Earl of Portland's three daughters.

Two days after learning of those English Poor Clares, Mary set out for Normandy with the money received from selling the Earl of Carlisle's present (56). When she arrived, the abbess made some difficulty, not knowing who she was, but after a few days accepted her as a novice under the name of Miss Parnel. Giffard notes that it was "customary" in times of "Persecution" for "*English* Catholics of Distinction, to disguise themselves in Monasteries and Colleges, by changing their Names" (65). Meanwhile, Lady Osborne returned in London in 1674 without Mary, to the dismay of the Earl of Berkshire's family. Some of them went to France to bring Mary back, but gave up when they found her a nun in Rouen (53). Dryden, too, would have learned of his niece's conversion in 1674. After a year, the Poor Clares voted unanimously to admit her and Mary took her vows on Sept 8, 1675, at age 22, assuming the name of Sister Mary of the Holy Cross, because of her great devotion to the Passion (64, 98).

Giffard constantly praises Mary for her "heroick Constancy," "heroick Virtue," "heroick Spirit" and "heroick Dispositions of Soul" (70, 71, 74, 101). The most memorable example he gives of her heroism is of her suffering the dark night of the soul. When she first entered the cloister, she felt spiritual consolations, but

“some time later” she fell “into a grievous spiritual Dryness, in which nothing warmed her Affections, no Feelings, of Devotion sweetened her Austerities; her Soul was overwhelmed with Darkness, and her Heart was a Stranger to the least Spark of divine Comfort” (113-14). Then, for “two whole years” she endured “a most frightful spiritual Darkness, Desolation of Soul, anxious Trouble, alarming Fears and Scrupulosity, and inexpressible Horrors.” Giffard, who became her spiritual director some time after the onset of this ordeal, says her suffering was “much increased by the Unskilfulness of a spiritual Director .. who understood nothing of her State.” Mary endured demonic visions and temptations: she felt God had left “her Intellect in Darkness, abandoning her Mind and Imagination to Distractions, and suffering them to be filled with frightful Images, haunted by Objects of Horror and Abomination, and miserably perplexed with vain Fears and Alarms, and troublesome importunate Temptations, depriving her Will of all sensible Relish of Devotion, and alarming it with unspeakable Horrors: in a Word, afflicting all her inward Powers in a Manner not to be expressed, nor even understood by any who have not learned it by their own Experience of that State” (110). Her “Heart” was no longer in “her own Power” but “seemed possessed by infernal Fiends,” and her mind filled with “alarming Phantoms.” Passions she had easily checked before now “made furious Assaults,” and former spiritual consolations seemed “an Illusion.” She felt only “Coldness, Wretchedness, and cruel Sadness, with which she was quite overwhelmed.” During this time, she remained outwardly unmoved and unchanged in her devotions (115-118).

Giffard compares her “Anguish of Soul” in this crisis to that of Christ in Gethsemane, and calls her fidelity “heroick” (108, 114). When she came out of this “Darkness which clouded her Understanding,” she was an utterly changed person. She had “so grown in all spiritual Science as to have attained to the Lights of the Saints” (118-20). Giffard places her in the highest rank of Christian mystics when he says that she experienced the passive “Prayer of Union,” the most “sublime Degree” of contemplation, to which even many saints are not called (126-7). In this state, he explains, the will enters into the cloud and is “swallowed up in the immense Ocean of the sovereign uncreated Good, with an insatiable Desire, and enlarged feeling Knowledge of it.” This state is called passive because

the soul “scarce perceives itself to act” while “the Understanding sees or contemplates great Truths of Faith in the divine Light, and the Will is employed in Acts of Adoration” (130-1).

With English reticence, Giffard gives few external details, except to say that Mary modestly resisted “extraordinary Favours” given her in public and that this is what Walter Hilton and John of Avila would have advised her to do. With the other sisters, she was “most careful never, if possible, to discover any Thing of extraordinary heavenly Favours received in Prayer.” Even so, they recognized in her “a new extraordinary Improvement in an angelical Spirit and Temper of Mind,” which was “visible Proof” to them that she had been “favoured with a particular Visit of the divine Spirit” (143). They would often hear her burst spontaneously into fervent “Aspirations,” which Giffard compares to those of Bernard of Clairvaux in his commentary on the Song of Songs. He also sees her as another Teresa of Avila (133-6).

From this point on, *A Short Account* is no longer based on Giffard’s story of Mary’s conversion and her interior struggles, but on what the other sisters observed about her. While “very young” she was chosen “Mistress of the Choir” for her fine voice and fervent devotion in the divine Office. Later as “Portress,” she met visitors at the grate and managed “the temporal Affairs” of the community, “buying all Necessaries” and paying tradesmen. In this role, she kept the monastery free from gossip by confining her words to the “necessary purposes of Charity” (96, 146-8). Then in 1701, at age 49, she was elected abbess, an office she held until her death in 1735. The election was ordered by the Archbishop of Rouen because the monastery had become infected with the heresy of Quietism and the nuns were divided into camps. The election was held by secret ballot, with two-thirds of the votes needed to win, and it took place on December 23, with three priests supervising. Mary was elected with 42 votes, while the former Abbess got six (191). The Archbishop was pleased, since he thought Mary free from the Quietism that had “found Abettors of great Reputation in Normandy, and some of them had caused no small Confusion and Disturbance in this Monastery.”

Mary’s humility appears in her reaction to this election. She hid in a little hermitage “weeping bitterly,” refused to come down, and insisted on another

election. The vicar commanded her to appear, and when she finally did, held up by two sisters, he could “scarce read the Prayers for Weeping” himself. She was confirmed abbess, and the deposed abbess promised to help her, while Mary wept in her arms. Although an abbess was elected for life, Mary kept asking for another election, hoping the choice “might fall upon some other,” till the community “unanimously intreated” the vicar not to listen to her. But to the end of her life, Mary would say that “she wished she could have put it in her Vows, never to have borne any Office,” and she “sighed” after “the Happiness of living a private Nun” (153, 162, 187).

The sisters recalled Mary’s meekness as abbess: she would reprove them with “necessary Authority” but without any “imperiousness,” mixing her rebukes with “so much Sweetness, Charity, and Compassion for Human Weakness, as took off every Thing that could seem harsh to Nature.” She would even ascribe their faults to herself, grieving thus: “Alas! The Tree is known by its Fruits. You see what poor Fruit I produce. The Fault is certainly mine.” And if she ever thought a sister had taken “Offence” at something she said, even if she was misunderstood, “she failed not to ask Pardon.” Another example of meekness is that three days before she died in 1735, she asked pardon of each sister, one by one, “for any Fault she might have committed in their Regard, or any Pain or Uneasiness she might have ever given them.”

The sisters also gave these examples of her heroic spirit. Although her constitution was so frail her superior had never given her any hard labor to do, once she became abbess, she took on hard labors such as “carrying Wood.” Also, she loved to visit the sick, especially one sister who had a “terrible Cancer in her Leg” with an offensive “Stench.” Mary used to change her dressing every day before breakfast (155-9). Besides this, Mary “never refused to receive a Postulant for Want of Fortune, or any temporal Consideration, when she seemed truly called to that State,” and she even called it an advantage to be deprived of “earthly Goods, and worldly Conveniences” (161) While she was abbess, she received 34 to “Profession” (187).

Mary Howard left behind many writings composed for her sisters, “little Practices of Devotion, suitable to each one’s spiritual Necessities and Dispositions” written with “her own Hand.” In particular, she encouraged them to practice a “continual Attention

to the divine Presence” by writing for them “fervent” aspirations “for every Place and Employment” (182-3). Thus she left the Poor Clares of Rouen “an incredible Number of short excellent MS. Instructions, Prayers, and several longer Treatises.” However, nearly all of these works seem to have been lost at the French Revolution. Only a couple of them survive in a Poor Clare convent near Durham, England.

