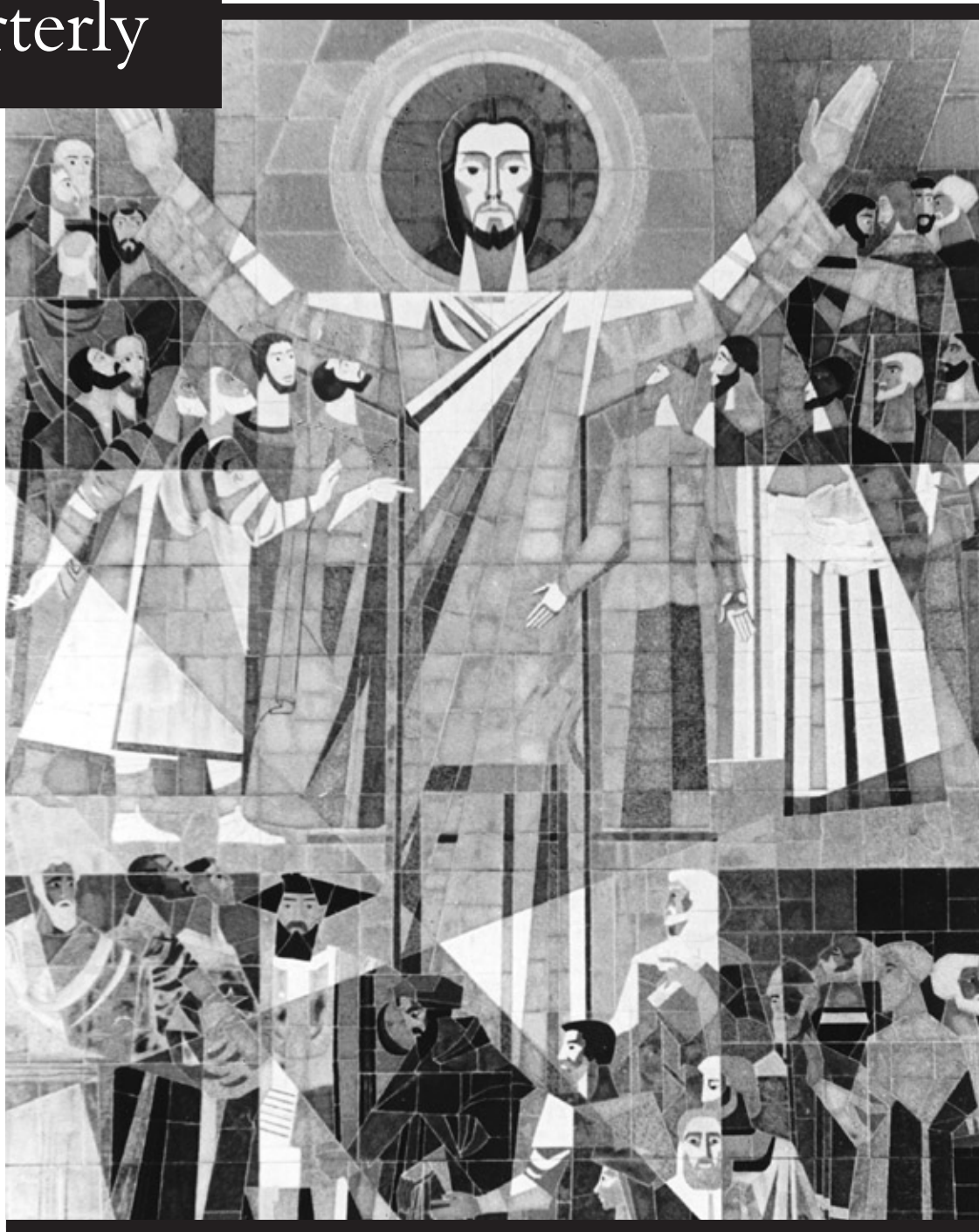


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Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

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

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As we go to press:

I am saddened at the death of Monsignor Kelly. In an era of confusion where self-aggrandizement and novelty took center stage, he subordinated, but did not extinguish, his intellectual gifts to the greater good of service to orthodoxy and a right understanding of Catholic doctrine. May the Lord bless him and bring to fruition the labors of his organization.

Dennis Larrivee, Ph.D., FCS member

PRESIDENT'S PAGE

VALEDICTORY

Few individuals have had the privilege to serve as President of our Fellowship— eleven, to be exact. No one has had the honor twice, except me. For a combination of reasons unimportant now, I stepped back into office last year to fill an unexpired term. That term ends in a few weeks, at the Convention in Pittsburgh. Here is my last President's Page -- and this time I really mean it!

I came into office joking, and have done my fair share since. Glancing at my inaugural Presidents' Page in September 1995 (an essay cleverly titled, "Inaugural"), I affectionately made light of my predecessor's enormous talents and prodigious accomplishments. I wrote: "Ralph [McInerny] knows everybody, and has so mastered the language of the universal Church that his latest book (as of 4:30 p.m. this date) promises to deliver Latin fluency to any reader before sundown". I said then and say now that Ralph "set the standard for a successful presidency". And for editing this Quarterly, a task he took up a second time when I returned to office, a service for which I now thank him.

The substance of that first column (and quite a few thereafter) was reform of Catholic higher education. 1995 was mid-way through the struggle to faithfully implement *Ex corde ecclesiae*, the 1990 papal constitution on colleges which the American bishops (more or less) implemented in 2000. "Inaugural" had mostly to do with a bishops' committee recommendation on the mandatum. They called for a "non-judicial application" of what is in fact a canonical requirement, a rule which makes sense only as a way to put into practice the underlying truth that Catholic theology ought to be taught by persons who hold the Catholic faith. Disregarding this sense of the matter and pursuing the path of less resistance, many bishops now give the mandatum to any theologian who asks for it. Just as well, then, that the whole matter has pretty much disappeared from public view.

Glancing now at Volume 1, number 1 of the FCS Newsletter, here is a plug for the first Fellowship Convention: "Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger, the new Archbishop of Munich, Germany and formerly member of the International Theological Commission, has been invited to be the Keynote Speaker". (He didn't make it.) Father Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap. and first President of our group, addressed not reform of institutions but what

distinguishes the Catholic scholar. He wrote, too: “The Fellowship was not established to canonize any narrow or partisan interpretation of faith, but to encourage the hearty support of Catholic faith and life that the tradition of scholarship in the Church has always recognized as indispensable”.

That first number also lists the founding Executive Secretary: Monsignor George A. Kelly. Then and for a score more years the guiding spirit of the FCS, Monsignor Kelly now lives in the Mary Manning Walsh Home on Manhattan’s Upper East Side, just steps from his boyhood home, and blocks from his

old parish. Monsignor Kelly’s failing health makes him an unlikely traveler to any more Board meetings or FCS conventions. But, sometimes, when I call, the old sparkle and zest and intelligence are once again on display. And always his great love for the Church, and for the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

George Kelly will take those loves to his grave, as did Ronald Lawler, as will (I dare say) Ralph McInerny, as will the many other stalwarts who brought our Fellowship into being, who nurtured it, and who (in a rash moment) entrusted it to my care.

As will I. ✠

ARTICLES

The Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops on *Faithful Citizenship*: A Missed Opportunity

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In the fall of 2003 the Administrative Committee of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) issued and widely distributed in Catholic parishes, schools and other organizations a kind of voters’ guide for Catholics entitled *Faithful Citizenship: A Catholic Call to Political Responsibility*. Although not a statement of the entire body of bishops, it is generally received as such. In mid-June of 2004 the USCCB distributed *Faithful Citizenship* to the Democratic and Republican party platform committees. In its presentation of its document the USCCB’s news release had this headline, “Bishops Platform Committee Testimony Calls For Focus On Pursuit Of the Common Good, Not Demands Of Special Interests.” As would be expected, the statement reminds U.S. citizens that the common good embraces the protection of life, the pursuit of social justice, peace and human rights around the world, etc. All Catholics should applaud the goals of the U.S. bishops.

While this Catholic call to political responsi-

bility rightly focuses on the common good, it has nothing to say to or about pro-abortion Catholic politicians, fails to mention the president’s power to appoint pro-life or pro-choice Supreme Court Justices, doesn’t urge Catholic Representatives and Senators to oppose same-sex marriage, doesn’t sound a clarion call about the perils of biotechnology, fails to distinguish clearly Catholic doctrine from partisan politics, doesn’t show that the attainment of social justice depends on Catholics’ knowing their faith and practicing virtue in every aspect of their lives, and gives the impression that Catholics exercise faithful citizenship simply by voting correctly. Worst of all, the Committee’s consistent ethic of life theory can easily be read by Catholics as giving them permission to vote for pro-abortion candidates if they support enough of the USCCB’s statements on social justice, global solidarity and war.

In the month of June, 2004, the bishops addressed two omissions in *Faithful Citizenship*. On June 24 the president of the USCCB sent a letter to all bishops asking them to solicit support from their Senators for the Federal Marriage Amendment. Early in July Bishop Gregory also sent a letter to the U.S. Senate requesting support of the same Amendment.

Because of public interest, the USCCB finally did address the subject of pro-choice Catholic politicians at their June meeting in a short statement published under the title “Catholics in Political Life.” With the collaboration of Cardinal Francis George, Archbishop Charles Chaput and Bishop Donald Wuerl, the Task Force on Catholic Bishops and Catholic Politicians prepared this statement for the entire body of bishops. Since these reflections were not formally submitted to the platform committees of the Democratic and Republican parties, things not said in *Faithful Citizenship* are still significant. As a postscript to this essay, I will briefly summarize “Catholics in Political Life,” because it makes up one glaring omission in *Faithful Citizenship*.

The “consistent ethic of life” theory in *Faithful Citizenship* stands in contrast to a statement issued by all the bishops in 1998 bearing the title, *Living the Gospel of Life: A Challenge to American Catholics*. In that statement the bishops challenge all Catholics to defend the sanctity of life and argue incisively that being right on “social justice” issues “*can never excuse a wrong choice regarding direct attacks on innocent human life*. Indeed, the failure to protect and defend life in its most vulnerable stages renders suspect any claims to the ‘rightness’ of positions in other matters affecting the poorest and least powerful of the human community.”

Recent news reports indicate that Democrats in the House of Representatives are preparing a “Catholic voting scorecard.” The purpose of this scorecard is to show that Catholic House Democrats support more of the bishops’ legislative priorities than their Republican counterparts. Democrats who support abortion and same-sex marriage may score higher than pro-life Republicans if they endorse a greater number of the bishops’ policy positions. Of course, the Democrats’ scoring card makes no distinction between USCCB positions based on Catholic doctrine and those based on debatable political preferences. Because the bishops themselves don’t always carefully make this distinction, their political statement on faithful citizenship may actually be read as giving support to this latest Democratic initiative to attract Catholic voters. I wouldn’t be surprised if the USCCB’s “consistent ethic of life theory” didn’t give Democrats the idea that they could minimize the ef-

fect of their pro-abortion stance by citing their support of the bishops’ positions on social justice.

Within the last eighteen months two Church documents on faithful citizenship have appeared, one issued by the Vatican Congregation For the Doctrine of the Faith in January of 2003, the other, the one mentioned above, written by the USCCB’s Administrative Committee. The latter is the latest in a series of documents issued under various names every four years since 1976. It was “developed under the leadership of [the USCCB’s] Committees on Domestic and International Policy,” in order to provide guidance for Catholic voters on the issues that should be kept in mind in the presidential election. In other words, the USCCB statement tells Catholics what kind of policy positions they should be supporting on a wide range of issues. While a few of these positions, such as the opposition to abortion and euthanasia, are required by Catholic doctrine, most are not, such as the support of affirmative action to overcome discrimination. These are simply debatable political opinions, as the bishops sometimes candidly admit. The Vatican document, entitled *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding The Participation of Catholics in Public Life*, was issued to clear up misunderstandings and errors in the Catholic community about the way to participate in public life. Unlike the USCCB document, it avoids endorsing positions with which the Catholic faithful may legitimately disagree and stays on the level of doctrine.

At first glance many Catholics will regard the USCCB’s *Faithful Citizenship* as a thoughtful, non-partisan guide for voters. The bishops say they are exercising their responsibility to address the moral dimensions of public life and do so as pastors, not as partisan strategists. “A Catholic moral framework does not easily fit the ideologies of “right” or “left,” nor the platforms of any party. Our values are often not ‘politically correct’” (p.7). The bishops then call upon Catholics to be a community of conscience, to protect the dignity of the human person, and to promote the common good. In order to help Catholics do their civic duty the USCCB document poses ten questions for Catholics to consider as they make up their mind about the major issues facing the nation. Those questions are based on the bishops’ formulation of seven themes in Catholic social teaching,

namely, 1) the life and dignity of the human person; 2) the call to family, community and participation; 3) rights and responsibilities; 4) the option for the poor and vulnerable; 5) the dignity of work and the rights of workers; 6) solidarity and 7) caring for “God’s creation. Protecting the life and dignity of the human person is at the top of the list because it is the *sine qua non* of a sound and moral democracy.

On the basis of the aforementioned seven themes of Catholic social teaching the USCCB comes up with four moral priorities for the public realm: protecting human life, promoting family life, pursuing social justice, and practicing global solidarity. Under the first rubric the bishops mention their strong opposition to abortion, euthanasia, cloning, the targeting of civilians by states or terrorists, the abuses of biotechnology, the preventive use of force, the death penalty, the failure of the U.S. both to sign the treaty banning the use of anti-personnel landmines and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and the U.S. participation in “the scandalous global trade in arms.” To promote family life the bishops endorse the legal protection of marriage “as a lifelong commitment between a man and a woman” (p. 20). The bishops also call for just wages to those who support families, the protection and education of children including the formation of their character in educational settings, the safeguarding of the parental right to choose private or public education for their children and the enforcement of responsible regulations to protect children from pornography and violent material on television, the radio and the Internet.

The third and fourth priorities are social justice (p. 22–26) and global solidarity (p. 22–28). Under the rubric of social justice the USCCB Committee recommends the following: “jobs for all who can work,” a living wage, the end of unjust discrimination at work, the right of all workers to organize, “economic freedom, initiative, and the right to private property,” welfare reform that doesn’t cut programs and resources, and includes “tax credits, health care, child care, and safe, affordable housing.” The Committee further supports the work of faith-based groups as a partner with government, income security during retirement for the “low-and average-wage workers and their families,” “affordable and accessible health care for all,” the strengthening of Medicare

and Medicaid, government aid for those suffering from HIV/AIDS and various addictions, affordable housing for all through contributions from the public and private sector, “food security for all,” sufficient income for farmers, better treatment of farm workers, policies that “support sustainable agriculture” and respect the earth, better treatment of immigrants, quality education for all, more just salaries for teachers and administrators, and the provision of the typical public school services in private and religious schools. The bishops then call on the nation to address the culture of violence, especially in the media; they recommend tighter gun control measures, the end to the death penalty and the continuation of the battle against discrimination, with the help of affirmative action programs. Finally, they urge “care for the earth and for the environment,” attention to global climate change, energy conservation, the development of new, clean energy sources.

Under the fourth priority, “practicing global solidarity,” the USCCB urges the United States to take “a leading role in helping to *alleviate global poverty*,” to make more efforts to promote *religious* liberty and other human rights around the world, and “reverse the spread of *nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons*, and to reduce its own reliance on weapons of mass destruction by pursuing progressive nuclear disarmament.” The bishops further recommend more political and financial support for “appropriate United Nations programs, other international bodies, and international law,” and they call upon the United States to adopt a more generous immigration policy, especially for those fleeing persecution. Finally, they urge the government to be a leader, “in collaboration with the international community, in addressing *regional conflicts* in the Middle East, the Balkans, the Congo, Sudan, Columbia, and West Africa.” The USCCB places special emphasis on the U.S. role in helping to resolve the Israeli–Palestinian conflict with security for Israel, a state for the Palestinians and peace for all. The bishops also urge the government, together with members of the international community, to persevere in working “to help bring stability, democracy, freedom and prosperity to *Iraq and Afghanistan*” (p. 28).

Although the USCCB doesn’t list all its legislative priorities or give much detail about the issues it discusses, readers can still form a pretty good idea of

where the bishops stand on the political spectrum. In terms of the sheer number of items the USCCB's agenda is more Democratic than Republican. But, in terms of their first two priorities, protecting human life and promoting family life, the USCCB's agenda favors Republicans over Democrats, unless Catholics think that opposition to the Bush Administration's Iraq policy and its war on terrorism must take precedence over opposition to abortion and euthanasia. (The death penalty is supported by a majority of both Republicans and Democrats.) What conclusions does the bishop's Administrative Committee want Catholics to draw from reading their pre-election document?

The bishops offer their readers an overarching principle to guide them in the evaluation of all the issues, namely, the "consistent ethic of life." "We do not wish to instruct persons on how they should vote by endorsing or opposing candidates. We hope that voters will examine the position of candidates on the full range of issues, as well as on their personal integrity, philosophy and performance. We are convinced that a consistent ethic of life should be the moral framework from which to address issues in the political arena." (p. 8)

On the contrary, the USCCB does implicitly instruct voters, not by endorsing or opposing candidates, but by laying out its own policy positions and by suggesting that Catholics evaluate candidates for office in the light of those positions within the moral framework provided by "the consistent ethic of life," keeping in mind the character, the political vision and past performance of the candidates.

What does this "consistent ethic of life" entail? Generally, it is a term used in social justice circles to describe the position that those who object to the taking of life at one stage or in one form must object to the taking of life at all stages and in all forms. Practically speaking, this means that those who oppose abortion should in practice oppose capital punishment and most wars. It is also generally understood to mean that Catholics should promote a respect-life attitude by supporting government spending on what are called the "social justice" issues, and embrace a host of progressive priorities. This is a position articulated by the late Cardinal Bernardin, the former Archbishop of Chicago, who argued in

his much discussed Fordham address of 1983 that a consistent ethic of life not only opposes abortion but also endorses policies designed to increase a people's well-being, that is, their quality of life. Cardinal Bernardin argued, "A quality of life posture translates into specific political and economic positions on tax policy, employment generation, welfare policy, nutrition and feeding programs and health care." Anyone who is consistently pro-life and on the side of justice should favor the kind of governmental policy that will help everyone, especially the poor. Reasonable Catholics, nevertheless, might disagree as to which policies will do the most good. So, Cardinal Bernardin interprets "the consistent ethic of life" to mean both opposition to clear evils about which there is no dispute and the endorsement of specific positions on such matters as tax policy, about which there will inevitably and legitimately be disagreement. *Faithful Citizenship* implicitly reflects the same interpretation of "the consistent ethic of life."

The bishops attempt to clarify what the "consistent ethic" requirement means by quoting from the Vatican Doctrinal Note. "A well formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals. The Christian faith is an integral unity, and thus it is incoherent to isolate some particular element to the detriment of the whole of Catholic doctrine. A political commitment to a single isolated aspect of the Church's social doctrine does not exhaust one's responsibility towards the common good." (p. 12)

Unfortunately, the bishops do not offer an explanation of this quotation. They simply urge Catholics to adhere to moral principles, practice discernment and make "prudential judgments based on the values of our faith" (p.12) Then, they mention the seven moral principles or themes of Catholic social teaching and explain their four moral priorities for public life.

The bishops comment on such a dizzying array of political issues that their readers will be hard pressed to distinguish which ones should have priority for Catholics, especially when *Faithful Citizenship* argues that "some Catholics may feel politically homeless, sensing that no political party and too few candidates share a consistent concern for human life

and dignity” (p. 3). The bishops’ Administrative Committee is apparently not heartened, as pro-choice-supporters are dismayed, by George Bush’s position on abortion. In other words, both the Republicans and Democrats fail to measure up to the high standards of Catholic social teaching. The message seems to be that each party is more or less equally deficient.

When all is said and done, *Faithful Citizenship* may be interpreted by Catholics as a permission to vote for a pro-abortion candidate if his position on other issues supports enough items on the USCCB’s political agenda. The Catholic faithful will receive an additional incentive to think this way from pro-abortion Democrats who can display high marks on their “Catholic voting scorecard.” Did the bishops intend this state of affairs, one may ask? Surely not. Nevertheless, previous USCCB documents on faithful citizenship and political responsibility have been so interpreted by people with an interest in voting for liberal candidates, despite their pro-choice stance. There is little to suggest that this latest version of faithful citizenship won’t be used in the same manner and much to suggest that it will.

Many Catholics may interpret the “consistent ethic of life” to mean that a candidate who is against abortion, euthanasia, the destruction of embryos in research, cloning, same-sex marriage, etc., does not deserve their vote if he or she supported the recent war in Iraq, believes in the death penalty and doesn’t support certain poverty programs. Put another way, Catholics might read the document to mean that a candidate who is adamantly “pro-choice,” and a supporter of same-sex marriage might be worthy of their vote if he also favors generous anti-poverty legislation, minority rights, job training for poor and underprivileged, increased educational opportunities for the poor, and opposes war and the death penalty. This is a likely scenario because the USCCB doesn’t explicitly argue that some evils are more serious than others and, therefore, should be addressed above all. While listing abortion and euthanasia as the first moral priorities for public life might incline some readers to take these evils more seriously than others, *Faithful Citizenship* avoids the dramatic language used both by John Paul II in his *Gospel of Life* about the culture of death, and by the USCCB itself in statements specifically addressing the evil of abortion. Not

noticing any special urgency, Catholics might also conclude that abortion is not that much of a priority if the pro-life candidate is judged to be the cause of x number of other evils, or insufficiently committed to the USCCB’s positions on social justice and global solidarity.

My point will perhaps become clearer by taking a brief look at Michael Pakaluk’s critique of Cardinal Bernardin’s “seamless garment” or “consistent ethic theory.” Pakaluk says it would make no sense to argue that the South before 1865 was unjust because of the institution of slavery and because the roads were not properly maintained in poorer regions. While the latter would be a problem, it would simply pale in relation to the evil of slavery. To think about the relation of abortion to other evils Pakaluk suggests that there are two ways of conceiving the evils of abortion.

“The first is that abortion is a calamity, a moral catastrophe of the first order, like the Ukrainian famine or the Holocaust. On this view, legalized abortion constitutes a direct attack on the foundation of our society: It involves the destruction of the most fundamental human bonds and requires, perilously, the continued corruption of our legal and medical professions. Our immediate task as citizens is to work with an almost militant commitment ... to remove this evil. (Cf, “A Cardinal Error: Does the Seamless Garment Make Sense?” in *Crisis* 6, 1988).

According to this view, the primary duty of all citizens, especially Catholics, is do everything morally possible to oppose the evil of abortion. The second way of looking at abortion, argues Pakaluk, is to look at it as one of many evils threatening the polity. “These evils come and go over time; and ... we simply have to do our best to bring about the best society that we can achieve.” According to this way of looking at things, faithful citizens may vote for pro-abortion candidates who seem to oppose more evils than pro-life candidates. “The seamless garment theory,” argues Pakaluk, “gives no support to the first view, which follows logically from the very nature of abortion conceded by Bernardin, and encourages the second view, which is a formula for lukewarmness and apathy.” Unfortunately, *Faithful Citizenship* doesn’t present abortion as a calamity of the first order, as the bishops do in some of their fine statements on human life. The document’s focus on the

“consistent ethic of life” reflects more Cardinal Bernardin’s seamless garment theory than it does John Paul II’s *Gospel of Life*.

Besides the problems posed by the USCCB’s “consistent ethic of life” theory, *Faithful Citizenship*, unfortunately, has the potential to mislead Catholics in a number of other areas. In comparing the Vatican’s *Doctrinal Note* with the bishops’ statement, one immediately notices that the former understands better than the latter the distinction between Church teaching and partisan politics, the importance of bishops being pastors and not partisan strategists, the indispensability of the practice of virtue for the reform of the political order, the devastating effect of relativism on society and the political order, the hierarchy of evils in society, how imperative it is for the Church to oppose the legalization of same-sex marriage, and the necessity of giving directives to Catholic politicians. A comparison of papal social teaching and other USCCB statements with *Faithful Citizenship* reveals that the latter omits to mention the many ways citizens may help the poor and promote social justice besides having the right opinion on the issues and voting for the best candidates.

Let us first look at the understanding of partisanship in *Faithful Citizenship*. The bishops realize that their own policy proposals may not always be the best way to realize their goals. That’s why they openly state in various places that lay Catholics may reasonably disagree with their approach. They actually admit their partisanship in both their pastoral letters on war and peace (1983) and on the economy (1986). In the former they write, “At times we state universally binding moral principles found in the teaching of the Church; at other times the pastoral letter makes specific applications, observations and recommendations which allow for diversity of opinion on the part of those who assess the factual data of a situation differently” (*The Challenge of Peace: God’s Promise and Our Response*, p. i). In the latter they alert their readers to their partisanship by writing, “We know that some of our specific recommendations are controversial. As bishops, we do not claim to make these prudential judgments with the same kind of authority that marks our declarations of principle” (*Economic Justice For All*, p. xii). Given this admission, I am constantly baffled when they affirm that their conference is not

partisan. In *Faithful Citizenship* the bishops say, “As an institution, we are called to be political but not partisan. The Church cannot be a chaplain for any one party or cheerleader for any candidate” (p. 29). The bishops seem to think that they can avoid the charge of partisanship as long as they don’t endorse a candidate or a party. In fact, any time they endorse policy positions with which reasonable Catholics may disagree they are acting in a partisan manner. They are rightly political when they teach the whole faith, explain all of Catholic social teaching, call for the end of clear evils, and inspire an educated and virtuous laity to change the world.

Cardinal Avery Dulles, before he became a cardinal, has directed attention to the bizarre claim made by the bishops that they are speaking as pastors when they “enter into technical realms such as counterforce targeting of military objectives, ...the minimum wage law, progressive taxation and affirmative action. The bishops claim to be speaking as pastors, not as experts on military affairs, economics or whatever. But when they make detailed applications of the kind I have mentioned, this distinction is hard to maintain” (Avery Dulles, “Religion and the Transformation of Politics,” *America* 167, no 12 (1992):297). Let us recall the teaching of the Vatican’s *Doctrinal Note*. Since there are various political opinions compatible with faith and the moral law, “it is not the Church’s task, to set forth specific political solutions—and even less to propose a single solution as the acceptable one—to temporal questions that God has left to the free and responsible judgment of each single person” (II,3). There is a good reason behind this position. If bishops endorse debatable policy solutions to specific problems, “they stir up opposition to themselves within the church,” says Cardinal Avery Dulles, “and undermine their own authority to teach and govern.” Unfortunately, the episcopal conference of the U.S. Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has not yet understood the wisdom of Dulles’s point. Since the end of Vatican Council II, the USCCB has continuously entered the world of partisan politics by making choices among policy proposals “that are held by sincere and intelligent Catholics” (p.297).

Even though the bishops are obviously people of good will trying their best to benefit society, the USCCB’s denial of partisanship is not a harmless

mistake. If Catholics are convinced that bishops are never partisan, they may elevate the bishops' debatable policy proposals to the level of doctrine. Such a move will further skew the interpretation of the "consistent ethic of life." If a pro-choice candidate supports twenty five of the USCCB's policy proposals on social justice and global solidarity, won't many Catholics be induced to downplay his support of abortion in the light of his "non-partisan," Catholic positions on social justice?

A third problem with the USCCB's *Faithful Citizenship* is the failure to tell Catholics that faithful citizenship includes much more than voting for good public policy. *Faithful Citizenship* claims to be "a statement on the responsibilities of Catholics to society." In fact, it doesn't really address this large topic at all. It is simply a guide to the issues facing the nation in the upcoming election of 2004. In *Christifideles laici*, (no. 41) Pope John Paul II talks about the lay renewal of the temporal order in these terms: "Charity toward one's neighbor, through contemporary spiritual and corporal works of mercy, represents the most immediate, ordinary and habitual ways that lead to the Christian animation of the temporal order, the specific duty of the lay faithful." If the USCCB were to spell out the implications of this statement, it would, indeed, have a good beginning for "a statement on the responsibilities of Catholics to society." In no place does the USCCB call upon the laity to make a contribution to civil society, except through some kind of political action. The episcopal conference chooses not to point out their own belief, professed elsewhere, that civil society offers Catholics an opportunity to be good citizens at work, in their families and neighborhoods, and in their volunteer activities. Failure to make this point unwittingly gives Catholics the idea that they can be good citizens simply by supporting good public policy through their votes.

A document that really focused on the responsibilities of Catholics toward society would have approached their four priority issues in a more comprehensive way. For example, in the section on promoting family life, where the bishops call for the legal protection of traditional marriage, they could also have called upon Catholic clergy and laity to persevere in their efforts to prepare the young for

marriage by educating them in the faith and by persuading them to practice chastity before and after marriage. Ignorance of the faith, pre-marital promiscuity and cohabitation as well as the practice of contraception in marriage are obstacles to living out the Church teaching on the sacrament of matrimony. Here was a perfect opportunity to point out that the separation of sex from its essential connection to procreation through the practice of contraception has prepared the way for acceptance of same-sex marriage. The section on social justice could have made the point that two of the most effective, long-term solutions to the problem of poverty are intact families and the work of Catholic education in poor neighborhoods. There are Catholic schools throughout the country that have done a wonderful job educating the poor, both Catholic and non-Catholic. They could even do better with more resources.