The last part of *A Short Account* cites a number of striking passages from Mary’s works. In *The Chief Points of our holy Ceremonies*, which she called her “last Will and Testament,” Mary urged her sisters to love each other: “We must have a tender cordial Love for all, accompanied with Respect, preventing each other in every Service, shunning all Disputes, as the Seed of Dissention, always ready to leave our own Will and Judgment to conform to others, to bear each other’s Burdens, support each other’s Ways and Humours, never complaining of any one’s Behaviour, and behaving toward all with Sweetness, by which we may change Antipathy into Love” (185-6). In *Prayers and Considerations upon each Article of the holy Rule of the Poor Clares* Mary exclaimed, “O that I could break forth without Intermission, into seraphick Acts of Thy Love,” and desired to have “all the Awe and Respect with which the Angels and twenty-four Elders are penetrated, when they prostrate themselves before the Lamb” (177). But though she prayed like this to be like the Seraphim, her models of contemplative prayer, she more often meditated on the “Sacred Humanity” and the Passion of Christ.

A Short Account goes a long way to explain why a learned bishop like Bonaventure Giffard, who carried on a difficult ministry in London for over forty years, often having to run from one hiding place to another, found inspiration and solace in the memory of Mary Howard. She represented to him what his struggle was all about. It is probably that Dryden, too, found inspiration in the example of his heroic niece.

FOOTNOTES

¹ James Anderson Winn, *John Dryden and His World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 121-125.

² later Anne Bedingfield, who converted and died at age 34, in 1682 (40).

Virginitas vs Maternitas in Partu: A Response to Msgr. Calkins

by Fr. Anthony Zimmerman S.V.D.
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Msg. Arthur Barton Calkins provides a respectful defense of Virginitas in Partu in the Spring 2004 issue of the *FCS Quarterly*. We owe him a debt of gratitude. If I now argue “sed contra,” it is to defend Mary’s motherhood. For if she did not “give birth” to Jesus in a natural manner, then some of her glory as our *Theotokos* fades.

If her birth canal remained virginal, then Mary did not “give” Jesus to us. Then it was God who took Jesus from Mary miraculously and laid the Child before her. When Mary saw the Child, she would then take Him to her breast and later lay Him into the manger. In this scenario, Mary would be inactive in the birthing process. She would be a passive *vas instrumentalis*, not an active *Theotokos*. We must weigh the merits of integral motherhood against those of a miraculous birth.

St. Luke employs verbs that indicate an active giving of birth, not passive instrumentality:

While they were there, the time came for her to deliver (*ut pareret, tou tekein*) her child. And she gave birth to (*et peperit, kai eteken*) her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Luke 2:6-7).

Luke presents Mary as active in giving birth as well as in wrapping Jesus in swaddling clothes.

The Church honors Mary with the lovely Antiphon: “Salve sancta Parens, enixa puerpera Regem.” The words *Parens* and *puerpera* envision active motherhood.

The Council of Ephesus, in the year 431, triumphantly designated Mary as the *Theotokos*, the one who gave birth to God. The name indicates that she bore Jesus actively, not that God took Jesus from her. The Acts of the Council of Ephesus, Session 1, contain a letter of Cyril to Nestorius, with this passage about Mary’s motherhood:

This was the sentiment of the holy Fathers; therefore they ventured to call the holy Virgin, the Mother of God, not as if the nature of the Word or his divinity had its beginning from the holy Virgin, but because of her was born that holy body with a rational soul, to which the Word being personally united is said to be born according to the flesh. (Roberts, Alexander and Donaldson, James, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, Second Series: Volume XIV, (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.) 1997).

Virginitas vs Motherhood

When the Word was made Flesh in Mary, her biological features of virginitas inevitably gave way and disappeared when new biological indications of motherhood displaced them. In no way whatsoever did the bodily features of motherhood violate Mary’s vow of virginitas. With the pregnancy, her uterus expanded to make room for Jesus. The uterine mucosa increased in thickness and vascularization to allow osmotic exchanges between mother and Child. Her mammary glands also developed and her breasts became those of a mother. At birth the placenta would also be extruded (or miraculously pass through the walls of her body) and would need to be severed from the Infant. Even after involution was completed the marks of historical motherhood would remain in Mary’s body. Saints tell us that she shows them to Jesus occasionally when she makes a petition with special motherly insistence.

The beautiful testimony of Ambrose cited by Msgr. Calkins about Mary’s “incorruption” notwithstanding, Mary’s body lost the features of virginitas, while her vow remained intact. The loss of the virginal seal was a continuation and term of the other bodily changes from those of a virgin to those of a mother. It was not a special novelty.

The author cites Thomas who states that “integrity of the bodily organ is accidental to virginitas” (ST 2,2,153). But he then modifies that statement of Thomas with another, namely that bodily integrity belongs to the perfection of virginitas (Q Q 6,10, prol). The author then follows with a rhetorical ques-

tion: "Could we expect that God would do less for His Virgin Mother?" To which we answer: "God preserved her virginal consecration fully intact when He transformed her into a mother."

Witness of the Fathers

The list of Fathers of the Church who support Virginitas in Partu offered by the author is ample and impressive. The fourth and fifth centuries were the golden age of the Fathers, and when such greats as Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, and Ambrose testify to their belief in virginitas in partu, we have reason to ponder their belief with due respect.

Msgr. Calkins then adds that "The preaching and teaching was not a mere matter of pious fantasizing, but rather it was a careful 'handing on' of what had been received." For this latter assertion he provides no data. Respectfully, might I ask the Monsignor to provide such data, if data exists. He lists no Clement of Rome, Polycarp, Ignatius, Barnabas, Justin, Irenaeus, Hermas, Tatian, Clement of Alexander, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, Lactantius, Apostolic Constitution, Origen.

The author then relates that the matter "was dealt with" during the Pontificate of Pope St. Siricius at the Council of Capua in 392." However, the subject dealt with there was the virginity of Mary post-partum, that she bore no more children after Jesus was born. Nothing explicit was proclaimed there about a miraculous birth of Jesus.

Msgr. Calkins cites a passage from a sermon by Pope Saint Leo the Great. In that passage, however, Pope Leo mentions that her conception came about "not by intercourse with man." That appears to be the focus of Leo's teaching. Her chastity underlies her perpetual virginity. There is no explicit mention of a miraculous birth:

The origin is different but the nature like: not by intercourse with man but by the power of God was it brought about: for a Virgin conceived, a Virgin bare, and a Virgin she remained...

He came that He might cure every weakness of our corruptness and all the sores of our defiled souls: for which reason it behoved Him to be born by a new order, who brought to men's bodies the new gift of unsullied purity. For the uncorrupt nature of Him that was born had to guard the primal virginity of the Mother, and the infused power of the Divine Spirit had to preserve in spotlessness and holiness that

sanctuary which He had chosen for Himself: that Spirit (I say) who had determined to raise the fallen, to restore the broken, and by overcoming the allurements of the flesh to bestow on us in abundant measure the power of chastity: in order that the virginity which in others cannot be retained in child-bearing, might be attained by them at their second birth.

In another passage, however, not cited by Msgr. Calkins, Pope Leo mentions Mary's miraculous conception and her giving birth in parallel. The passage occurs in an authoritative teaching document, the Dogmatic Constitution against Flavian: "*quae illum ita salva virginitate edidit, quemadmodum salva virginitate concepit*; who brought Him forth with virginity intact, as she conceived Him without loss of virginity." The passage is not a data opera teaching and says nothing about biological details concerned with virginity when giving birth, but appears to reflect a common assumption at that time (A.D.449) that Christ issued forth miraculously. Even so, the parallel may refer to her perpetual state of virginity rather than to biological events of conception and birth.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that Mary preserved her virginity even in the act of giving birth:

499 The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary's real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man (Cf. DS 291; 294; 427; 442; 503; 571; 1880). In fact, Christ's birth "did not diminish his mother's virginal integrity but sanctified it" (LG 57). And so the liturgy of the Church celebrates Mary as *Aeiparthenos*, the "Ever-virgin" (Cf. LG 52).

The normative Latin original: "*etiam in partu Filii Dei*" is embellished in the English translation to read: "even in the act of giving birth." The translation is an obvious specification of a meaning that may or may not be in the original. The Latin "*etiam*" however, singles out the fact of virginal integrity when giving birth. That appears to suggest a miraculous birth while avoiding an explicit teaching.

An examination of the passages annotated by paragraph 499 indicates a belief illustrated in the documents that Mary's virginity was preserved when giving birth. This can be interpreted as being identical with the universal teaching about Mary's perpetual virginity. The documents uniformly fall short of teaching explicitly that the birth was miraculous. However, if one is already convinced that the birth was miraculous, then the documents can firm up that belief.

Discussion

From these references we can conclude that a miraculous birth is a common assumption that dates back to at least the latter part of the fourth century. In the current Catechism, the Church gives voice to this common assumption, but does not teach explicitly any biological details of what this might imply.

Neither the Fathers nor the Catechism indicate an awareness of the extent to which a miraculous birth might derogate from the significance of the maternity of Mary.

The data presented by Msgr. Calkins fails to show that a belief in the miraculous birth can be traced back to an Apostolic Tradition. A gap of three hundred years exists between the death of the last apostle and a documented belief in a miraculous birth. If the belief is an article of the faith, it must be sought in implicit teachings, if it is not passed on during this gap of time by an explicit Tradition. A teaching that started only in the fourth century does not ordinarily qualify as a part of the Apostolic Tradition.

The teaching that Mary remains a virgin at conception, at the birth of Jesus, and after His birth, is a doctrine of the Church that is not essentially affected by biological factors of pregnancy and giving birth. The core of this teaching is Mary's response to Gabriel: "How can this be, since I know not man?"

The honor of Theotokos belongs to Mary eminently because she brought Jesus forth into the world. The Gospel according to Saint Luke provides no indication that the birth was miraculous. An active participation by Mary in giving birth belongs naturally to the integrity of motherhood, and perhaps even to its essence.

To my knowledge, neither the Fathers, nor the Magisterium, nor Msgr. Calkins has weighed the negative effects that a miraculous birth might have upon Mary's motherhood. Until that has been done, I believe that a doctrine about a miraculous birth of Jesus remains tentative.

I personally believe that the concept of Theotokos contains an implicit belief that Mary really gave birth to Jesus as mothers do this naturally. For unless Mary participated in active birthing, she could not "give" Jesus to us and to the world. It implies that our belief in her motherhood negates belief in a miraculous birth.

The actual experience of Mary giving birth, and of Jesus being born of her, perfects the bonding between mother and child. The very vivid experience of giving birth to this child imprints upon the mother the powerful instinct to recognize this as her child, to therefore love that child, to feel bound to nurture and educate the child—all this belongs profoundly to motherhood.

For Jesus, too, being brought into the world by active participation of His mother has significance. A baby born of its mother instinctively takes it for granted that it has a mother who will respond to his ever need. A natural bonding of a baby to its mother occurs by the very reason of being born of her.

Mary might have missed very much of what belongs to motherhood, if God had miraculously taken the Child from her and laid Him before her to now take care of Him. And Jesus would have missed the experience of proceeding forth from His mother, and the overwhelming feeling of being her Child.

After giving birth a mother tingles from head to foot in a tsunami of love, as this mother knows from experience:

The greatest joy and fulfillment of a woman is precisely in having this child -- this little one, this miracle of life. Holding her newborn baby is such a stirring experience for a woman that words can hardly express it. Here is this little one, so perfect, so close, so loving—and he is totally dependent on you. There is just nothing in the world that can be more rewarding to a woman—nothing! Not fame, not ability, not money, not acclaim. This is it! She is happy; she is fulfilled (Erica John, mother of nine, "Motherhood is Golden," address given in Tokyo, Morning Star School, 1981, reprinted from *Natural Family Planning, Nature's Way—God's Way*, De Rance, Milwaukee, 1981).

If Mary had not given birth to Jesus as mothers do naturally, her life would be considerably impoverished. A similar impoverishment would effect Jesus. As a result, the angels and saints would lose one of the supreme delights of heavenly contemplation. I hope, then, that Mary is truly the mother of Jesus by having given birth to Him. That makes her to be our mother also, who are brothers and sisters of her Son Jesus. *Benedicta tu in mulieribus.* ❧

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Do We Recognize Ourselves in This Jesus?

Review by Alice Ramos, Ph.D.
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In the February 25th Op-Ed page of *The New York Times* an article appeared by Kenneth Woodward with the title: “Do you recognize this Jesus?” The Jesus portrayed in Mel Gibson’s “*The Passion of the Christ*” is shocking and as Woodward says, Gibson intended to shock. Do we need to be shocked? I think we do; we need to get out of our usual comfort zone. We all know that we live in a materialistic culture that seeks pleasure, instant gratification, novelty, and that pursues in a sense the fountain of youth and external beauty (one has only to think of the recent “extreme makeovers”). This type of culture has influenced everyone—Christians and non-Christians alike. Christians have not always been counter-cultural. They have not always tried to influence the culture around them by means of the “good news,” the Gospel of Christ, but rather in accommodating themselves and the Gospel to the culture have fallen prey to its dictates and many are now left without direction because of a vacuous faith. In ending his article, Woodward says the following: “Were we a nation of Bible readers, not just Bible owners, I don’t think a film like Mr. Gibson’s would cause much fuss. While I do not think that “*The Passion of the Christ*” is anti-Semitic, I do think it presents Christians with a “teaching moment.” But the lessons have more to do with forgotten Christian basics than with who killed Jesus.”¹

I think Woodward is right and that to say this film is anti-Semitic is, as a Vatican spokesman has recently said, tantamount to regarding the Gospels as anti-Semitic, which is absolutely false. Jesus was a Jew. His Mother was a Jew. His disciples were Jews. Christians believe that the salvation of mankind was brought about by Christ, a Jew. We can’t de-Judaize Christ. The Catholic Church in its declaration *Nostra Aetate* has pronounced itself against anti-Semitism. Furthermore, as the current Papal Household Preacher puts it: “Perhaps, as believers, it is necessary to go beyond the affirmation of the non-culpability of the Jewish people and to see in the unjust suffering endured by them in history something

that places them on the side of the suffering Servant of God and, therefore, for us Christians, on the side of Jesus.”² This is precisely how Edith Stein, philosopher, a Carmelite nun converted from Judaism, and Catholic saint, understood her own fate and the fate of her people in Hitler’s Germany.

But I’d like to get back to Woodward’s point about Christian basics. I think this movie can help us to think about human life, more specifically about the Christian life, about who man is, about who this Jesus is. Just as the devil tempts Christ in the opening of the movie by saying that the restoration of humanity is too great a burden for one man, we might be tempted to think: What manner of man is this who endures such suffering? What manner of God is this who permits the cruel death of His only Son? Can I follow the God that the face of this Jesus reveals to me? I think and know that we can, and that this film provides us with a “learning moment” about ourselves and what it means to be a Christian, a follower of Christ, one who gives witness to Him.

I’d like to begin my comments on what we can learn from this film by first considering the words of Fr. Augustine DiNoia, undersecretary of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—the Vatican department charged with promoting “official” church teaching. After seeing the film, Fr. DiNoia characterized it as “an intensely religious experience,” and welcomed “the director’s profound spiritual insight into the theological meaning of the passion and death of Christ.” He considers the film “a production of exquisite artistic and religious sensitivity” and concludes that it “is entirely faithful to the New Testament.”³ My reason for quoting Fr. DiNoia is to remind us of one of the great services that art—art such as this film—can render us: the possibility of knowing things, in this case the last hours of Christ on earth and his interaction with Jews and Romans alike, and of seeing them in a new light, of seeing ourselves differently, of recognizing and reinterpreting ourselves, thus gaining self-knowledge.⁴

Aristotle tells us in the *NE* that we are to be good as the good man.⁵ For the Christian that good man is Christ, perfect man and perfect God. Christ’s life reveals God’s love for humanity and it is his life that we are called to follow as Christians. If we want

to be his disciples, Christ tells us in no uncertain terms that we have to deny ourselves and take up the cross, because paradoxically the cross is the way to victory, suffering and death the way to life. That said, I'd like to focus briefly on three aspects of this movie that can lead the Christian who views it to a significant learning moment or as DiNoia puts it, "an intensely religious experience." My remarks will focus on what I will call detachment or attachment, heart, and newness—newness which could be rendered as integrity or wholeness, the integrity that we aspire to not only as spiritual beings but as corporeal beings as well. I've chosen these three aspects for a reason: they are central aspects of the Christian life, of the hope of the Christian. My choice is not whimsical or sentimental since it is based on a knowledge of the Gospels, of the spirituality of Christianity, of the good life, of the Christian life.