A fourth, and most serious, omission in *Faithful Citizenship* is the failure to address Catholic politicians on the subject of abortion and same-sex marriage. Surprisingly, the USCCB doesn't take Catholic legislators to task for their persistent support of the right to abortion and for resorting to the subterfuge that they are personally opposed to abortion but wouldn't think of trying to persuade others to share their opinion. This is like a pre-civil war politician saying, "I am personally opposed to slavery, but won't support a law banning slavery." At least, they could have spoken like Archbishop Charles Chaput of Denver, who recently said, "We've come a long way from John F. Kennedy, who merely locked his faith in the closet. Now we have Catholic senators who take pride in arguing for legislation that threatens and destroys life and who then also take communion. The kindest explanation for this sort of behavior is that a lot of Catholic candidates don't know their own faith." Furthermore, the bishops neither call upon the Catholic politicians to oppose the legalization of "marriage" between persons of the same-sex, nor do they alert Catholics in their document to the movement in the country to legalize same-sex marriage. This omission reveals a lack of political prudence, given the real possibility that the legalization of same-sex marriage will change the public understanding of marriage entirely. This is in stark contrast to the Vatican effort to provide specific guidelines to

Catholic politicians in a statement issued on June 3, 2003, entitled *Regarding Proposals To Give Legal Recognition To Unions Between Homosexual Persons*. Catholic politicians are instructed to oppose any laws which give legal recognition to same-sex unions. If laws are passed giving such legal recognition, Catholic politicians must make their opposition known and work to have the laws repealed. The CDF states its rationale for its position as follows: “Society owes its continued survival to the family, founded on marriage. The inevitable consequence of legal recognition of homosexual unions would be the redefinition of marriage which would become, in its legal status, an institution devoid of essential reference to factors linked to heterosexuality; for example procreation and raising children” (III, 8).

Still another problem with the USCCB’s *Faithful Citizenship* is the treatment of the cultural crisis in the United States. In the very beginning of the text the USCCB says, “Our culture sometimes does not lift us up but brings us down in moral terms.” The qualifier “sometimes” is explained in the next sentence: “Our world is wounded by terror, torn apart by conflict, and haunted by hunger.” Are these the primary ways in which our culture brings us down in moral terms? In my mind, Catholic social teaching shows that the negative characteristics of American culture are, first and foremost, rampant relativism, materialism and nihilism in all areas of life, “the culture of death” and the movement to undermine the understanding of marriage as a union between a man and a woman. Given the bishops’ moral priorities, you would expect them to alert Catholics to those aspects of American culture that most seriously oppose their Catholic principles. For example, there is a mention, but no description of the “culture of death” so eloquently drawn in Pope John Paul II’s *Gospel of Life*.

In conclusion, let us return to the Vatican’s point about what Catholics need to keep in mind in evaluating political issues. Its *Doctrinal Note* says that faithful citizenship requires all Catholics both to oppose clear evils such as abortion and euthanasia and to realize that the common good demands more than opposition to clear evils, although such opposition must never be omitted in the name of social justice concerns. Otherwise stated, Catholics may not legiti-

mately argue that their pro-life stance in the form of opposition to abortion and euthanasia exhausts the Catholic contribution to the common good. The young must be adequately educated, jobs created, terrorism thwarted, the poor cared for, etc. Under no circumstances, however, does a well-formed Christian conscience “permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of morals” (*Doctrinal Note* (II, 4)). Neither the Vatican nor the USCCB explicitly says so, but this statement from the *Doctrinal Note* seems to mean that Catholics may not vote for a candidate whose political program is to protect the right to choose abortion, or to support the legalization of same-sex marriage and euthanasia, even if he or she seems to have good positions on the issues falling under the rubric of social justice.

It is regrettable that the following thought of Archbishop Chaput didn’t find its way into *Faithful Citizenship*: “Our job as Catholics this election year, if we’re serious about our faith, is not to get fooled. Candidates who claim to be ‘Catholic’ but who publicly ignore Catholic teaching about the sanctity of human life are offering a dishonest public witness. They may try to look Catholic and sound Catholic, but unless they act Catholic in their public service and political choices, they’re really a very different kind of creature. And real Catholics should vote accordingly.” In other words, Catholics should be “as prudent as serpents and as innocent as doves.”

As things stand, the USCCB has missed an opportunity to contribute more to the political education of Catholics, especially Catholic politicians. One can, however, be grateful that the individual bishops throughout the country are making a significant contribution to that education by addressing subjects not discussed by *Faithful Citizenship*.

POSTSCRIPT

After their June meeting the USCCB issued “Catholics in Political Life,” a two page statement prepared by its Task Force on Catholic Bishops and Catholic Politicians with the collaboration of two additional bishops and a cardinal, and then strengthened by the entire body of bishops during their meeting. This short statement, developed on the basis of their more extensive interim report, is obviously not the

final word. After the Task Force submits its full report by next November, the full body of bishops will presumably have more to say, but not before a pro-choice Catholic stands for election to be president of the United States.

“Catholics in Political Life” makes the following points. 1) “If those who perform an abortion and those who cooperate willingly in the action are fully aware of objective evil of what they do, they are guilty of grave sin and thereby separate themselves from God’s grace.” 2) “Those who formulate law ...have an obligation in conscience to work toward correcting morally defective laws, lest they be guilty of cooperating in evil and in sinning against the common good.” The bishops mention the legalization of abortion on demand as an example of a morally defective law. 3) The bishops “counsel Catholic public officials that their acting consistently to support abortion on demand risks making them cooperators in evil in a public manner.” Note that they don’t say that pro-choice Catholic politicians are definitely cooperating in evil or are in an objective state of sin. The bishops seem to imply that Catholic pro-choice politicians may not know that supporting the legalization of abortion is formal cooperation in evil. They then express the hope that the proper formation of their consciences will deter Catholic politicians from supporting the right to abortion. 4) All Catholics have an obligation to defend human life and human dignity in public life. 5) Catholic institutions should not honor Catholics who act against the fundamental moral teachings of the Catholic Church. 6) It is up to individual bishops to decide whether to deny communion to pro-choice Catholic politicians. (Of the 70 bishops who submitted an opinion to the Task Force, those opposing the denial of Holy Communion to pro-choice Catholic politicians prevailed by a margin of three to one. 7) The bishops commit themselves “to continue to teach clearly and help other Catholic leaders to teach clearly on our unequivocal commitment to the legal protection of human life from the moment of conception until natural death.” 8) The bishops further recognize that they “need to do more to persuade all people that human life is precious and human dignity must be defended.” To accomplish this goal the USCCB says that “more effective dialogue and engagement” with

Catholic politicians is necessary. 9) “All must examine their conscience as to their worthiness to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. This examination includes fidelity to the moral teaching of the Church in personal and public life.”

These points in “Catholics in Political Life” fill a big gap in *Faithful Citizenship*, which had nothing to say about or to pro-choice Catholic politicians. The strong point of this statement is the commitment to persuade pro-choice Catholic politicians to recognize they are not in communion with the Church and to refrain from communion out of a sense of integrity. One should not underestimate how important this point is. The weakness of “Catholics in Political Life” is its failure to appreciate the full import of Cardinal Ratzinger’s memorandum to the USCCB, which has only recently been released to the public. (It appears that the vast majority of the bishops didn’t have a copy of the Ratzinger memorandum, since it was sent to Bishop Gregory and Cardinal McCarrick. That the latter presented to his fellow bishops an inaccurate summary of Ratzinger’s thought can be easily seen by comparing his “Interim Reflections” with the Ratzinger memorandum.)

The head of the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith encourages Pastors of pro-choice Catholic politicians to meet with them and explain that they should not receive communion until they put an end to “the objective state of sin” in which they have placed themselves by campaigning and voting for permissive abortion and /or euthanasia laws. If Catholic politicians refuse to be persuaded, and still seek to receive the Eucharist, “the minister of holy Communion must refuse to distribute it.” (cf. Pontifical Council for Legislative Texts Declaration ‘Holy Communion and Divorced, Civilly Remarried Catholics’ [2002, nos 3-4])” Ratzinger adds that this is “not a sanction or penalty. Nor is the minister of Holy Communion passing judgment on the person’s subjective guilt, but rather is reacting to the person’s public unworthiness to receive Holy Communion due to an objective situation of sin.” Ratzinger’s text clearly implies that the refusal to distribute communion to a pro-choice Catholic is not to be done for political reasons, e.g., to influence the outcome of an election, but only for religious reasons.

Ratzinger also addresses the pro-choice Catholic

voter in an incisive paragraph appended to the end of his memorandum. “A Catholic would be guilty of formal cooperation in evil, and so unworthy to present himself for Holy Communion, if he were to deliberately vote for a candidate because of the candidate’s permissive stand on abortion and/or euthanasia. When a Catholic does not share a candidate’s stand in favor of abortion/euthanasia, but votes for that candidate for other reasons, it is considered remote material cooperation, which can be permitted in the presence of proportionate reasons.” This is very helpful clarification and will help Catholics form their conscience if their pastors can find a way to tell them about it.

While the USCCB statement does urge every bishop to meet with pro-choice Catholic politicians and work tirelessly to persuade them that their position contradicts Church teaching, one cannot but notice the reluctance of the American bishops to be more insistent with pro-choice Catholics by denying communion to them when the work of persuasion fails to achieve its end. By not following Cardinal Ratzinger’s teaching on the theology of denying

communion, the USCCB, in my judgment, has not done enough to unsettle pro-choice Catholics and Catholic politicians in their vincible or invincible ignorance. The overwhelming majority will continue to be pro-choice and to maintain that they are in full communion with the Catholic Church because they are able to receive the Eucharist.

At present, only a minority of bishops are likely to be lovingly insistent that pro-choice Catholic politicians may not receive communion if they refuse to be persuaded that their support for abortion is morally wrong. These bishops will greatly benefit the Church, as they bear courageous witness to the Catholic faith. One can hope that this minority will eventually persuade their fellow bishops to see the wisdom of withholding communion as a last resort in order to bring about the conversion of pro-choice Catholic politicians. ✕

The Authority of the “Old” Pontifical Biblical Commission

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It has been fashionable in the last thirty years to dismiss or simply forget about magisterial pronouncements before Vatican II. For some biblical scholars this trend started early. Since the late 1950’s, and especially after the conclusion of the Second Vatican Council, the majority of Catholic scholars specializing in Holy Scripture have considered themselves unconstrained by the declarations of the Pontifical Biblical Commission (hereafter referred to as the PBC) which were handed down at the beginning of the twentieth century.

It is important to ask how this state of affairs came to be. These decrees, they maintain, were historically conditioned and as such are no longer in force. They declare that the decisions were developed in the face of the modernist crisis and therefore part of the historical past. Finally they assert that several documents, beginning with *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of Pius XII in 1943, successively undercut the authority and binding force of the commission’s findings.

This question touches the very nature of scholarship, especially in terms of the current debate over the episcopal *mandatum* to theology professors. How much must Catholic researchers submit the results of their findings to the doctrines of the faith? Ought their very research be constrained by the admoni-

tions of the Church, especially in those cases where the subject is not clearly defined doctrine or morals? Can scholarship in this sense really be the spirit of free inquiry which most moderns seem to demand as the precondition of research? This question also deals with the difficult problem of development of doctrine, and on the varying levels of authority in magisterial statements. The PBC decrees are heard about very little these days and it is important to ask why.

In response to the rise of rationalist biblical criticism which looked to reduce the scriptures to the status of near-eastern myths and unhistorical accounts, Pope Leo XIII decided to create a committee which would investigate the issues raised by scholars both inside and outside of the Catholic Church. In his letter *Vigilantiae* of October 30, 1902 the Pope established the Biblical Commission. It was constituted to examine the findings of contemporary scholarship and to rule whether or not it was compatible with Catholic Doctrine. The commission was to be made up both of Cardinals and of expert consultants from around the world. Decrees began to be issued in 1905. It is important to note that most of the decrees occurred during the reign of St. Pius X, whose pontificate was dedicated to opposing the modernist heresy.

As if to dispell any doubts about the authority of the Biblical Commission, Pius X issued the *Moto Proprio Praeestantia* on the 18th of November 1907. In it he declared how the decisions of the Biblical Commission were to be received. This document not only reinforced the position of the Commission but also made more clear the consequences of dissent from the anti-modernist encyclical *Lamentabili Sane*. The pertinent section of the document reads:

Wherefore we find it necessary to declare and to expressly prescribe, and by this our act we do declare and decree that all are bound in conscience to submit to the decisions of the Biblical Commission relating to doctrine, which have been given in the past and which shall be given in the future, in the same way as to the decrees of the Roman congregations approved by the Pontiff; nor can all those escape the note of disobedience or temerity, and consequently of grave sin, who in speech or writing contradict such decisions, and this besides the scandal they give and the other reasons for which they may be responsible before God for other temerities and errors which generally go with such contradictions.¹

In writing this the Pope expressly made the decisions binding in conscience, though not infallible. Three years later he mandated that all who recieved the degree of Doctor from the PBC were to swear an oath which bound them to accept the decisions of that body as normative for their studies.

The Commission made a series of declarations on a large number of topics in the next ten years, ranging from the historicity of Genesis to the authorship of the Pauline letters. Today the decisions are sometimes presented as the greatest example of institutionally monolithic acts perpetrated against academic freedom since the Galileo Case. This is somewhat unfair. In fact, most of the declarations themselves are actually very temperate in language and considered in tone. Several examples ought to make this clear.

The first declaration made by the Commission, regarding implicit citations, states that they may not be accepted unless proved by solid arguments.² Thus the first decision invites Catholic scholars to make arguments where they believe an implicit citation to have taken place. Another decision, handed down in 1906, was in response to a question as to whether Moses was the author of the Pentateuch.³ This declaration is often pointed to by biblical scholars who seem to see this as the keystone of the church's attempt to quell historical criticism (largely due to their general acceptance of the JEPD documentary hypothesis). The commission first declared it unnecessary to hold that Moses wrote every word nor even that he dictated every word to scribes (hardly an uncritical position). The second part of the answer contains the extremely important qualifier that Moses must be held to be the substantial author of the text and that glosses and interpretations might have been added to the books later in history. It seems that there is an extremely large area for interpretation and research contained within the very wording of the decree. Far from being stifling to research it would appear that the commission provided a wide latitude for scholarly investigation. Finally, to show that the Church was both faithful to her long tradition of spiritual interpretation and at the same time permissive to the investigations of modern science, the commission decided that the Six Days of the first Chapter of Genesis may be taken either in the

specific sense of a natural day or in the general sense of a space of time.⁴

Though this is only a small sampling of the decisions handed down by the experts on the commission they hardly seem to deserve the opprobrium of the modern community of scripture scholars. The decrees themselves are far from being either uncritical or anti-academic. One of the criticisms often raised against them is that they were handed down at the time of the modernist controversy. The examples given above are hardly conducive to this argument. In the minds of some modern scholars, such a heavily conservative commission should have declared that Moses was the *only* author and that the Six Days must be taken in their proper literal sense *alone*, for this would have strengthened their case against it. One should beware of conflating the relationship between theological modernism and historical criticism too closely, even though there was much cross-fertilization between the two. Even though the reaction to modernism in general was an acute historical fact at that time one must beware of undercutting the insights made by the magisterium in that period. For example, though the declarations against the Arian heresy date back 1700 years, it still seems as if they have something to say to the modern believer.