I

As we all know, human beings seek happiness, and for the Christian this happiness is union with God in Christ. Just as Aristotle tells us that man's happiness cannot consist in wealth, honor or fame—what we might call the good opinion of others—, power, and pleasures,⁶ Gibson's film magnificently tells us the same in his depiction of the last hours of Christ. Think of Judas, the one who has the greater guilt for having handed Jesus over, for thirty pieces of silver. Judas was a close follower of Jesus, the one who kept the purse; a follower of Christ but attached to money. Even after Christ calls him "friend" and lovingly looks at him, even after Judas comes to his senses and returns the money, he despairs and takes his life. Even a follower of Christ is capable of betraying Him. The Christian who views this film might well ask himself or herself if he or she has not in some way betrayed Christ, whether out of avarice, or something a little more subtle.

Think of Peter; he too betrays Christ—not for money; he doesn't want to admit that he's a follower of Christ out of fear, so he denies that he knows Jesus the Galilean—not once, but three times. Are there not times in our own lives when perhaps out of human respects, out of wanting to please others more than we wanted to please God that we too have betrayed Christ?

Think of Herod in the movie; I think it's fairly obvious what his attachments are—pleasures. Herod

speaks to Christ; Christ gives no answer. There are attachments that so fill the heart that even if Christ spoke to us we wouldn't recognize His voice because we're so filled with self.

Think of Pilate; even though in the Gospels Pilate nowhere gives Christ a cup to drink, I think the gesture is significant; there is something about Jesus that haunts Pilate. It seems as though he knew that Jesus, the man standing before him, subject to his earthly power, was really the Truth. But Pilate is afraid—afraid of losing his power. Perhaps we too are tempted by power, or a sense of self-sufficiency, or are attached to some Caesar whose opinion we can't break loose from. And so because of these attachments we can fail to find happiness, union with God in Christ.

II

Now let's look at the Christ in the movie. Before the scourging, Jesus says what may seem the impossible: "My heart is ready." Why is his heart ready? Having spent the night in prayer, he has united his will to the will of the Father. His being is completely identified with his mission. He knows that only by undergoing the brutal scourging, by carrying the cross and being lifted high on the cross and dying that ignominious death, will he bring about the salvation of all of humanity. He wants to make us participants in his love, in his goodness, in his life. He took on a human nature for that purpose and he submits his will to the Father, he obeys. His only attachment is to do his Father's will, for this has he come. And so his heart is ready. He knows what he has to do and he willingly and lovingly does it. And so after the scourging, which seems interminable, whip lash after whip lash after whip lash, his body defiled, sunken in a pool of blood, he still undergoes further humiliation—the crowning with thorns, the taunting of the soldiers. How could any man endure so much? And yet he offers his life for you and me. And when the moment comes to take up the cross, he embraces it, lovingly, because by that cross we will be saved. As the Gospels tell us, "Greater love than this no man has than he lay down his life for his brethren."⁷

What about you and me? To live the life of Christ means carrying the cross. Most likely you and I are like Simon of Cyrene, reluctant to carry the cross, perhaps even angry at times to be faced with any suffering, any difficulty, at all. But if we look at

Simon in the movie, his encounter with Christ, with the cross, is transformative. Christ's love has effected a change in his heart. At one point, the camera closes in on the cross and we see the arms of Simon and Jesus intertwined; now they are both embracing the cross. Christ repays Simon by giving him a bigger heart capable of loving the cross as He loved it: a pusillanimous Simon becomes a magnanimous man due to his encounter with the cross of Christ.

I can't help but think for myself as a Christian, as a human person, how important this question of heart is. The Psalms tell us that where our treasure is, there also our heart is; or, where our attachments are, there our heart is. Aquinas says something similar: "That in which man rests as his last end is master of his affections, since he takes from this his entire rule of life."⁸ Gibson's portrayal of Christ can lead us to the question: What do I really love? Where is my heart? Where am I seeking happiness?

III

Christ says in the film: "I make all things new."⁹ Perhaps these words seem strange, and yet we all love what is new, perfect, and whole. Christ's tortured and beaten body, his lifeless body, that Mary holds at the end, presenting it to us for we are all responsible for Christ's death; that body will be whole again, new again. A transfigured life overcomes death, and so the camera zooms in on the resurrected body of Christ, whole, new, radiant. That's what we want, that's what the Christian hopes for and believes. But to arrive at that, we have to go through the cross.

I find Christ's words: "I make all things new," particularly significant. In Scripture he is referred to as the new man, the new Adam, the sinless man, who restores man to life. Contrast this new man to the child that the devil holds; I'm sure you remember that scene after the scourging where the devil appears with a child; when the child turns its head, we see a distorted, old face—no doubt, a depiction of sin, of the old man or Adam after the fall. Certainly, we all need to recover a sense of the gravity of sin, of its ugliness. Our culture does much to cultivate external beauty, without giving much thought to spiritual beauty, to an internal beauty that comes from cultivating the moral and supernatural virtues. As Tom Wolfe says: "At the core of fashionable society exists a monstrous vulgarity. The habit of judging hu-

man beings by standards having no necessary relation to their character."¹⁰

Conclusion

No doubt much more could be said about these three aspects which I have chosen to speak about, and there are other aspects of the Christian life which could be approached here as well. My point is that Gibson's film provides us with a unique opportunity to learn about Christ, about those who followed him and those who betrayed him, and to learn about ourselves, how we can betray Christ and how we can follow him. Alasdair MacIntyre in a book well known by many, *After Virtue*, says that the quest for the good leads to a greater self-knowledge and a greater knowledge of the good itself.¹¹ I think this film can do just that for the Christian who is really seeking union with God in Christ. And as another critic of modernity, Charles Taylor, says: "... acknowledging the transcendent means being called to a change of identity. ... Christian faith can be seen in [these] terms: as calling for a radical decentering of the self, in relation with God. ('Thy will be done.')"¹² It seems particularly appropriate that this film should have been scheduled to appear on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent for Christians, a time of conversion, to die to ourselves so as to live in Christ. ✠

ENDNOTES

¹ Kenneth Woodward, "Do You Recognize This Jesus?", Op-Ed page of *The New York Times*, February 25, 2004.

² See www.zenit.org.

³ Quoted in Thomas F. Dailey, "Impassioned Rhetoric Precedes the Trailers," in *The Morning Call*, February 4, 2004.

⁴ Alasdair MacIntyre, "Contexts of Interpretation: Reflections on Hans-Georg Gadamer's *Truth and Method*," *Boston University Journal*, vol. 26, p. 176.

⁵ See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Martin Ostwald (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1962).

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ John 15:13.

⁸ *ST I-II*, q. 1, a. 5, sed contra.

⁹ Rev. 21:5.

¹⁰ Quoted in Nancy Etcoff, *The Survival of the Prettiest*, p. 241.

¹¹ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, 2nd ed.), p. 219.

¹² Charles Taylor, "A Catholic Modernity?" Marianist Award Lecture, in *A Catholic Modernity?* with responses and ed. James Heft (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 21.

The Fighting Sociologist

Reviewed by Marvin R. O'Connell
Emeritus Professor of History, University of Notre Dame

Nearly forty years ago I was invited by the editor of *The Catholic Bulletin*, the weekly published by the Archdiocese of St. Paul, to contribute a regular column to what would be called today the paper's op-ed page. The proposal arose out of some local controversy in which I, a "conservative," challenged what I discerned to be the *Bulletin's* "liberal" bias. It may have had something to do with John XXIII's celebrated encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*, to which William F. Buckley, Jr.'s *National Review* had rather cheekily responded, "Mater si, Magistra non," because of the papal document's alleged sympathy with socialism. Well, I was pretty cheeky myself in those days, though not nearly so clever as Mr. Buckley or his resident Wortmeister, as he was at the time, Garry Wills. Whatever the verbal dust-up had been about, the editor took me to lunch and issued the invitation. Bernard Casserly had had broad journalistic experience in Twin Cities' newspapers before he took on the editorship of the *Bulletin*. He came from that generation of Catholic laymen who served the Church in non-ecclesiastical positions—at considerable financial sacrifice—with a devotion akin to a religious vocation. I regarded him, whatever his ideological leanings, in a class with my similarly devoted lay colleagues at the College (now University) of St. Thomas, where I was then a junior professor. He was (and is, now in his late eighties) a genuine professional and a consummate gentleman. I accepted on the spot.