What then was understood as the binding force of these decrees at the time? It is clear that Pius X intended the decisions of the PBC to form an integral part of the ordinary magisterium. Its decrees, by a wide consensus, were held to be binding in conscience. Indeed an American scholar, Henry A. Poels, was asked to swear, in conscience, that he believed the decrees of the commission to be true.⁵ In spite of this, the status of the PBC as a curial commission certainly meant that the Pope's personal charism of infallibility did not extend to it. The findings of the commission therefore were neither infallible nor irreformable. However the competence to change the decrees seemed only to lie in the power of the commission itself or in the power of the Pontiff under whose auspices it operated.

In subsequent decades the atmosphere of biblical study began to change. The Modernist crisis passed. *Divino Afflante Spiritu* of Pius XII is often cited as the great charter of modern biblical scholarship. The document invited scholars to employ the tools of

modern scientific research and to consult the original languages. It clarified the position of the Vulgate as free from error and authoritative in juridical and pastoral cases but not as the definitive critical edition. The literal sense was again pointed to as the primary sense of scripture and different literary genres were recognized. Nowhere in the document is the authority of the PBC directives challenged.

The commission itself had definitely shifted gears during this period. After its initial flurry of activity of 1905-1915 it issued decisions on only two more questions until its constitution was changed in 1971. In 1948 it issued an important letter to Cardinal Suhard, the Archbishop of Paris, regarding the Pentateuch and the historicity of Genesis.⁶ The reply states that no one doubts that Moses used sources in composing the Pentateuch and that there was subsequent development in the Mosaic Law. More importantly though, and this is often downplayed by those who see a shift, the PBC stated that they said as much in their 1906 Decree. No new decrees were needed and this was expressly stated in the letter. As to the issue of the historicity of Genesis, the letter follows *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, and contends that the history narrated by Genesis 1-11 is not proper modern history nor that of a Greco-Roman historian. In light of this, the commission calls for more scientific and literary study of the texts. Indeed here is nothing revolutionary either. In any case no decrees were made and neither was there mention of any of the other declarations of the commission.

To those who want to prove that the decrees are no longer binding, 1955 appears to be the watershed. In that year, two secretaries of the Commission, Athanasius Miller O.S.B. and Arduin Kleinhans O.F.M. wrote reviews of a new edition of the *Enchiridion Biblicum*, the compilation of Church teachings on the bible. Though writing in different languages they apparently had worked out a common position which declared that only PBC decrees relating to faith and morals were binding; as to all the others, scholars could now work on them "in all freedom."⁷ It is important to mention that the two men were not members of the commission, but rather they were the secretaries. Msgr. John Steinmuller asserts that this caused such a stir that the Prefect of the Holy Office wanted to bring them up on charges,

but that they were saved by the head of the PBC, Cardinal Tisserant, and no more was heard officially about it.⁸

It is ironic that Pius XII, the popular archetype of a conservative pontiff, presided over what modern scripture scholars see as the great relaxation of Church strictures on Biblical research. It is equally strange that under Bl. John XXIII, whose popular image is that of a jocund and open liberal, that a marked conservative reaction occurred in which some scholars were removed from their teaching positions. The Second Vatican Council made no specific decisions contrary to the earlier decrees of the PBC. In 1971 the tenure of the PBC as a magisterial organ came to an end with the Moto Proprio *Sedula Cura* of Paul VI. The PBC was made an advisory subcommission of the Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, thus ending its term as an independent body with papally-conferred authority. In light of this development, nothing after the promulgation of this document can be considered to have the independent magisterial authority that the decrees of 1905-1915 possess.

It is not at all clear that any document has repealed the binding force of the decrees of 1905-1915, issued by a commission with independent authority and confirmed by a reigning Pope. Those who would pass over the decrees as historical curiosities (since they are deprived of any evidence of positive magisterial abrogation) are forced to rely on the arguments of Kleinhans and Miller in 1955. It is Father Joseph Fitzmyer's assertion that no one on the Commission or indeed anywhere in the curia made any rebuttal or retraction of the secretaries' articles.⁹ This is true. Fitzmyer states that, by their silence, the members of the PBC gave their consent to the content of Miller's and Kleinhans' assertions. However the sentiment of the Commission is not the real issue. Perhaps some Cardinal members of the commission *did* agree with Miller and Kleinhans, perhaps most did. That they took no action may imply consent but it still results in the status quo. The secretaries had no authority whatsoever, they were not voting members of the Commission. Even if they were expressing the mind of the commission, their voice was an outside one with no right to absolve Catholics of their obligation to the decrees. Imagine how troublesome it would be

if doctrine changed every time a Roman congregation *said nothing* in response to a challenge.

Nonetheless, as Fitzmyer declares, most exegetes began to act as if this were an official retraction of the PBC decrees. They acted "in all freedom" as the Miller/Kleinhans articles had recommended. Raymond Brown, S.S. and Thomas Aquinas Collins, O.P. in the Jerome Biblical Commentary give the obituary of the decrees:

*A brief (italics theirs) summary seems indicated, for many of these decrees now have little more than historic interest, being implicitly revoked by later decrees, by *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, and by Vatican II. The early decrees must be evaluated according to the 1955 clarification issued in Latin and German by A. Miller and A. Kleinhaus(sic)...*¹⁰

Fathers Brown and Collins do not take the trouble to point out any of the subsequent decrees which *implicitly* revoked the earlier ones. Indeed there were no later decrees of the commission. They also neglect to point out later where *Divino Afflante Spiritu* even mentions the PBC decisions. And citing Vatican II as a blanket revocation for previous magisterial pronouncements is a bit broad. In any case Roman documents are usually pretty exact when something is getting revoked, canon lawyers tend to get antsy when something is implied in a document rather than stated.

In the end, the case for the revocation of the decrees seems tenuous at best, made up of assumptions and implicit assertions, but not backed up by any formal magisterial pronouncement. Perhaps biblical scholars really did not need to go through all of these gymnastics to get out of submission to the decisions in the first place. All of the decrees are very carefully phrased and many point out the need for further research. At the same time the decisions respect the constant traditions of the Church regarding things like authorship. It is not too onerous a thing to be tied to tradition. Instead of beginning research with a blank slate, "in *all* freedom," perhaps ecclesiastical traditions could be taken as the starting point, indeed as normative unless *proved* wrong. Some have pointed out that the atmosphere of the modernist reaction was not conducive to original research. Perhaps, but as they have indicated, that period is past, and

freedom of research is now possible. That freedom must be conversely understood in light of the responsibilities of a Catholic scholar. They have a real obligation to the past and to tradition, they also have responsibilities to assist the magisterium and to submit when necessary, and finally they have a responsibility to truth. From a Catholic perspective, all of these things are intimately related. ✠

Footnotes

- 1 Pope St. Pius X, *Praestantia Scripturae*, 18 Nov. 1907.
- 2 Denzinger-Schoenmetzer, 1979.
- 3 DS, 1997-8.
- 4 DS, 2128.
- 5 Fogarty, Gerald P., S.J. *American Catholic Biblical Scholarship*. San Francisco: Harper, 1989., 105-117.
- 6 DS, 3002.
- 7 Fogarty, 261-264.
- 8 Steinmuller, John, Msgr. *The Sword of the Spirit*. Waco, TX: Stella Maris, 1977. 7, n. 1.
- 9 Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *A Christological Catechism: New Testament Answers*. New York: Paulist, 1982., 100, n.1.
- 10 *Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Raymond Brown, Joseph Fitzmyer, and Roland Murphy eds. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1968, 629.

Policy Suggestions for the Church*

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Introduction

In what was perhaps his last public lecture, given at the Nassau Community College Center for Catholic Studies, in Garden City, New York, on March 29th, 2003, Monsignor George A. Kelly started his talk on the reasons for the founding of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars by declaring bluntly that “sometime after Vatican II, the Church went to hell.” Perhaps the bluntness of Monsignor Kelly on this occasion could be explained by the fact that his presentation was not written in advance and his remark was extemporaneous and not as nuanced as it could have been. Or perhaps it can be partially explained by the disappointment and exasperation on one who has tried to

hard for so long to right the direction of the Catholic community during his era but perceives that his efforts have been mostly for naught. Or perhaps it is the declaration of an older man who has, finally, lost his patience. Or perhaps the good Monsignor was just “calling it as he sees it” and seeing it pretty clearly at that. Even allowing for a certain amount of hyperbole on the part of the good and colorful Monsignor Kelly, I would argue that this judgment made by one of the true heroes of the Catholic Church during the post-Vatican II debacle is not too far off the mark. As I see it, the picture of the contemporary Catholic Church in the United States isn’t pretty. It most certainly is uglier than many of those committed to maintaining, for whatever reasons, a certain image of a faithful and functioning religious community would be willing to admit publicly.

I will start my deliberations rehashing some of the pertinent facts about the present state of the Catholic Church in this country, facts that many from even disparate worldviews would agree on in terms of their simple veracity. I will then address the issue of how these accepted facts are interpreted and what policy conclusions naturally flow from such divergent analyses. Finally, I will propose solutions that are consistent with my own analysis of the state of the contemporary Church.

*An earlier version of this paper, under different title, was presented at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, Michigan, November 3rd, 2003

Institutional and Social Failure: Some Facts

The failure of contemporary Catholicism can be discussed in terms of two necessarily overlapping categories, those that are internal to the Church institution and those referring to the Catholic population at large. These categories are necessarily overlapping because there exists a dialectical or mutually shaping relationship between Church and society. This is a relationship heavily weighted, at the moment, on the impact of society on the Church and not the other way round due precisely to the weakened condition of the latter.

Regarding institutional failures, the most important one is the seeming inability of the Church to effectively pass on the essentials of the faith to its own membership. Sociological studies comparing pre-Vatican II, Vatican II, and post-Vatican II generations clearly show a general trend downwards in terms of, most basically, knowledge of, and derivatively, assent to, Church teachings. Of paramount importance here is the overwhelming fact that the majority of the current teachers of the Catholic faith in the Church's official education programs simply do not pass on the Catholic faith correctly and effectively because they themselves do not possess the faith. The members of what Monsignor Michael Wrenn and Kenneth Whitehead have referred to as the present day "catechetical establishment" have themselves been trained by dissenting theologians who have consciously misinterpreted the theology of the Second Vatican Council into a vision that, practically speaking, falsely baptizes as Catholic the secularizing developments of the outer American and modern culture. In this regard, I cannot think of a more depressingly central indicator of contemporary widespread religious illiteracy than the recent research indicating that a high percentage of communicants are not aware that they are receiving the body and blood of Jesus Christ when administered the sacrament of the Eucharist. Related to this is the significant increase in the unworthy reception of the sacrament. This religious illiteracy is at least one key factor in explaining the growth of the selective "picking and choosing" of the essentials of the faith both described and advo-

cated by sociologist Father Andrew Greeley through his discussion of a "communal Catholicism" (which actually was predicted as a general religious trend last century by the liberal Protestant theologian and sociologist Ernest Troeltsch through his own discussion of what he saw as the inevitable rise of a "mystical" appropriation of religion). For both Troeltsch and Father Greeley, it is both inevitable and desirous that the locus of religious authority reside with the individual and not with received or organically developing tradition. Such a radical individuation of religion is quite consistent with the worldview of liberal Protestantism and a Protestantizing Catholicism and its effects quite in line with sociologist Peter L. Berger's observation that, inevitably, a liberal religiosity is a self-liquidating enterprise.

Compared to a baseline of the mid-twentieth century Catholic Church in the United States, mass attendance is down. The abandonment of the priesthood and religious life after almost 40 years now seems finally to have stabilized but, at the moment, at inadequate levels of replacement. A substantial and well-placed "middle management" of progressive Catholics intent to "update" the faith at all costs and unsympathetic to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is still, for the most part, in charge of catechesis and the other functions performed by the Church's various organizations and bureaucracies. Too many seminaries allow or even encourage dissent and some have become enclaves for an active homosexual movement. Too many Church administrators and pastors view the Catholic high school and parochial school system not as an opportunity to evangelize and as a non-negotiable aspect of their ministry but as an unnecessary headache. The sacrament of penance has almost disappeared, priests themselves go to confession less, and when the sacrament is celebrated, it oftentimes serves as an opportunity for priests to deny the objective reality of sin and promote in its place an undemanding "therapeutic mentality." The incredibly large number of annulments granted in the Catholic Church in America breeds suspicion, at the very least, of the possible misuse by marriage tribunals of psychological analysis. The implementation of *Ex corde Ecclesiae* has effectively been obstructed and the secularization of Catholic higher education, for the most part, continues unabated. Finally, and

as a result of this institutional defilement, financial contributions are down as serious Catholics refuse to throw good money after bad and progressive Catholics have more “important” liberal and secular causes to support. Regarding the latter, many leaders of the misnamed group, “Voice of the Faithful,” are quite up front in urging their followers to withhold donations subject, presumably, to the “structural” changes they want instituted in the Catholic Church. Far less honestly, however, this group claims that their desired changes are not intended to violate the essentials of the faith. For one thing, it is a contradiction for a group of laity to demand to oversee the Bishops who are, after all, the official “overseers” of the Catholic Church set up by Christ himself. Put another way, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is the non-negotiable foundation of the faith not subject to being subverted by democratic forces, whether those forces are actually authentically democratic or not.

Regarding the Catholic population at large, the percentage of both Catholics who are married, and married validly in the eyes of the Church, has dropped. Relatedly, the size of Catholic families has decreased to, more or less, the national norm. Similarly, Catholic acceptance of the use of artificial means of birth control, pre-marital sex, and abortion are generally indistinguishable from the American population at large. The Catholic population overwhelmingly seems to be innocent of the reality of, the logic behind, and the empirical evidence supporting the salutary effects of, both the natural law and Catholic social doctrine. As a result, too many Catholics, especially from the middle classes upward, have followed the mental lines of least resistance embracing various forms of neo-paganism as their “ultimate concern” (referring to Paul Tillich’s term) such as the soft socialism of cultural elites in academia, the mass media, the arts, government, and the Democratic Party or the soft capitalism of corporate America and the Rockefeller wing of the Republican Party. That which is of paramount importance for many other Catholics, especially from the working class and immigrant populations, remains an essentially pagan attachment to such essentially pre-modern allegiances as the family, ethnicity, and the local community/neighborhood.

An Important Qualification

An important qualification about the facts hitherto presented is in order. This qualification moves in the direction of modifying, a bit, the bleak picture thus far displayed. This caveat is that the portrayal presented thus far doesn’t make a basic distinction between practicing and non-practicing Catholics. When asked by my students which is America’s largest denomination, I answer, “the Catholic Church.” When students naturally follow with the question as to which group is the second largest denomination, I respond, only half-facetiously, “nominal Catholics.” Sociologist Father Joseph Fichter’s categories, based on participation in the Church and developed before the unintended impact of Vatican II was felt, are here useful; utilizing a concentric zone framework, he speaks of “nuclear,” “modal,” “marginal,” and “dormant” Catholics. Religious illiteracy, by definition, is obviously higher for marginal and dormant Catholics. If these baptized Catholics were, sociologically, not defined as members of the Catholic community but as the targets of Catholic missionary activity, the illiteracy rates would not look quite as bad as they do when all the four categories are combined.

The issue of religious dissent, however, is a little more complex. In the immediate pre-Vatican II era, one could usefully assume that “nuclear” Catholics meant Catholics who were religiously orthodox in both belief and practice. Sociologically at least, this is not the empirical case today as many outright dissenters have accepted the advice of people like the radical feminist Rosemary Radford Reuther not to leave the Church but to stay active and fight from within. The latter figure is alleged to have responded to the question as to why she stays in a Catholic Church that she views as inherently sexist as follows: “In order to win the revolution you need xerox machines and the Church has the xerox machines.” Many such dissenters have demanded what Joseph Sobran has referred to as “squatter’s rights” in the Church; while they defile the vision and violate the practice of the Church’s teachings, they nonetheless do not abandon the institution; they are “nuclear,” at least sociologically, to the institution and its activities and programs and stand in combat with the re-

ligiously orthodox “nuclear” core for the soul of the Church. Indeed, as James Hitchcock and others have argued, a religiously heterodox “new class” of intellectuals, bureaucrats, activists, combined with some misinformed and misguided “church mice,” now constitute a vast “middle management” of Church run, or better yet, mis-run, institutions.

It is important to point out that the dissent of the religiously illiterate differs significantly from the dissent of the religiously heterodox core. The former is a form of “soft dissent,” not based on codified and articulated knowledge and critical reflection, and most times the issues involving dissent are merely of passing interest or outright indifference to the individual in question. And precisely because this form of “dissent” is soft, it is subject to being corrected by vigorous evangelization and re-evangelization efforts. Does the marginal or dormant Catholic really care, for instance, about the issue of the ordination of women or whether or not Bishops should be democratically elected? And even the marginal or dormant Catholic woman, shorn of any hardened secular ideological commitment, who approves of abortion rights and actually has willingly consented to abortions herself is far more susceptible to admitting eventually to the evil of the act as the dysfunctions—spiritually, bodily, and socially—of abortion manifest themselves as they inevitably do. The same could be said of Catholics who have experienced the disastrous consequences of rejecting the Catholic ideal of the intact traditional family. It cannot be stressed enough, however, that successful conversions to the state of thinking and acting with the Church require more than just disenchantment with the status quo. In any intellectual and moral migration, there must be more than just a “push” factor; there must also be some sort of “pull” factor. The Church must capitalize on the present day experience of disenchantment by many by offering simultaneously a compelling alternative vision, a vision that Karl Adam has referred to as “the spirit of Catholicism.” Regrettably, given the massive dissent that has been allowed to be institutionalized within the Church over the past forty years, the Catholic vision has not been presented whole, with integrity, and in all its majesty and therefore has failed to convert as many of the disenchanting, the searchers, the ambivalent, and the open-

minded as was, and is, possible.

The “hard dissent” of the religiously heterodox, on the other hand, emanates far more out of some secularized ideological commitment and is oftentimes buttressed by sets of material, power, and status interests (as they have no desire to lose their jobs, bully pulpits, and influence). This dissent is disproportionately influential within the Church precisely because it is so well placed. However, the numbers involved are not vast, at least not as a proportion of the total Catholic community. Literally speaking, a policy of “decimation” would do wonders for the health of the Catholic Church. To be perfectly clear, what I am calling for is not the classic Roman decimation leading to the execution of Roman soldiers picked randomly from legions who have been judged not to have performed their duties. Rather, what I am calling for is a Roman Catholic disciplinary policy regarding all baptized Catholics that ranges from excommunication in those cases in which Church insiders and members of civil society have notoriously and scandalously rejected Christ and His Church, to the firing of dissenters from Church-based employment, to the never relenting and public correcting of those who themselves have manifestly denied Catholic doctrine. Such a policy regarding the decimation of dissent would quickly take care of the issue of making it clear to all just what Catholic teachings are and what they aren’t. To quote the phrase of one of the more famous general managers of baseball, Branch Rickey, institutionalizing such a policy would represent a case of “addition through subtraction,” in terms both of personnel and worldview. To sum up: the present disarray in the Church could be improved substantially if proper Church officials would use, respectively, their authority against the hard dissenters and their evangelization resources for a massive outreach to the marginal and dormant Catholic.

Differing Interpretations of What to Do

As one wag has allegedly commented, “there are lies, damn lies, and statistics.” The point here, regarding the second purpose of my presentation, is to show that “the facts never speak for

themselves,” i.e., to demonstrate how factual information about the state of the Church is capable of being transformed by various theoretical or interpretative spins and by the ability of human beings to rationalize what they perceive, many times incorrectly, to be in their self-interest. Regarding Catholics in American society, for instance, the apparently clearer and ever more indisputable “fact” that human life exists within the womb will not necessarily convince all abortionists to stop their barbaric practices; rather it is quite possible, following the claim of James K. Fitzpatrick, that elaborate or, for that matter, home spun, defenses of infanticide will emerge. Likewise, the overwhelming “fact” that more and more upper middle class married couples consciously decide not to have children will not automatically “wake up” feminists to the dangers and limitations of submerging oneself into a self-absorbed, hedonistic, and materialist upper-middle class American lifestyle; so-called “quality of life” arguments similarly have multiplied.

Regarding issues of religious dissent and illiteracy that are internal to the institution, many progressive Catholics would merely shrug off their acknowledged reality by claiming, incorrectly, that Vatican II’s positing of conscience as the “supreme subjective norm” is an endorsement of the value and reality of an autonomous individualism and, practically speaking, means that, short of murder and transgressing the politically correct, Catholics can believe anything and do anything and still call themselves faithful members of the religious community. Again, Father Greeley’s advocacy of a “communal Catholicism” is here relevant. Or, similarly, other progressive Catholics will make the claim—like the liberal Baptist thinker, Harvey Cox, does in his *The Secular City*—that the evolving, broader, and ever more secular culture is “out in front” of organized religion, the Catholic Church most especially included, and that all would be well if only the Church would marry the zeitgeist. Dissent, from this perspective, is viewed not merely as just an option but actually as a valuable and required contribution to the Church.

Another progressive approach that tries to neutralize the negative statistical information previously laid out is to argue that all religion, including Catholicism, is, at base, a matter of “experience” and not, conversely, doctrine. Such an approach is labeled

by the Lutheran theologian, George Lindbeck, an “experiential-expressive” one. It is an approach that argues that all doctrinal statements are merely non-essential reflections of some alleged universal religious experience. The goal, presumably, of the religious seeker is to try to bask in the presence of, or perhaps even merge into, the “numinous,” what Rudolf Otto referred to as the “totally other” than human. Doctrinal issues (e.g. that the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ) including, social doctrinal issues (e.g. that abortion is the destruction of a child of God) are best of secondary importance and usually viewed as a matter of opinion and taste.

Some traditional religionists, for their part, acknowledge, (as I do), that all the religious and social indicators previously discussed are negative and deleterious but view them, (as I do not), as out their or anybody’s control, usually attributing them as the inevitable consequences of broad cultural and social trends. All that can be done, so this logic goes, is to take a basically passive counter cultural stance and try to keep the religion alive in the nooks and crannies of society waiting for a more propitious circumstance from which Catholicism can re-emerge as a potentially society shaping force. There is yet another interpretation that believes both that the Church in the contemporary United States is in a bad way but that the goal of “restoring all things in Christ” in this civilization is not only necessary but possible—the interpretation that I support and that will be presented momentarily. However, the point summarizing this overall section is even granting some consensus reached on the mere existence of specific factual developments occurring within the Church and society will not, in and by itself, lead to a consensus about the health and welfare of the Church and society and their necessary and desired directions.

Reorienting the Catholic Church Back in the Right Direction

The claim, accepted by almost all non-Marxist sociologists, that human beings are “cultural creatures” is one similar but not identical with the Church’s understanding that human beings are “moral beings” subject to the internal conversa-

tion between the natural law “written into the heart” and the surrounding environment. The sociological and Catholic understandings are not identical because of the deterministic leanings of some (not all) cultural sociologists who portray the individual as a prisoner of culture and hence cannot incorporate into their models the reasoning capability and free will that are constitutive of a Catholic philosophical anthropology. However, the sociological and Catholic traditions are, indeed, similar in that they both acknowledge the important role for what sociologists call “socialization”-- or the internalization of culture--in shaping the thoughts and activities of individuals. The relevant point here is that the key concern in reorienting the Church back in the right direction involves what sociologists call “socialization,” what religionists term “evangelization,” and what the man in the street simply refers to as “education.” What, then, can Catholic social policy suggest that can lead to more nominal Catholics, and potential non-Catholic converts, “thinking and acting with the Mind of the Church?”

The most basic and essential proposal geared to reorienting the Catholic Church back in the right direction is the rebuilding of what the distinguished Lutheran sociologist, Peter L. Berger, calls its “plausibility structure.” For Berger, any belief system requires a structural base that reaffirms, through constant interaction and exposure, its “realness” to the individual, that provides what the psychologist William James refers to as a necessary “accent on reality.” The Church’s plausibility structure consists of those “intermediate” (and potentially “mediating”) institutions (e.g. parishes, seminaries, schools and colleges, hospitals, mass media outlets, professional and academic associations, libraries, museums, art galleries, etc.) that stand between the individual and what the classical French sociologist, Emile Durkheim, called a society’s “collective conscience” or, more simply, central value system. A plausibility structure, if its various parts are internally consistent with each other, is capable of producing either subcultures or, if need be, countercultures capable of dialoguing with and critiquing the messages of an American society that was, originally, characterized by a Protestant cultural, economic, and political hegemony and now by a secular monopoly in the public square. Without an effective

Catholic plausibility structure consisting of a comprehensive set of mediating institutions, what socializes those baptized in the Church is not the Catholic worldview but whatever system of ideas that, at the moment, is socially dominant.

Legitimated by a false and selective understanding of Vatican II, what has occurred in the Catholic Church of the United States over the past forty years or so is a defilement of its plausibility structure though what Peter Berger has referred to as a “secularization from within.” The latter refers to an empirical situation in which traditional religion survives in society as a hollowed out, ineffective reality, little more than providing a thin veneer for what is actually and effectively non-religious belief and activity. The processes of a “secularization from within” has occurred at almost all but Magisterially defined and controlled levels of the Church, including what passes for a general religious worldview in too many Church bureaucracies. The end result is a cutting down of an authentic worldview to the contours of American liberalism and autonomous individualism with predictable and disastrous results in the formation, knowledge, and behavior of a vast percentage of the Catholic population in the United States. For those interested in an elaboration of this thesis, I refer you to my volume, *Bright Promise, Failed Community: Catholics and the American Public Order*.

Some More Concrete Suggestions

The most basic concrete suggestion is that the Catholic Church in this country should radically change priorities, in terms of its ministries and apostolates, which would entail a change in its allocation of personnel and spending priorities. Outside of the administration of the sacraments, there must be an almost exclusive emphasis given to Catholic education, with the ultimate goal being to offer all interested Americans, Catholic or not, a free K-12 education for their children that is shaped by an authentic Catholic worldview. The basic idea was first suggested by, of all people, Father Andrew Greeley over a decade ago. Father Greeley was making the claim that the single greatest service that the Catholic

Church can offer to minorities and the poor would be a first rate and free Catholic elementary and high school education geared to both body and soul. I think his suggestion should be expanded to include the whole American population, given my expressed belief that it is possible to restore major sections of the total society to Christ. It surely is the case, however, that such a proposal would be seized upon with most enthusiasm by those most disenfranchised in our society. The possibilities for the saving of souls and the promotion of human dignity among the minority populations in the Archdiocese of Detroit, for instance and to underplay the point, are both palpable and realistic. Related to this, all parishes must emphasize, much more than they do now, catechetical instruction in the essentials of the faith not only for their parishioners but for any potentially interested citizen, Catholic or not. Related to and supporting this general catechetical thrust would be efforts—via such instruments as cable television, radio programming, and free continuing education courses—presenting the Catholic worldview on a wide range of topics and issues through discussions of theology, philosophy, the popes, the saints, social thought, social science and history, and social and public policy. Diocesan newspapers must be transformed into more serious religious, intellectual and moral vehicles both promoting and explaining the Catholic faith and what it has to offer the individual and society.

Such a radical change in priorities would naturally impact on the degree and nature of support that the faith offers other aspects of its internal ministry and social apostolate. All other aspects of the Catholic social apostolate, if it wants labor intensive and financial support, should be an activity that the secular State does not fund for whatever ideological reason (e.g. natural family planning, pregnancy care, Project Rachel and the caring of those suffering from post-abortion syndrome, settlement or hospitality houses addressing the needs of the homeless including those who are mentally and physically ill, etc.). While, ideally, it is important for all social welfare activity to be performed simultaneously in conjunction with the presentation of Catholic social doctrine, the present weakened condition of the Church does not allow the Church to do everything for everybody. If the State can perform some social welfare function with-

out violating the natural law, let it do it, at least until the Church's financial resources and, more importantly, number of orthodox personnel increases.

It is no secret that the state of Catholic higher education, judged by authentic Catholic criteria, is close to abysmal. The number of smaller orthodox colleges, either started over the past few decades or that have come home to the bosom of Mother Church, while heartening, is not an adequate response. At least some of the sacred Catholic soil that has been occupied by the secular pretenders to the thrown of Catholic education during the past decades must be recaptured. Another concrete suggestion is to create a nation wide Catholic educational agency composed of orthodox Catholic scholars from groups like the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, the Cardinal Newman Society, and the Society of Catholic Social Scientists which is designed to help and serve those Bishops concerned with the renewal of Catholic higher education. The religious and intellectual argument must be made to the Bishops, and at least a core must accept such an argument if the proposal has any chance of even limited success, that any college that wants to call itself Catholic must be willing to be evaluated by this agency which will offer its professional judgement to the presiding diocesan Bishop about whether or not, or to what degree, and where and where not, the Catholic scholarly, religious, and moral tradition is being effectively and faithfully presented. If Catholic colleges and universities submit, in certain respects, to secular accrediting agencies, they should understand that they logically and necessarily bear the burden of being judged simultaneously from a Catholic framework legitimated by Magisterial authority. Catholic universities and colleges who are unwilling to submit to this evaluation—and there will be many of them—could be designated by the complying local ordinary of the diocese in which the institution is located as no longer a “Catholic institution” and thereby must not be able to advertize itself as such. Obviously, a diocesan based Catholic institution of higher education, like Seton Hall University which is ultimately under the outstanding and very orthodox leadership of his Grace, Archbishop John Myers, should be more easily reconverted than others under the direction of religious orders that, practically (although not

theoretically) speaking, have some greater degree of autonomy.