Mr. Casserly's plan was to run my column on one side of the page and, opposite it, the already syndicated column by Andrew Greeley. There was no direct connection between the two of us; Father Greeley was already something of a celebrity in his native Chicago and elsewhere, while I was an obscure St. Paulite. Mr. Casserly's idea was rather that I would represent the generally "conservative" point of view within the Church and Father Greeley the "liberal." These, of course, were the heady days of the mid-sixties, when contending positions were emerging within the Catholic community in the wake of the Second Vatican Council. Out of devotion to John Henry Newman, as

well as a certain youthful hubris, I titled my columns *Tracts for the Times*. Thanks to the efforts of Bernard Casserly, they came to be widely syndicated, to my gratification and, not incidentally, to my financial advantage. I wrote forty-eight columns a year for seven years, and it was a grand experience.

The editor's original idea, however, did not quite work out. Perhaps on occasion I wasn't conservative enough. I recall a tongue-lashing from my archbishop when I suggested early on that an audit of diocesan finances be made public; interestingly enough, I heard nothing from him when, in 1968, I opined that despite the issuance of *Humanae vitae* the internal debate over birth control had to continue. But by and large, I think I proved myself adequately right-wing and took proper aim at those self-styled progressives who were busy inventing something they called "the spirit of Vatican II." Father Greeley, by contrast, could not be said to have raised any banner. He was totally unpredictable on any issue, free of commitment to any party, a maverick, a lone ranger. I don't mean that he was in his commentaries without strongly held principles; I do mean that he seemed to believe that the drama in which we were all playing bit parts should be titled "Andy Against the World."

I was reminded of this minor and now ancient journalistic enterprise by the publication of two of Father Greeley's most recent books. (A third will also appear this year, a fictionalized account of the priest sex-abuse scandal. I do not read Andrew Greeley's fiction.) Both *The Catholic Revolution. New Wine, Old Wineskins* and *the Second Vatican Council and Priests: a Calling in Crisis* are published by the University of California Press. Neither is long, and both are impassioned, understandably so, since both were written in 2002, which Father Greeley calls "the Year of the Pedophile." And that simultaneity of composition leads to a great deal of repetition between the two books and, more surprisingly, within each of them. The prose is clear and lively and virtually free of social science jargon. Indeed, Father Greeley has the knack of making statistics interesting and bar-graphs bearable.

As a long time associate in the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, Father Greeley has conducted dozens of such statistical studies, and—though I speak as one less wise—I believe his

credentials as a sociologist are impeccable. “I will not apologize,” he writes, “for using the tools of my trade, statistical tables, significance tests, and graphs. . . . The alternative is cocktail chatter, the exchange of opinions and views without the restraints that the logic of social science seeks to impose to achieve a comprehensive and accurate understanding of a phenomenon in a human population.” This quotation, it seems to me—and it could be replicated many times—reveals the two sides of the Greeley coin: an inquirer employs the proper instruments of social science, as he does, or “the alternative is cocktail chatter.” The lone ranger rides again.

But we live in perilous times for the Church in America, and I think it would be foolhardy to ignore Father Greeley’s conclusions so long as he explains them to us with methodological precision and without obiter dicta. To be sure, Andrew Greeley never met an obiter dictum he didn’t like. Still, he has amassed much data that deserves careful attention, even if it brings little comfort to either “liberals” or “conservatives.” If you lean to the right, you might nod sagely at the following observations about the contemporary priesthood. “There is [no] support in the data. . . . that priests are emotionally immature. Quite the contrary.” “There is no evidence in the data. . . . that priests are unhappy misfits. Quite the contrary: they are among the happiest men in the world. They say they would become priests again.” “The desire to marry itself accounts for about one out of six defections from the active ministry. In the absence of dissatisfaction with the priesthood, only a few men would leave the active ministry.” “Priests stay in the priesthood because they like being priests. They like being priests because they like the things priests do. . . . It is hard for many, both inside the Church and outside, to comprehend that a man can be a happy, fulfilled, and mature human being without a woman of his own. However, celibate priests prove that this is possible and rewarding.”

If, on the other hand, your proclivities incline you leftward, you also might find some confirmation for your views. “The younger generation of priests (under forty-five) are on average very different from their predecessors. Some of them may be seeking security that comes from a position of status and authority and appear to be narrow and inflexible. . . . More than a third [of them] insist that the laity must be educated to recognize the authority of a priest’s word.” “Most

priests do not accept the Church’s sexual teaching. On the crucial issues of birth control and masturbation even the youngest cohorts do not accept the teaching that these behaviors are always wrong.” “Most priests support the ordination of married men and the election of bishops. About half also support the ordination of women. Even the youngest [and most conservative] cohorts approved the ordination of married men.” “Priests are surprisingly insensitive to their laity. Most priests dismiss them as lacking in faith, spirituality, and prayer life as well as being victims of apathy, materialism, secularism, and individualism. Very few priests seem to sense that the laity are massively dissatisfied with the quality of priestly ministry (which indeed they are).”

This “massive dissatisfaction” has several causes, not least among them, Father Greeley maintains in several places in these books, the “poor quality of preaching and liturgy.” Of course none of the assertions just quoted is beyond debate, but it should be emphasized that the data to support them, along with the requisite graphs and tables, can be found in the pages of *Catholic Revolution* and *Priests*. I say debate them by all means, challenge them, but ignore them at your peril. Eternity is long, to reverse T. S. Eliot’s aphorism, but time is short.

But perhaps Father Greeley, here as elsewhere, poisons the debate even before it starts. I refer to his venomous rhetoric. He routinely calls down a plague on everybody’s house. He scores the “knaveish imbecility” of the American bishops—their intelligence and integrity “at an all time low”—in confronting the sexual abuse crisis. He accuses the Vatican of conscious “cruelty” in the procedures required of those who canonically leave the priesthood, as well as being imbued with the “denial virus,” which leads to the appointment of bishops through “a mix of cronyism and silent incompetence disguised as virtue.” But lest the “progressives” take heart from such denunciations, he directs his contempt at them too. He does this most notably in discussing the work of Eugene Kennedy and A. W. Richard Sipe. (The fact that Father Greeley consistently uses Dr. Kennedy’s middle name, Cullen, makes one wonder whether there might be an inside joke or maybe some personal animus between prominent Chicago Catholics.) These two ex-priests, both psychologists, have argued that the present crisis in the Church, is due to the “asexual clerical culture,” inevitably produced by the imposition of celibacy.

“Incompetence” is the kindest word Father Greeley can summon up to describe their methodology, “garbage” is rather more harsh. And I must say I took some pleasure in one of Father Greeley’s observations, which might be considered by some as politically incorrect in the ecclesiastical context. “Eugene Cullen Kennedy, . . . a talking head, has been writing about the psychology of the priesthood for forty years. . . . [He] subsequently left the active priesthood but continued to write books, articles, and op-ed columns in oracular and sometimes purple prose.” Writers like these, most notably Kennedy, are inactive and married Catholic priests. Whatever their intentions in writing about the culture of those they left behind in the priesthood, they can hardly escape a bit of suspicion that their work is self-justifying, that they are saying to those who remained that they lacked the courage to follow them in their departure from the priesthood or are sustaining the hegemony of an all-male patriarchal church. This posture, while not common, is not completely absent from those who have resigned from the active ministry. In effect their message could easily be interpreted as “we are the men of virtue because we had the courage to leave that vipers’ tangle and become honest and free. Or as *The New York Times* quoted an inactive priest who is a psychologist [like Eugene Cullen Kennedy], “the healthy ones began to jump ship.”