As is well known, His Eminence Adam Cardinal Maida of the Archdiocese of Detroit was one of the key proponents of the creation of the magnificent John Paul II Cultural Center based in Washington, D.C. which serves as a key depository of the Catholic faith and as an agent of evangelization. Cardinal Maida and all the Bishops in charge of Catholic dioceses should strongly consider the creation and dispersion of similar entities within their own jurisdictions, i.e., what I've previously referred to in the *Newsletter of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* as "Catholic religious and cultural centers." These centers can effectively evangelize by representing both the universal message of the Catholic faith and the specific needs, gifts, and applications of each individual region.

Another suggestion is to increase the scope of educational and evangelization activities that take place at Catholic seminaries which are under, very clearly and without ambiguity, the authority of orthodox Catholic leadership. There is, of course, a certain danger in this proposal. By their very nature, seminaries are designed to meet the need of generating and cultivating that most central calling, the priesthood. Again, however, it must be pointed out that these are not normal times within the Catholic Church in the United States; our functioning institutions must, of necessity, be asked to bear extra responsibilities and tasks that they were not originally intended to master. Alas, we must "go into battle" with what we've

got and what we've got are a few institutions, like Sacred Heart Major Seminary, which are fast heading back to Catholic orthodoxy. Such seminaries must be quickly expanded into developing liberal arts colleges and must also serve as "hotbeds" of Catholic intellectual and evangelistic activity where faithful groups (e.g. Catholics United for the Faith, Opus Dei, the Legionaries of Christ, etc.) must be invited to run their programs. Given the present unreliability of most colleges that call themselves Catholic, faithful seminaries should be locations offering the community various educational outreach programs both situated at the seminary and, through technology, geared to an national audience. The focus, therefore, of Catholic institutions during this period of crisis should not merely be to serve some local community (e.g. the Archdiocese of Detroit) but should be oriented also to what is best for the Church, both nationally and universally. The motto should be something like "One for all and all for Jesus Christ." ✠

This essay is based, in part, on the volume, *Bright Promise, Failed Community: Catholics and the American Public Order* (Lexington Books, 1-800-462-6420; www.lexingtonbooks.com or www.barnesandnoble.com or www.amazon.com). The author would like to express his thanks to both Kenneth Whitehead of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars and the Very Reverend Steven Boguslawski, O.P., Rector and President of Sacred Heart Seminary, for the critical feedback they offered my initial presentation. I accepted some, but not all, of their suggestions. It should be made perfectly clear that the author assumes total responsibility for the line of argumentation offered in this essay.)

Announcement: **Creation of the Murphy Institute**

May 2004

The University of St Thomas announces the creation of the Terrence J Murphy Institute for Catholic Thought, Law, and Public Policy. Named after the University's longtime former president and chancellor, the Institute will explore the various interactions between law and Catholic thought. It will examine how the law might be affected by a "vision of the human person and the world that is enlightened by the Gospel" (Pope John Paul II, *Ex corde ecclesiae*). As a collaboration between the University's Center for Catholic Studies and its School of Law, the Institute will draw on the resources of

both programs, as well as on other academic disciplines and other faith traditions. In exploring the connections between law and Catholic thought, the Institute will emphasize developing curricular resources, facilitating scholarship and scholarly discussions, and engaging and serving the community through public events and public policy analysis. The Institute plans to hold its first major conference in the spring of 2005. The co-directors of the Institute are Professor Robert Kennedy of the Center for Catholic Studies and Professor Thomas Berg of the School of Law.

Edith Stein As Mystical Theologian

by D. Q. McInerney, Ph.D.

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I

In 1942, Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Edith Stein, was asked by her prioress to write a tribute to St. John of the Cross, as a contribution to the celebration of the fourth centenary of the birth of the great Spanish mystic. It may be doubted that Edith Stein ever embarked upon a major writing project with anything less than full enthusiasm, and with that peculiar brand of concentrated seriousness which was a hallmark of her character, but surely this task must have represented something special for her, qualifying it for the category of a labor of love. She had in the past rolled up her scholarly sleeves to the challenge of writing on other doctors of the Church, St. Augustine, for example, and, more notably, St. Thomas Aquinas [1], but for her as a Carmelite, St. John of the Cross was not simply another subject for analytic concern. He was her “Holy Father,” the co-founder of the Order to which she belonged, and she had dedicated her entire life to the assimilation and imitation of his spirituality. The approach she had taken to St. Thomas Aquinas had been critical, in the sense that she sought to measure his thought against certain philosophical standards which were not his own, and in the sense that she at times passed negative judgments on his thought. But she came to St. John of the Cross, not as a philosopher and a critic, but as a daughter and dedicated disciple. It was the contrast between an intellectual approach and a devotional approach. The product of her labors was *The Science of the Cross*, which she finished a year before she met her death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. It was published in 1950, the first volume of her collected works.

To say that the main approach Edith Stein took to the writing of *The Science of the Cross* was devotional is not to say that this is a work lacking in what might broadly be defined as philosophical analysis. It could not have been written by Edith Stein if that were the case. The work can be seen as representative

This is a companion piece to “Edith Stein as Philosopher, in Vol. 26, No. 4 FCS Quarterly, Winter 2004, pp. 17–32]

of the venerable tradition of the Scholastic commentary, as indicated by the fact that the principal goal she set for herself was to provide the reader with an accurate and comprehensive account of the thought of St. John of the Cross, as revealed in his major works. This was accompanied by her own running commentary, the purpose of which was to add elucidation to explication. She succeeded impressively in achieving her goal. In her subject she was dealing with someone who was not only a great saint and a great mystic, but a great poet as well, and she shows remarkable versatility in handling every aspect of the saint’s multi-faceted character. This is especially apparent in her treatment of St. John as a poet, where we witness a sensitive and perspicacious literary critic at work. If one is looking for a more or less precise category into which to put the book, it would do quite well to call it a work in mystical theology.

In the Preface to *The Science of the Cross*, Edith Stein gives a precise advertisement of what she intends to accomplish in the book. “In the following pages,” she writes, “an attempt will be made to grasp St. John of the Cross in the unity of his being as it expresses itself in his life and in his works—from a viewpoint that will enable us to see this unity.” [2] Few authors pose for themselves so ambitious an undertaking. A writer who intends to present to us St. John of the Cross, or any other human subject for that matter, in terms of “the unity of his being,” is one who, eschewing all that is superficial or incidental, is concerned only with what is substantive. She wants to get at the very essence of St. John of the Cross, to reveal him in terms of his innermost identity. It was her altogether correct intuition that she had in her subject someone who was in fact extraordinary for his unity of being, someone who, in other words, was possessed of exceptional personal integrity. It was precisely the integral completeness of the saint’s person that she was attempting to explain, something that would be impossible to explain apart from his sanctity. St. John’s unity of being was not a purely natural phenomenon, as if he were no more than an exemplar of well-balanced psychology. His perfect oneness with self followed upon his perfect oneness with Christ.

Interestingly, Edith Stein calls to our attention

that what she will have to say in one of the book's chapters, where she treats of, "I, freedom, and person, does not derive from the teaching of our Holy Father John of the Cross." [3] That she took care to point this out reveals the keen sense of obligation she felt to be scrupulously accurate in delineating the thought of St. John. As it happens, though what she discusses in the chapter in question does not indeed derive from St. John's thought, I cannot see, from my reading, that it is in any way incongruous with that thought, and certainly not antipathetic to it. Because her principal intention is to engage directly with the doctrine of St. John as revealed in his own major works [4], she does not concern herself with delving into a wide array of secondary sources. However, there are two secondary sources, she tells us, upon which she did put considerable reliance, Father Bruno's *St. John of the Cross*, published in 1929, and his *Life of Love of St. John of the Cross*, published in 1936. [5] She also found valuable supporting material in Jean Baruzi's *St. John of the Cross and the Problem of Mystical Experience*, published in 1931.

One of the reasons that might be proposed to explain why Edith Stein did not approach the writing of *The Science of the Cross* with the kind of philosophical frame of mind that guided the writing of *Finite and Eternal Being* was that she simply saw that the subject matter of the book did not warrant such an approach. This was not philosophy she was dealing with, but mystical theology, and an important difference between the two is that philosophy treats of what is at least potentially explicable, whereas mystical theology treats of what is by its very nature inexplicable, at least in the sense that it does not lend itself to the sort of explanations to which philosophy is limited. And so she approached the subject matter of the book with hesitancy, and in that she was imitating the attitude shown by St. John himself in dealing with like subject matter. "John had hesitated to attempt the exposition," she writes, "because, as a task for the natural intellect, it seemed to him to be impossible." [6] And there was this consideration: "If the saint is compelled to silence by the feeling of his inability to write the inexpressible—how shall we dare to follow his words with a technical explanation?" [7] Her solution to the problem was to avoid any attempt to follow his words with a "technical explanation." A technical explanation of the texts she was studying would yield results that would be superficial at best, and very likely would end up being seriously

distorting. Such explanation might succeed in catching the letter here and there, but the spirit would be missed.

One will not find in *The Science of the Cross* the kind of scholarly distance between author and subject which is typical of Edith Stein's earlier major works. Her interest in the doctrine of St. John of the Cross is not merely theoretical. So thoroughly had she made the doctrine she is discussing an intimate part of her own life that it is no exaggeration to say that this book is as much about Edith Stein as it is about St. John of the Cross. The interpretations she will bring to bear upon his thought, she tells us in the Preface, "will be validated by what the author believes she has gained from a lifelong effort to grasp the laws of spiritual being and life." [8] In this essay, then, the thought, the spiritual doctrine, of the two saints will be treated as if they were one, as I take them virtually to have been.

The richness and breadth of the book precludes my being able to do anything like full justice to it within the scope of this essay, but I think the heart of its message can be effectively communicated by focusing on three of its central themes: the role of faith in the spiritual life; the prominence of the cross; union with God.

II

It is the end which defines, which lends intelligibility to, human action; that fundamental principle applies to the sum total of those actions that go together to compose the life of someone who is earnestly committed to advancing in the spiritual life. The end or purpose of the spiritual life—which is simply to say, the Christian life lived seriously—is nothing less than union with God, to the degree that it is possible to attain such union in this life. The final end for which every human being has been created is that perfect and permanent union with God which is the Beatific Vision (*visio divinae essentiae*). But short of that perfect and unqualified union with God which is the Beatific Vision, there is another union, of a very elevated kind, which, according to the teaching of St. John of the Cross, is possible to achieve in this life. What led the saint to such a conviction was his taking quite literally Christ's straightforward, quite unambiguous injunction, "Be therefore perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect." If Christ were to be understood as enjoining us to be perfect in the same manner as God is perfect He would of course be asking the impossible, but the import of His words

is that we should strive, in complete cooperation with divine grace, to attain completeness of being according to the peculiar kind of beings we are. We should be perfect in the sense that we should seek the completion of our own proper nature. If union with God is the end, the very reason for our being, what are the means that are to be followed in striving to attain that end? The absolute first step, a negative one, which must be taken by anyone seriously intending to work toward sanctity is the rejection of all sin. It is absurd to suppose that one can attain perfection while continuing to cling to that which is completely antithetical to perfection. To be a saint is, for a human being, to be a quintessentially rational creature, for a life of perfection is a life lived in complete accord with reason. But living in complete accord with reason is anything but easy. We have to contend with our passions.

Given man's fallen state, his passions often work in ways that are directly contrary to reason, so one of the most important tasks to be performed by someone who has set his foot upon the path of perfection is to bring his passions entirely under the control of reason. Man's sense life must be made entirely submissive to his rational life. This task, an arduous one indeed, is undertaken in what St. John of the Cross calls the night of the senses. The victory of the spirit over the flesh is not gained without the assisting grace of God, to be sure, but the soul is very much an active participant in the effort. And it is precisely this active participation of the soul that sharply distinguishes the night of the senses from the rather disconcerting experience which is to follow it, the night of the spirit. In the night of the senses, the soul rids itself of attachment to things of the flesh; in the night of the spirit the soul rids itself of—or, more accurately, allows itself to be rid of—all attachment to things of the spirit. The soul is to be rendered utterly empty, so as to make room for God and God alone.

According to the doctrine of St. John of the Cross, it is within the dark night of the spirit that the real work of sanctification takes place. It is by passage through the dark night of the spirit that Christian perfection is immediately effected. This is the proper means by which union with God is attained. Enduring the dark night of the spirit involves two indispensable and closely related experiences: the soul lives entirely by faith, and the soul suffers. The night of the senses, as noted, is a period of purification in which the soul takes an active part. In entering into

the night of the spirit, the soul surrenders unconditionally to God. One abandons oneself without reserve to the painfully perfecting action of divine grace. This is a spiritual "letting go" of the most complete kind. St. John's blunt advice to the soul at this stage: "If you desire to be perfect, sell your will."^[9] In the night of the spirit, the soul undergoes a veritable crucifixion. While the attitude of the soul in this dark night is essentially passive, the passivity in question is freely acquiesced to. Here divine grace does most of the work, but that work is effective only because of unstinting cooperation on the part of the soul.

In the night of the spirit, also called the night of faith, one surrenders all reliance upon human knowledge or wisdom as would-be means of attaining union with God. Neither philosophy nor theology are of any help to the soul. If the philosophical or theological knowledge we gain through natural reason can be compared to light, the knowledge of faith can be compared to darkness. It is not a knowledge completely devoid of content—a contentless knowledge would be no knowledge at all. There are, as mainstays, the basic tenets of the faith. But this is a knowledge founded not so much on content as on the Source of the content. In other words, it represents a total trust in God as the source of all truth, even when the truth of which He is the source is far from perfectly clear to us. Those who choose to enter this narrow way must "liberate themselves from the impediment and fatigue of ideas and thoughts, and care not about thinking and meditating," Edith Stein writes.^[10] There was a time when it was entirely appropriate that the soul should solidify its spiritual base through discursive meditation, prayerfully thinking about God and the things of God. That time is now past. Following St. John, Edith Stein sees meditation as an activity which, once the soul has entered into the night of the spirit, is not only unnecessary, but might even prove to be a positive impediment to further advancement in the spiritual life.