No serious reader of these books will leave them without disagreeing with some or indeed many of their authors’ conclusions. For instance, Father Greeley is airily dismissive of the distinction between pedophilia and ephebophilia, crucially important, it seems to me, in getting to the core of the priest sex-abuse

phenomenon. I think too that with the evidence presented to the bishops recently by the *National Review* Board, Father Greeley might revise his rather causal treatment of the part played by homosexuals in the scandal. And I doubt that many would accept the “policy implications”—his personal recommendations, some of them bizarre—with which he concludes *Priests*. Nevertheless, during the grave crisis through which we are passing, these books deserve sober attention.

I have met Andrew Greeley only twice. The first occasion was in 1963 or 1964 or at any rate before I began writing my column. In the course of preparing his early book on Catholic higher education—*The Changing Catholic College* (1967)—Father Greeley and his research team had come to St. Thomas to do a series of interviews. One day by chance I turned up late for lunch, and when I arrived at the priests’ dining room, only Father Greeley and the late Monsignor (as he then was) James Shannon, president of the college, were seated at the long table. I marveled at the time, and still do, how Father Greeley dominated the conversation, a feat seldom if ever accomplished in the presence of our talkative president. Then, four or five years ago, a mutual friend in Tucson—where Father Greeley spends part of the year on the faculty of the University of Arizona—took the two of us dinner. Andrew’s conversation was charming, not dominating, and it was a most pleasant evening. I don’t remember specifically what we talked about, except that he displayed a marked sympathy for the Irish republican Army. For him, I think, the struggle itself is as important as the cause. ✠

Available:

The Catholic Imagination: Proceedings from the 24th Annual Convention of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Omaha, Nebraska, September 2001, edited by Kenneth D. Whitehead,

St. Augustine’s Press, South Bend, IN (2003), 172 pp., paper, \$10 (includes postage). Send your check to FCS, PO Box 495, Notre Dame, IN 46556.

Older Proceedings are also available. Email Alice Osberger for titles and prices—osberger.1@nd.edu

The 2004 FCS Australia Conference was held in Sydney on Saturday, March 6. About 35 people attended from Sydney and interstate. The conference opened with Mass concelebrated by Bishop Anthony Fisher, O.P., and by Father Paul Stenhouse, M.S.C., Fr. John Flader, Fr. Michael Tate and Fr. Mark Withoos.

The papers delivered covered a range of topics in great depth. We were particularly privileged to be addressed in the plenary sessions by Professor Philip Ayres, drawing on his work for a biography of Cardinal Moran; and by Rev. Professor Michael Tate, A.O., who drew on his involvement in the preparation of the 2004 bishops' social justice statement to discuss aspects of just war theory after September 11. All the papers given demonstrated a high standard of scholarship, joined to a strong sense of applying Catholic insights and principles to action in the world. The conference closed with Vespers, led by Bishop Julian Porteous, followed by the conference dinner at a hotel near St. Mary's Cathedral.

Papers delivered at the conference are posted on the website: www.fcsaustralia.org/conference.shtml

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The Founder of Opus Dei: The Life of Josemaria Escriva, Volume 2: God and Daring by Andres Vasquez de Prada. New York: Scepter Publishers, Inc., 2003. 524 pp.

Reviewed by Sister Mary Thomas Stewart, O.P. Monastery of the Infant Jesus Lufkin, TX

This is the second volume of a multi-volume life of the recently canonized Josemaria Escriva, founder of Opus Dei and the Priestly Society of the Holy Cross. Since this volume picks up immediately where the first ended, it would be a help to the serious reader to read the books sequentially. Andres Vasquez de Prada is a wonderful apologist for St. Josemaria Escriva, presenting him in the best possible light in every circumstance, calling our attention to the minutest detail of Escriva's sanctity. He often lets Escriva speak for himself, and these are some of the best passages in the book. Escriva is revealed as a man of deep spirituality, evidenced by his numerous letters and spiritual notes, as well as the testimonies of his companions. "His words, some serene, some energetic and charged with emotion, but all of them illuminating, poured down on us and seemed to settle within our souls," recalled Eduardo Alastrue. However, he was also a man of great humor, sometimes rather earthy. During his stay in the Honduran consulate (where he sought refuge during the Spanish Civil War), Escriva managed to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a desk that could be locked and referred to it as "the Bread Box". He once referred to an orange and onion salad served in the consulate as "revolutionary - boy, do things move fast the next day!"

The strengths of this book come from the numerous quotations from Escriva and the saga of how he survived the Spanish Civil War and

managed to found Opus Dei at the same time. The narrative describing Escriva and his companions making the dangerous crossing over the Pyrenees into the Nationalist zone is one of the most gripping episodes of the book. This volume extends into the post-war years, when Opus Dei was re-established throughout Spain and eventually spread to other countries as well. It is fascinating to read how Escriva combined arduous travels and grinding poverty with the growth of Opus Dei and his own work on his dissertation on the monastery of Las Huelgas for his doctorate in law.

De Prada emphasizes Escriva's strong feelings that priests should be politically neutral. It is interesting, in light of accusations made against him, to read that Escriva refused to give the one-armed salute popular during the Franco regime. Although he did give Franco a private retreat, de Prada explains that this was not a political or personal success for Escriva, who took the opportunity to ask Franco, "Do you ever think that someday you will die?" It comes as no surprise to learn that shortly after this episode Escriva made the move to Rome.

De Prada also discusses Escriva's work with the women of Opus Dei in some depth. This is a particularly interesting aspect, since the role of women was greatly circumscribed in Spain during the time recounted. The modern reader may be startled to find the women so eager to do domestic work (cleaning, cooking, sewing, et cetera) but the context should be kept in mind; Escriva saw these women as equal partners in the work, although given to a different aspect of it.

The weaknesses of this book derive mainly from the fact that de Prada tends to assume his readers already know a great deal about Opus Dei and Josemaria Escriva. Thus, various members suddenly appear in the story without introduction, including Alvaro

del Portillo, who as the first successor of Josemaria Escriva would seem to deserve a short biographical sketch. There are numerous mentions of small details which are entirely mysterious and which I was only able to discern from an earlier reading of the book *Uncommon Faith: The Early Years of Opus Dei* by John F. Coverdale. This book covers roughly the same period of time that de Prada's book does, and while lacking in many of the interesting tidbits de Prada provides, *Uncommon Faith* is much more systematic and offers a more concise introduction to Escriva and the other members of Opus Dei. In fairness, I should say that the first volume of de Prada's work also suffers a little from this assumption of knowledge, although not as much as the second volume.

In spite of this, both volumes of the biography are quite excellent and read very well. I found it humorous to read in the first volume de Prada's assertion that Escriva disliked hagiographers who made the saints pious from birth—only to find de Prada himself canonizing every episode in Escriva's life, seeing a saintly significance in the most trivial of events. And yet, surely this is part of the spirit of Opus Dei: the sanctification of everyday life, so that every task is holy, every act in perfect union with the will of God. If we find these "little things" tedious, perhaps we need to examine our own lives and see how we are lacking in supernatural insight and self-abandonment to God's will at every moment.

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The Making of Europe: An Introduction to the History of European Unity, Christopher Dawson (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932; Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003; new introduction and reprint)

Reviewed by Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ

We have waited a long time to see the works of Christopher Dawson (1889–1970) reappear. One of the joys of the new millennium is to discover this expectation partially fulfilled.

The Catholic University of America Press now lists *Progress and Religion, Medieval Essays*, and *The Making of Europe* as again in print. Also an edited collection of his works, *Christianity and European Culture*, contains *The Historic Reality of Christian Culture* (1960) and selections from *The Making of Europe* (1932), *The Judgment of the Nations* (1943), and *Medieval Essays* (1959). There is still a void for his 1928 classic, *The Age of the Gods*.

Dawson had a fine British education, thanks in part to his religion. However, Dawson never had a university teaching position in Britain because he changed his religion in 1914. As a Catholic, he was refused when he applied for a post as professor at the University of Leeds shortly after the 1932 publication of *The Making of Europe*. The author of the new introduction, Alexander Murray, sees some good in this. It made Dawson a kind of "historian prophet" who gained respect and an eager audience in the English-speaking world outside the academic establishment. Dawson finished only two of his planned major works, and *The Making of Europe* is one of them.

The Making of Europe treats the period between 300 BC and 1000 AD. Let us remember that the Renaissance

mentality saw no real good after the classical period which effectively came to an end with the Emperor Constantine. The mood of the Enlightenment was even more severe in accepting nothing good from the past when it replaced "the myth of the golden age" with "the myth of progress". Marxism pushed this further taking the stance that "all history is the history of oppression". But Dawson brought light where there was darkness, and his work rejected the concept of the Dark Ages. His thought was original when he saw the complex history of Europe as more akin to the myth of the Phoenix—something new and vital arising from the ashes of the old when Christian Europe was born.

In just over 250 pages Dawson shows how conflicting movements eventually coalesced into a vibrant medieval unity. Roman institutions and learning, barbarian spirit and energy, contact with the East—both the Byzantine State and Islam, and the fusion of church and state in the Carolingian period, all had a role in the story. There had been partial revival and partial reversal with Justinian and Charlemagne, but by the eleventh century what we know as Western culture was in place, and it has continued without interruption to the present.

Though *The Making of Europe* dwells upon the past, it ends with a warning about the present. Dawson says that the deeper spiritual needs of man were met by the medieval synthesis which he has outlined in the manner of a "meta-history". But in the last four centuries this spiritual aspect has been muted in favor of secular culture and material advantage. He warns that this is not enough. Surely since 1932 his warning seems correct. The fashionable Nihilism of our day does not satisfy, and Europe is poised either to regain her lost soul or to lose it to alien forces. ✠

The Illusions of Egalitarianism, John Kekes. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2003. Pp. xii + 228. Cloth, \$29.95.

Reviewed by Jude P. Dougherty
The Catholic University of America

It is clear to anyone who is attentive that the West is in cultural decline. Social historians have even begun to speak of the collapse of Western civilization. There is considerable evidence that we are living on the legacy of a dying past, that we are nearing the end of a great tradition, not unlike that experienced before the fall of Rome when internal corruption made possible the barbarian invasion. The classical and Christian learning, which for millennia has shaped the West, has been eclipsed by the Enlightenment philosophies that arose in Europe more than two centuries ago. The agnostic legacy of that movement, coupled with its repudiation of natural structures to which man is accountable, has eradicated all standards against which behavior may be judged, a legacy which paradoxically has fostered an unrealistic confidence in man's ability to shape both nature and society. The agnostic lives under the illusion that it is possible to conserve the constitutive elements of the Christian order while removing belief in God. It has taken two hundred years of post-Enlightenment modernity to bring us to this impasse. The liberal mentality characteristic of the salons and academies of Enlightenment Europe has slowly made its way into political discourse to become the political *Zeitgeist* of the present. With the omnipresence of the mass media, through which whole continents are tutored by an intellectual elite, the liberal mentality has become the common currency of political discourse. As fostered in the academy, it is essentially an aristocratic mentality, presupposing a position of privilege and dominance on the part of its adherents.

One of the most trenchant criticisms of this liberalism is to be found in John Kekes's *The Illusions of Egalitarianism*. Kekes prefers to use the word "egalitarian" to distinguish the dominant form from other forms of liberalism. Egalitarianism, he finds, is grounded in an optimistic but unwarranted faith in the basic goodness of human beings. The egalitarian moral vision of society presupposes good and reasonable people who cooperate to design and maintain political arrangements that provide equal freedom, rights, and resources, thereby enabling everyone to live according to a wide plurality of different conceptions of the good life. This attitude Kekes takes to be the product of wishful thinking, a vision he regards as dangerous not only because it denies evil but because it is meant to serve as a practical guide to politics. His targets, among others, are the works of John Rawls, Ronald Dworkin, Gregory Vlastos, Martha Nussbaum, and Joseph Raz.

"Universities," Kekes writes, "have abandoned the time honored goal of teaching the classic works that embody the accumulated wisdom of the ages." Instead they pursue a political agenda aimed at transforming society in accord with a radicalized version of egalitarian principles. The results of a half-century of proselytizing are a welfare system that has produced a dependent underclass that perpetuates itself at an increasing rate, law enforcement agencies handicapped by rules that protect the criminal at the expense of the victim, illegal immigrants who are allowed to flood the country to become a drain on the failed systems of education and welfare, and a tax system designed to penalize the productive and successful. The way out? Abandon the optimistic faith.

No reasonable person should accept the myth that all human beings have equal worth. "It is suicidal," Kekes writes, "to suppose that the widespread evils that threaten society can be avoided by a policy that aims

to provide equal freedom, rights, and resources to good and bad, prudent and imprudent, law-abiding and criminal. The fact is that the propensity for both good and evil is implicit in human nature, and a society must have policies that encourage the good and curb the evil." The claim that government ought to treat all citizens with equal consideration perverts the elementary requirements of morality to treat good and bad people differently. The fact is that a society cannot long endure unless it rewards and protects its productive members and punishes and curbs depredators, cheaters, and free-riders.

The egalitarian impulse, Kekes claims, often translates into a sentimental compassion for the "have nots," ignoring a fundamental difference between those who have brought misfortune on themselves and those who suffer through no fault of their own. Yet another propensity of the egalitarian mind is to place value upon liberty above all other values. The Greeks knew well that virtue calls to virtue, and Kekes makes the point that, like virtue, values hang together. There is a danger in preferring one at the expense of all others. Freedom is desirable, but it is only one value among many, i.e., peace, prosperity, order, security, and toleration. The single-minded emphasis on freedom as a value to be preferred above all others exemplifies a fatal defect of all ideologies, the assumption that all other values are in place and that no tradeoffs are required. This flies in the face of experience, which teaches that a system of values must be defended as a whole.

Indifference to the good is another liberal failing, an attitude that has become enshrined in the notion of "procedural democracy," preventing the government from preferring one conception of the good over others. Political impartiality toward all conceptions of the good is impossible, Kekes maintains. "The rhetoric

of egalitarian liberalism has systematically claimed for itself the honor of being the paragon of toleration, but this is no more than hypocritical pretense. Egalitarians favor toleration of a wide variety of sexual practices because they regard them as harmless, but they do not favor toleration of a similar wide range of attitudes toward religion, the economy, morality or indeed sexual practices which are basically at odds with their own.” Realistic politics, Kekes insists, must provide a principled account of what should and should not be tolerated. It is in this context that one could wish for more. Although Kekes provides no clue to the anchorage of judgments of value in a philosophical anthropology or metaphysics, let alone two thousand years of Christianity in the West, he nevertheless recognizes that realistic politics must start with the problems a society faces and endeavor to cope with them in ways that have proved successful in the past, given the history, traditions and customs of a particular society. Here one may recall Livy’s admonition to a failing Rome, which invited his readers to attend to “the kind of lives our ancestors lived and to trace the processes of their moral decline, to watch first the sinking of the foundations of morality and then” the dark dawning of our modern day when we can neither endure our vices nor face the remedies needed to cure them.”

Although Kekes targets the academic sector as a whole, his primary object of criticism is the thought of the late John Rawls, whose book, *A Theory of Justice*, is reputed to be the most quoted work by a philosopher in North America.¹ In that work, Rawls makes justice the primary goal of social institutions. Likening justice to dessert, Rawls seeks to remedy nature’s unequal distribution of talent and native gifts which give some an unearned advantage. Such undeserved inequalities call for redress, so the theory goes. As a result society

must give more attention to those with fewer native assets. A just society, Rawls argues, will redress the bias to favor equality. In effect, Rawls denies that a person deserves the fruit of his labor or is entitled to benefit from his good fortune. As Rawls states his position in *A Theory of Justice*, “The effort a person is willing to make is influenced by his natural abilities and skills and alternatives open to him. The better endowed are more likely, other things being equal, to strive conscientiously, and there seems no way to discount for their resulting greater fortune.”² By this reckoning it follows that behavior itself, including virtue and vice, is a question of luck. Kekes is unrelenting in a multifaceted critique of Rawls’s theory, not only because it is at variance with common sense but because by denying personal responsibility it threatens the foundation of civilized life itself. If equality trumps all else, in the drive to secure equality it is necessary for the state to take from some and give to others. The egalitarian impulse, Kekes points out, inevitably leads to favoritism and often to outright appropriation of property.