One who walks in the dark night of faith should not strain to understand. "It greatly behooves the soul," she quotes St. John, "not to want to understand the truths of faith so clearly, that she may thereby conserve the merit of faith pure and entire."^[11] And St. John shows to what extent his own doctrine is integrated within the larger apophatic tradition of Christian spirituality when he adds: "the soul must know God more by what He is not than by what

He is.”[12] One must suppress the natural and otherwise praiseworthy desire to know in order to render more perfect, more refined and unalloyed, the quality of that faith upon which one has chosen to put one’s entire store. But, again, the fact of the matter is that at this stage, knowledge, the kind of knowledge that results upon discursive reasoning, is no longer needed, and, as indicated, can act as an impediment to progress.[13] While by no means diminishing the importance of the truths revealed by God, indeed, being sustained by them in the deepest sense, the soul’s faith is focused on and fixed in the God who reveals.

A very important aspect of the total submission to the workings of divine grace which characterizes the night of the spirit, is the soul’s willingness to forsake all consolation, spiritual as well as sensual. There could be no more egregious misunderstanding of the spiritual doctrine of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, or of genuine Christian mysticism in general, than to suppose that it has anything to do with what would pass for “mystical experiences” in today’s popular imagination. Signs and wonders, locutions, ecstatic raptures—these are things to be shunned, not sought. The way being followed here is the way of the cross. The point is not to foster an in-turning attitude that seeks soothing, subjective confirmations of one’s spiritual state, but to keep one’s eyes turned ever outward, upon the Crucified. This is a way whose foundational premise is God-affirmation, not self-affirmation.

One who is guided by the darkness of faith, then, must eschew all extraordinary experiences, and, indeed, even look upon them as temptations. The way of faith is the way of the ordinary, not the extraordinary. In St. John’s calculus, there is an inverse relation between “signs and external proofs”[14] and faith, in that the more there is of the former, the less there is of the latter, and vice versa. The soul must not seek to be “confirmed” in his faith by emotive assurances or by spiritual favors of any sort, for to do so would shift the proper focus, from God to self. Abiding patiently in the dark night of faith is the surest way to God, and the profoundest way to praise Him. Does the fact that the soul puts complete reliance upon the darkness of faith mean that he is in the throes of uncertainty? Just the opposite. There is no greater certainty than the certainty of faith, as St. Thomas teaches. And this is because the source of that certainty is not the human intellect, but the originating cause of faith,

which is God Himself.[15]

Looked at from a purely natural point of view, the way of St. John of the Cross which is mapped out for us so faithfully by Edith Stein in *The Science of the Cross*, and which she implicitly invites us to accompany her in following, can easily strike us as not only quite forbidding, but perhaps downright inhuman. But to look at it from a purely natural point of view is to look at it from precisely the wrong point of view, and thus not to see it for what it actually is. In the night of the spirit, having witnessed what Edith Stein describes as “the progressive collapse of the natural,”[16] we find ourselves very much in the realm of the supernatural. And the demands made upon anyone who would have the courage to enter upon this way are not, in any considered understanding of the term, inhuman, for if that were true they would not be, what in fact they are, perfective of our human nature. St. John can calmly advise us, as a matter of regular practice, to “Never omit a work that does not appeal to you and for which you have no taste.”[17] We are being urged here to go very much against the grain, not of human nature just as such, but of a human nature that is seriously debilitated, for the purpose of rehabilitating it. St. John is advising us to be consciously “counter intuitive” in all our choices of behavior, and that is because, given the present state of our nature, almost all of our “intuitive” promptings are invariably egocentric and systematically self-serving. We must learn to act “unnaturally,” that is to say, deliberately go counter to our natural proclivities because of their marked tendency to be disoriented. St. John outlines the general strategy by describing the kind of “lifestyle” to which we should be committed. “Let us live on earth like pilgrims and the poor,” he writes, “like the banished and the orphans, in dryness, without a way, and without anything else, but always hope.”[18] This is a way “without a way,” in the sense that it is followed by the wayfarer in a spirit of perfect trust in the God by whom he is being led. This is God’s way, not the way of the wayfarer, and it is a way of darkness.

III

It was no accident that St. John of the Cross, who began his religious life as Friar John of St. Matthias, changed his name to John of the Cross when he joined the Carmelite reform which had been initiated by St. Teresa of Avila, a woman who was both mother and daughter to him. If ever a title

was eminently apt in revealing the core character of a man, it was “of the Cross” as applied to St. John. The cross, for him, was considerably more than a mere devotional preoccupation. It was central to his life and consciousness, not unlike, I think it may be said, the way in which the cross was central to the life of Christ Himself. The whole purpose of the Incarnation was the redemption of mankind, and in the impenetrable mystery of divine providence that redemption was to be effected in one way and one way only, through the crucifixion and death of the Redeemer. The whole of Christ’s life was ordered toward the crucifixion. The crucifixion of Christ was an act which was absolutely unique, and absolutely efficacious in its effects. But, understood in an extended sense, the crucifixion was an experience He willed to be not exclusively His own. He bid those who would be His disciples to imitate what He had done; indeed, He made it a condition of discipleship. “If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me.” (MT 16:24)

There is a poignant redundancy in that conditional proposition. Christ is telling us: if you wish to be my follower, then you must truly follow. You must do what I have done. The condition that Christ’s sets for discipleship is not presented as an option, as one possibility among other, perhaps less onerous, possibilities. We are being presented with the cross as a *conditio sine qua non*, one that is necessary as well as sufficient. This particular point would seem to be emphasized by another passage, also from St. Matthew’s gospel, where Christ says, “And he who does not take up his cross and follow me, is not worthy of me.”[19] What would it mean to be unworthy of Christ? From the point of view of the mystical theology expounded by St. John of the Cross and Edith Stein, the phrase would seem to be appropriately interpreted as referring to someone who simply is not suited for union with God. By His crucifixion and death Christ lost all, and thereby gained all. And He invites us to enter into a similar paradoxical situation, one in which the only way we can save our life is by losing it.

Nor was it an accident when Edith Stein, on the occasion of her receiving the habit of a Discalced Carmelite, chose to take the name of Sister Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Her whole spiritual life as a Catholic could be said to be summed up in the new names by which she henceforth wanted to

be known. “Teresa” was of course in honor of her “Holy Mother,” St. Teresa of Avila, the Foundress of the Order. The “Benedicta” reflected the love and sense of gratitude she felt toward the Benedictine tradition, in which her Catholicism had been importantly nurtured. The “of the Cross” title she assumed is, doubtless, to be interpreted as a sure sign of the special love and veneration she felt toward her “Holy Father,” but its significance ran deeper than that. Like St. John himself, she was, right from the outset, fully prepared to take with all literalness that condition for discipleship which had been set by Christ Himself. What this seemed to have meant for her, in the most personal terms, was the conviction that there could be no union with God, in perfect love, a union that she desired above all else, without giving herself over unconditionally to the cross, with all it implied. For her, there simply was no other way to divine union than the *via crucis*. “The fundamental setting is the same,” she writes: “there is no other way to union than that which leads through the cross and night, the death of the old self.”[20]

To follow Christ after the manner of St. John of the Cross meant not only to live a life of complete detachment from material things—again, this is what was commonly expected of anyone who was in earnest about the spiritual life—but furthermore, and uncommonly, actively to seek suffering, consciously to desire crucifixion. In this she was showing how thoroughgoing and uncompromising a disciple she was of her Carmelite Father. Quoting St. John, she writes that those who seek perfection should have “a great predilection for suffering.” In this indicative of a flirtation with masochism? Hardly. She goes on to stress the point that this predilection for suffering must be “purely for the sake of Christ alone.”[21] In her most important philosophical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, Edith Stein develops an interesting interpretation of the experience of joy, in which the experience turns out to be something like a participation in a Platonic Form.[22] By the time she wrote *The Science of the Cross*, joy, or at least a certain type of joy, would seem to have become for her almost an irrelevancy, or worse. She now looks upon joy as something that should be renounced for the love of God.[23] The joy she has in mind is “vain joy,” which is to say joy that leads the soul—she is quoting St. John—“to deceive others and to be deceived herself.”[24]

Following in the footsteps of Christ, the soul must seek that supreme form of suffering which is

death to self-crucifixion. *The imitation of Christ* necessarily entails following Him all the way to Golgatha. "If our life does not consist in imitating (the Crucified)," she quotes St. John again, "it has no value." [25] They are effectively telling us that there is no greater delusion than to suppose that one can be a genuine Christian and at the same time escape the prospect of crucifixion. With perfect logic, then, St. John advises us pointedly that we must allow ourselves to be crucified. [26] The passive voice must be carefully noted. One does not crucify oneself. To attempt it is to pass from the world of healthy spirituality into the world of aberrant psychology.

In reading her moving self-oblation, made, with the permission of her prioress, in 1939, in which she voluntarily accepts whatever suffering and death God might send her, for, among several other intentions, the conversion of the Jewish people, one cannot help but wonder if Edith Stein did not have a special premonition of just the kind of crucifixion she was going to be asked to bear. However that might be, this act provides emphatic evidence of how complete and uncompromising was her dedication to the imitation of Christ. [27]

IV

The crucifixion of Christ was not an end in itself. It was the means by which the redemption of mankind was effected. So too, the dark night of the spirit and the crucifixion it represents is not to be regarded as an end in itself: it is the means through which union with God is attained. Edith Stein, following the reasoning laid down by St. Thomas Aquinas, reminds us that there are three distinct types of union with God. Most basically, there is what is called substantial union. This is the union that is established between Creator and creature, through the very act by which the creature is brought into being by the Creator. This union is signaled by the fact that God is in every creature by His "presence, essence, and power," as it is traditionally expressed. Absent that divine presence, the existent simply would not exist.

On a much higher level, there is the very special union that is established between God and His rational creatures through the presence in them of sanctifying grace, which is to say, more precisely, through the presence in them of God Himself, as perfecting them through His life and love. In the connubial language favored by St. John of the Cross, this second

kind of union with God is referred to by him as a betrothal. Through baptism we are "given" to God, solemnly committed to a future, indissoluble, and eternal union with Him—the Beatific Vision—that will be realized only after death.

Short of the Beatific Vision, there is another type of union with God, considerably different from that which is represented by a soul in the state of sanctifying grace, and which is described by St. John as a marriage between God and the soul. It is called, more fully, a transforming union through perfect love. It is just this union that is the end toward which the dark night of the spirit is directed. Echoing the opinion of St. Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein maintains that the difference between the second and third levels of union, i.e., the difference between spiritual betrothal and spiritual marriage, is a difference in kind and not merely of degree. [28]

In terms of what has been said thus far concerning the nature of the night of the spirit, are we permitted to conclude that the very special union with God which is its outcome, mystical marriage, is something that is universally realized? The question is no sooner posed than we know the answer to it. That this is a state that is attained by very few in this life is a fact for which two millennia of Christian history offer ample evidence. And there is no commanding reason to believe that things will be appreciably different in the future. Why is this so? Is it simply how God wills it to be? Not according to St. John and Edith Stein. God wills that all men should be perfect. That so few men manage to gain perfection in this life is a circumstance for which God is not to be blamed. The fault lies with men. God provides the necessary grace, but only a small number of men are able to muster the quality of courage necessary to endure the crucifying trials that full cooperation with that grace inevitably involves. Every Christian, presumably, wants to be identified as a true follower of Christ, but the condition that must be met to merit that status proves to be more than most men are willing to meet. It is this fact that leads Edith Stein to observe that, "The saint did not write his works for everyone." [29]

The night of the spirit, and the transforming union through perfect love (the mystical marriage between God and the soul) that follows upon it, may be offered as the culminating exemplification of the great Christian paradox that it is only by losing one's life that one succeeds in saving it. Through the dark

night of the spirit, all is lost, all, that is, that we tend to value from a purely natural point of view. And yet, precisely through that loss, everything is gained, the “everything” here referring to all that is truly valuable to man in terms of what contributes toward his ultimate end, his very reason for being. In the darkness and ignorance of faith there is discovered a knowledge that far surpasses anything natural reason could ever hope to attain. By abandoning all “vain joy” one comes into possession of a joy that is as deep and inexpressible as being itself. One embraces suffering, and in that embrace an ogre is transformed into an angel.

The formula is as simple as it is unfathomable to those who are of the world and can think only in worldly terms: to give all is to gain all, to erase self is to uncover self.[30] To submit to crucifixion is to insure resurrection. As to the suffering that is necessary for mystical marriage, it is all “of short duration,” St. John writes, “since it lasts only until the knife is raised; then Isaac remains alive and receives the promise of his reward.”[31] And all the creatures that one has given up in a spirit of detachment are repossessed in a more pure and permanent way, for, as St. John explains, “The soul knows creatures through God and no longer through creatures.”[32] And in another place he writes: “Whoever seeks God and nothing else is not wandering in darkness no matter how dark and poor you think you are.”[33] The dark night of the spirit, in some wondrously strange way, is luminous.

V

Some six years separated the writing of *Finite and Eternal Being* and *The Science of the Cross*. They are quite different books. One can almost imagine that they were written by two different people, and perhaps, in a sense, they were. *Finite and Eternal Being* is very much a philosophical work. Her approach is determinedly analytic. She seeks to plumb the depths of the various subjects she treats of, in order to come up with the most reliable understanding of them. And she is not shy about calling attention to how the conclusions she reaches differ from those reached by other philosophers. In *The Science of the Cross*, critical analysis, in any kind of rigid employment, plays a rather minor role. Here, the object of her study, the writings of St. John of the Cross, are approached with deferential reverence. It is not that she is beyond making any critical com-

ments about the great Carmelite mystic, but they are muted, and offered with the understanding that they pertain to what is of only peripheral import. This is a book written by a daughter about her beloved father, a book written by a dedicated disciple about her master.

The markedly different complexions of these two books, the last two major works to come from the pen of Edith Stein, reflect, I would like to suggest, a significant change that took place over the final years of her life, a change which had the effect of altering her whole attitude toward philosophy. What we find revealed to us in *The Science of the Cross* is not Edith Stein the philosopher, but Edith Stein the mystical theologian. Edith Stein the philosopher, by the time she came to write this book, had receded into the background, and this is explained by her having dedicated herself completely to a life of Christian perfection as a Discalced Carmelite nun. A comparison might be made between the kind of change I am suggesting came over Edith Stein and that experienced by St. Thomas Aquinas during the final year of his life. We all know the story, how, as the result of a mystical experience the particulars of which remain obscure, St. Thomas abruptly stopped writing the *Summa Theologiae*, announcing that everything that he had written appeared to him now as “so much straw.” All the earnest solicitations on the part of his confreres, urging him to continue his writing, were to no avail, and the *Summa Theologiae*, the saint’s magnum opus, was left unfinished. There are important differences between the two cases. The experience of St. Thomas would seem to have been a specific incident of some sort, and the transformation it brought about in him was sudden. A specific result of that transformation was his decision to stop writing.[34] With Edith Stein the experience extended over a period of years, and the transformation that accompanied it was gradual. And she made no decision to stop writing. But, and citing *The Science of the Cross* as the illustrative case in point, she ceased to write principally as a philosopher. She most definitely continued to employ reason, in its broadest sense, but now it was reason put in the service of truths that, though very much applicable to the human sphere, came from a source that transcended that sphere.