Kekes’s analysis is not an extended textual examination of the very complex *A Theory of Justice* but is offered as a critique of the egalitarian temperament. Kekes is not alone in his judgment that liberal society—once could say the West—is dying because of its egalitarian outlook. The egalitarian principle, which is essential to the liberal position, has policy implications from immigration to tax assessment, land use, and welfare entitlements. Under its spell, the illegal immigrant is accorded social benefits on an equal footing with the native hard-working laborer, the convicted felon is permitted voting rights in some states, the person who recklessly abuses his health is accorded full health benefits. In the political sphere, the egalitarian is willing to cede the balance of power and decision making to the many who are not in the nature of things

qualified to govern a modern complex economy. Kekes speaks of the abdication of a naturally endowed governing class in favor of the crowd. He then asserts that the crowd is, in essence, undifferentiated, without quality, without merit or excellence. Persons of merit, though part of the crowd, are obliterated without distinction. True, but paradoxically, what “most people think” is determined by major media which are in the hands of an elite of liberal persuasion all too eager to control the levers of power.

Kekes also calls attention to the rampant moralism associated with the egalitarian temperament. For example, one chapter is entitled, “The Tyranny of Do Gooders,” and another is “The Menace of Moralism.” The egalitarian in the name of compassion is eager not only to dictate social policy but speech patterns as well. “We are not supposed to say that people are crippled, stupid, mentally defective, fat or ignorant. We must not use words like ‘mankind’ and ‘statesman’ or ‘He’ when referring to God.” Kekes is especially critical of the “egalitarian illusion” that there is an obligation to help equally all those who lack the basic necessities of a good life. He finds Peter Singer implying that when people are starving, it is immoral to have such things as “stylish clothes, expensive dinners, a sophisticated stereo system, overseas holidays, a (second?) car, a larger house, private schools for children, and so on.”³ On Singer’s account the obligation to prevent poverty and suffering extends beyond one’s community, indeed beyond one’s nation to the globe as a whole. “By not giving more than we do,” writes Singer, “people in rich countries are allowing those in poor countries to suffer from absolute poverty (i.e., having less than basic necessities), with consequent malnutrition, ill health and death. This is not a conclusion that applies only to governments. It applies to each absolutely affluent individual.”⁴

In rebuttal, Kekes points to some

well-known statistics, namely, that in the United States, approximately 60 percent of federal and state budgets is spent on welfare programs, which means that about one-fifth of the income of every taxpayer in the \$100,000 bracket—the so-called rich—is spent in helping others. He then questions the effectiveness of international aid with a list of the pitfalls that such aid faces from corrupt governments to the unwillingness of a population to rectify destructive policy and behavior.

Given the repugnance of the egalitarian position to common sense and to its variance to the classical Western moral tradition, it seems implausible that such a theory could be entertained by any informed person, let alone widely held. Yet “it is an odd sociological phenomenon,” Kekes writes, “that numerous highly intelligent people who have been trained to think critically and analytically have shown themselves positively to fall in with this Orwellian maneuver of calling blatant injustice just.” The problem may be that academic

philosophy has long abandoned its roots in classical antiquity in favor of logical analysis removed from daily life and all metaphysical anchorage. Frequent appeals to justice, compassion, fraternity, and community are illusory, says Kekes, apart from an inherited culture, a legacy symbolized by attachment to land, village, and the local churchyard where one’s ancestors have lived for generations. Justice entails a common commitment to the rule of law and, one must add, to a common acknowledgment of the sources of our being. Western societies, as this volume makes clear, are confronted with ubiquitous and ill-defined appeals to the priority of freedom, choice, and human dignity, all unanchored in a coherent account of nature and human nature. Moral obligation, the only obligation clearly separable from prudence or self-interest remains a utopian dream apart from an acknowledged theistic context. A theistic or religious context and its accompanying moral sense can only be achieved by rediscovering its role in the formation of Western culture. Absent a his-

torical sense, we are prisoners of our own time, vulnerable to the whims of the academic *Zeitgeist*. Unfortunately, recovering a sense of the past may not be an easy task for the past can be clouded by the ideological mentality of the academy or rewritten or invented to promote the egalitarian agenda.

The *Illusion of Egalitarianism* is a rare volume, published in an academic milieu rarely given to self-criticism. One can hope that it will find its way into every library that contains the works which fall within its critical purview. ✠

FOOTNOTES

¹John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971). See also Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

²As quoted by Kekes.

³Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 2nd ed.), p. 232.

⁴*Practical Ethics*, p. 222.

How Not to Share Your Faith: The Seven Deadly Sins of Catholic Apologetics and Evangelization, Mark Brumley, San Diego, Calif.: Catholic Answers, 2002
 Preface by Avery Cardinal Dulles, SJ
 Foreword by the Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, OFM Cap, Archbishop of Denver

Review by Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ

This extended essay of 121 pages deserves to be read by every young person who wishes to defend the Catholic faith. Even high school students would benefit. It is written with clarity and simplicity, with grace and a positive tone. The title indicates what “not” to

do, but the direction the author takes really tells us “what to do” and also “how to do it”.

Mark Brumley presumes a new generation of apologists has gone to work. Perhaps some of us are less aware of them. If this is the case, his real target readership is this cadre of apologists, but anyone can still profit.

One of the strengths of this very readable work is its reliance on tradition. The wisdom of the past is presented and activated as something bright and usable today. Catholic wisdom has a flexibility and an applicability that spans time and place. There is real continuity between the pioneering work in Catholic apologetics of Frank Sheed and what Brumley recommends. Thomas Aquinas, Louis

Bouyer, C. S. Lewis, and Joseph Ratzinger also figure in.

Apologetics is a branch of theology, which requires intelligence. But it likewise requires faith. Brumley is plain when he insists that, in the end, any attempt to defend the faith—better, to lead others to it—must be deeply rooted in charity. Apologetics has been known to keep people out of the church when it ignores this truth. Apologists must lead seekers to Christ, not to themselves or their methods.

Apologetics as a vocation must be rediscovered in this post-conciliar period. There is a need to expand its scope. Mark Brumley contributes in an excellent way to this need. ✠

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BOOKS RECEIVED

Please email Alice Osberger if you would like to receive a complimentary copy of one of these books to review:

The Vatican-Israel Accords: Political, Legal, and Theological Contexts, edited by Marshall J. Breger, University of Notre Dame Press, (2004), 392pp., hardcover.

Getting It Straight: What the Research Shows about Homosexuality, edited by Peter Sprigg and Timothy Dailey, Family Research Council, Washington, DC, (2004), 143pp., paper.

On Being Liked, by James Alison, Crossroad Publishing Company, NY, (2003), 150 pp., paper.

The Garden: What Really Happened in the Garden of Eden, by Elsie V. Aidinoff, HarperTempest, NY, (2004), 403pp., Cloth.

1 + 1 = 1 + 1

We know we're in trouble when the obvious has to be stated and, when stated, is considered controversial. Thus it was when God gave the tablets of the law to Moses. Corrupt practice can so obscure the mind that even prohibitions of murder, theft and philandering come almost as news. In our own times, to say that marriage is the union of a man and woman with an eye to offspring sounds like a theory, and a menacing one at that, rather than simple fact. I suppose no one seriously contests the biology of gender, but sexual morality, or immorality, has for some time dismissed the teleological clues of our bodily nature.

People who want to play with themselves, or with others, as an end in itself, no longer regard this as odd. But then many marriages are probably little more than an assured opportunity for gratification. If a man and

woman live together just for the fun of it they are unlikely to find it odd that two women or two men are doing it for the same reason.

It's a long way to Tipperary, or Massachusetts, but surely an early milestone was the legal and overt or covert religious acceptance of contraception. The slippery slope to Boston began when the unitive and procreative meanings of the sexual act were sundered. Doubtless there will be legal wrangles ahead, but they will be conducted on self-defeating terms. Justice Kennedy's mystery clause has now invaded the bedroom and sex and marriage are what we say they are. There will be a lot of middle aged ladies hugging and kissing on the courthouse steps and assuring us that their marriage is just like any other. Alas, they may be right. Only in the paradoxical mathematics of a true marriage does $1 + 1 = 1$. ✕

Ralph McInerney

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