In *The Science of the Cross*, Edith Stein, while not altogether abandoning philosophy and the philosophical mode of reasoning, had in the main tran-

scended them. She had come to see the limitations of philosophy. Philosophy responds to the world by speech, the only way it can respond. The typical reaction of a soul brought into experiential proximity to God is speechlessness. Language fails, not because there is nothing to respond to, but because what is being experienced is more than the human intellect is capable of coping with. There are no words available because there are no thoughts available, and there are no thoughts available because the mind, given what it is confronting, lacks the wherewithal to form them. Edith Stein continued to speak, but with the measured wisdom of one who realizes that she is speaking about the unspeakable. It was only the factor of charity, acting as motivating impetus, that prevented that from being an exercise in futility. Like her Holy Father St. John of the Cross, she accepted the challenge of attempting to express the inexpressible because of the pressing importance of reminding duller and more distracted wits of the constant need to be aware of the One Thing Necessary. Edith Stein had given way to St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. ✠

Notes

1. Her developed responses to St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas are to be found in the pages of her single most ambitious philosophical work, *Finite and Eternal Being*, which she finished in the fall of 1936. The book was published by the Institute of Carmelite Studies, Washington, D.C., in 2002.
2. Edith Stein. *The Science of the Cross*. (trans. Sr. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D. Washington, D. C.: ICS Publications, 2002, p. 5. In all subsequent citations from the book I will refer to it simply as SC.
3. SC, p. 5.
4. These are: *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, *The Dark Night*, *The Spiritual Canticle*, and *The Living Flame of Love*.
5. I think it right to say that the status of “definitive biography” of St. John has now shifted from Father Bruno’s book to that written by Father Crisogono of Jesus, O.C.D., *The Life of St. John of the Cross*. (trans. Kathleen Pond). New York: Harper & Brothers, 1958.
6. SC, p. 218.
7. Ibid., p. 217.
8. Ibid., p. 5.
9. Ibid., p. 282.
10. Ibid., p. 52.

11. Ibid., p. 75.
12. Ibid., p. 82.
13. St. John writes: “...the mystical wisdom...need not be understood distinctly...in order to cause love and enthusiasm in the soul.” (Ibid., p. 234.) When he speaks of enthusiasm here he is not referring to purely emotional responses—these, according to his doctrine, are at best irrelevant and at worst dangerous—but a firmer fixity of the will upon God.
14. Ibid., p. 102.
15. St. Thomas’s argument runs along the following lines: one way in which we can determine certitude is in terms of its cause, “and thus something is said to be more certain which has a more certain cause. In this respect faith is more certain...because it is founded upon divine truth.” (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 4, a. 8.)
16. SC, p. 273.
17. Ibid., p. 280.
18. Ibid., p. 279.
19. As if to accentuate the importance of the message, and to insure that it is clearly understood, Christ’s statement, in which He sets the condition that must be met by those who desire to follow Him, is expressed in almost identical terms in all three synoptic gospels.
20. SC, p. 217.
21. Ibid., p. 276.
22. See *Finite and Eternal Being*. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 2002, p. 62 ff.
23. SC, p. 93.
24. Ibid., p. 101.
25. Ibid., p. 279.
26. Ibid., p. 282.
27. The self-oblation reads in part: “May the Lord accept my life and death for the honor and glory of his name, for the needs of his holy Church...for the Jewish people, that the Lord may be received by his own...” Waltraud Herbstrieth. *Edith Stein: A Biography* (trans. Father Bernard Bonowitz, OCSO). San Francisco: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1985, p. 95.
28. SC, pp. 171-72.
29. Ibid., p. 37. She goes on to explain: “Of course, he does not wish to exclude anyone. But he knows that for understanding he can count only on a determinate circle of persons, those who have a certain amount of experience of the inner life.” (Ibid.) In the final analysis, only those who accept the cross as he did will be able to understand the writings of St. John of the Cross.
30. St. John of the Cross offers a pointed rebuke to the narrow mind-set that would interpret human fulfillment in purely individualistic and naturalistic terms. “If you are relieved of the burden [i.e., the burden of the cross] you will find your strength in yourself alone, you who are weakness itself.” (Ibid., p. 281.)
31. Ibid., p. 277.
32. Ibid., p. 214.
33. Ibid., p. 279.
34. It should be noted that on his death bed he dictated a commentary on the Canticle of Canticle for the Cistercian monks at Fossanova.

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars 27th Anniversary Convention

Wyndham Pittsburgh Airport, Pittsburgh, Penn.

Friday, September 24th, 2004

Because of space limitations, breaks and meals are not indicated in this schedule.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2003

- 8:00 a.m. **Registration** opens
- 9:00 a.m. **Convention Opens with Sacred Liturgy**
- 10:15 a.m. **Welcome** by Gerard Bradley, *President, Fellowship of Catholic Scholar*
Introduction by William Saunders, Program Chair,
Family Research Council
- 10:30 a.m. **Session I: Gender Theory & Identity: A Challenge for the Church in the 21st Century**—Stephen Miletic, *Professor of Scripture and Catechetics, Franciscan University of Steubenville* and John Crosby, *Chairman of the Philosophy Department, Franciscan University of Steubenville*
- 1:30 p.m. **Session II: Public & Personal Goods of Marriage**—Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP, *Auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, Australia*, and William E. May, *Michael J. McGivney Professor of Moral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family*
- 3:15 p.m. **Session III: Catholic Marriage and Feminism**—Sister Mary Prudence Allen, *Professor of Philosophy, Saint John Vianney Theological Seminary*
Response: Laura Garcia, *Professor of Philosophy, Boston College*
- 7:30 p.m. **Keynote address: On the 10th Anniversary of the Holy Father's Letter to Families**—Alfonso Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, *President of the Pontifical Council for the Family*

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2003

- 7:00 a.m. **Mass** (in the hotel)
- 8:45 a.m. **Concurrent Sessions**
- Psychological Insights and the Dignity of the Person and the Role of Parents**, Chair: Philip Sutton, *Family Psychologist, Diocese of Fort Wayne/South Bend*
- Pornography and the Community of Persons**, Whitney Jacobs, *Institute for the Psychological Sciences*
- Talking 'Bout My Generation: The Emergence of the 'New Wife' in Generation Y**, Rachael Patterson, *Deakin University, Australia*
- Raising Catholic Children in a Secular Culture**, Chair: Sr. Hanna Klaus, *Executive Director, Teen STAR Program, Natural Family Planning Center of Washington, DC, Inc.*
- K-12 Catholic Schools and the Revival of the Catholic Family in American Culture: An Appraisal**, Dennis Purificacion, *University of Sacramento*

- 8:45 a.m. **Raising Catholic Children in a Secular Culture: The Importance of a Sound Vision of the Person in a Sexually Permissive Culture**—

continued

Theresa H. Farnan, *Mount St. Mary's Seminary* and William Thierfelder, *Belmont Abbey College*

The Cultural Battle for the Family in Contemporary Society, Chair: Damian Fedoryka, *Professor of Philosophy, Ave Maria College*
Homosexuality: How Relevant are Experience and Science to Theology and Pastoral Practice? Paul Flaman, *St. Joseph's College, University of Alberta*

The Human Family as a Type of the Family of the Trinity, Kelly Bowring, *Independent Scholar*

- 10:30 a.m. **Session IV: The Future of Marriage and the Family in the United States: Some History Lessons**—Allan Carlson, *President of the Howard Center for Family, Religion, and Society*

Response: Msgr. Stuart Swetland, *Newman Center, University of Illinois*

- 1:15 p.m. **Session V: Lessons from Social Science and Demography on the Family**—William Bradford Wilcox, *Professor of Sociology, University of Virginia* and Nicholas Eberstadt, *Henry Wendt Scholar in Political Economy at the American Enterprise Institute*

- 3:00 p.m. **Session VI: Theological Developments Regarding the Family Since Vatican II: As Nuptial Body and As Domestic Church**—David Schindler, *Academic Dean and Edouard Cardinal Gagnon Professor of Fundamental Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family*, and Joseph Atkinson, *Assistant Professor of Sacred Scripture and Pastoral Theology, John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family*

- 4:30 p.m. **Fellowship Business Meeting**

- 6:30 p.m. **Cardinal Wright Banquet**

Presentation of Awards to:

Cardinal Wright Award—Sister Prudence Allen

O'Boyle Award—Honorable Chris Smith (Republican, NJ) and Marie Smith

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 26TH, 2003

- 8:30 a.m. **Sacred Liturgy** (in the hotel)
- 9:30 a.m. **Defending the Family at the United Nations: 10 years since Cairo**—Austin Ruse, *President of the Catholic Family and Human Rights Institute*
Response: William Saunders (Senior Fellow & Human Rights Counsel, Family Research Council)
- 11:00 a.m. **Convention officially ends**

The Virus and the Vaccine by Debbie Bookchin and Jim Schumacher, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2004.

*Reviewed by Eugene Diamond, M.D., Director of the Linacre Institute
Dr. Ratner was recipient of the Cardinal Wright award from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.*

Dr. Herbert Ratner was one of the most illustrious members of the Catholic Medical Association having served as its president in 1977. He was a charismatic and influential teacher in the Department of Public Health at Loyola University School of Medicine while, at the same time, serving as Director of Public Health in Oak Park, Illinois west of Chicago. In that capacity he was called upon to approve the use of Salk polio vaccine for the immunization of school children in Oak Park. Because of his unique intuition as a scientist, he refused to give the vaccine in Oak Park. He felt that the process for the development of the vaccine did not guarantee that it would be free of viral contamination. While his community was protesting loudly that their children were being denied protection from a dread disease by a highly publicized and effective vaccine, Dr. Ratner was vindicated by the occurrence of polio cases caused by the vaccine, particularly that manufactured by Cutter Laboratories. Later Dr. Ratner was one of the first to call attention to the fact that Simian virus 40 also contaminated the vaccine, containing virus grown on monkey kidneys.

Forty years later Dr. Michaela Carbone working at the NIH in a laboratory studying oncogenes discovered that SV40 when injected into hamsters caused mesotheliomas. Dr. Carbone, presently also working at Loyola Medical School was able, with other scientists around the world, to demonstrate that SV40 was showing up in a variety of human lung, brain and

lymphatic cancers in adults. Between 1954 and 1963 almost 100 million Americans had received polio vaccinations with a vaccine contaminated with this same carcinogenic monkey virus. This fascinating book, *The Virus and the Vaccine* traces the growing body of evidence that the SV40 virus introduced into human subjects by a huge experiment of nature through a contaminated vaccine has the potential to continue to function over time as a slow growing oncogenic virus.

This began a years long odyssey by Dr. Carbone to study the role of SV40 in the causation of human tumors. Other investigators using the polymerase chain reaction technique were able to detect traces of viral DNA in tumors. When Bergsogel and Garseo at the Farber Institute were able to detect SV40 DNA in tumors, they were accused of having contaminated their material. Skeptics came up with many theories as to explain away the SV40 that in appearing in human cancers in denial of its source having been the polio vaccine.

Dr. Carbone had tried for a number of years to find old vials of vaccine. He wanted to use PCR to see if they contained SV40 and, if so, what type. But how could he get his hands on archival vaccine? Carbone first approached the FDA. The agency responded that it no longer had vials dating back to the contamination era in the late 1950s and early 1960s. In the early 1990s, coincident with the new round of SV40 research that Carbone and others had begun, a decision had apparently been made at FDA to discard the old lots of vaccine. Carbone next wrote to every one of the six manufacturers who had produced Salk vaccine in the 1950s and 1960s. None had vials for him to test; they had discarded their old stock years, even decades, ago. Where could Carbone find vaccine to test? Stumped, he decided to call on Herbert Ratner, an elderly doctor he had met while

attending the 1997 SV40 conference in Bethesda. Ratner had served as the public health officer during the 1950s in—of all places—Oak Park, Illinois, the very community in which Carbone resided. Ratner had been hoping to hear from the young Italian scientist who had impressed him at the 1997 conference; he had something very special he wanted to give him.

Within a week of the April 12, 1955 announcement of the success of the Salk field trials, cases of Parke, Davis vaccine had arrived at Ratner's offices in Oak Park. Ratner was supposed to start inoculating local school children immediately as part of the National Foundation's free immunization campaign. But Ratner was the rare public health official in 1955 that was not eager to distribute the newly licensed Salk vaccine. He was concerned that the Salk inactivation process was inadequate, and he was also concerned about viral contaminants. Ratner refused to administer the vaccine. Parents were angry, and Ratner was practically run out of town. Then the Cutter incident broke, and Ratner suddenly appeared to be very perspicacious. After the Cutter incident had blown over, Ratner remained suspicious of the vaccine. Instead of injecting the young children of Oak Park with the vials he deemed unsafe, he stored them away in his refrigerator, where they remained, unopened, for more than forty years. The eighty-seven-year-old Ratner offered them to Carbone to test. "I would have gone all the way to Alaska to find this stuff, and here it was three miles away," Carbone says, holding a tiny vial of vintage vaccine between his gloved thumb and forefinger.

Carbone and Rizzo used PCR to test Ratner's vials in the summer of 1999. Their first discovery was that the 1955 Parke-Davis vaccine did indeed contain SV40, but it was a variant of the simian virus that virologists refer to as slow-growing, because it

replicates at a much slower rather than most SV40 strains used in laboratories. Carbone's discovery was significant because it marked the first time such an SV40 variant had been recovered from polio vaccine. Earlier researchers, including Sweet and Hilleman, had only found fast-growing SV40 when they had searched contaminated vaccines. Both kinds of SV40 occur in human tumors, but until Carbone tested the Parke-Davis vaccine, there was no proof that the slow-growing SV40 found in humans had come from polio vaccine. Carbone's finding debunked claims that the virus the researchers were finding in human tumors came from another source. Even if some small amount of exposure to SV40 was due to monkey bites, SV40 researchers now widely agree there is no question that the vast exposure of millions of Americans to the monkey virus occurred through contaminated vaccines. "This proves that the SV40 that was present in the polio vaccine is identical to the SV40 we are finding in these human tumors," Carbone says of his finding.

The Virus and the Vaccine is a meticulously researched and powerfully written account. The Salk vaccine and its role in wiping out one of mankind's most dreaded of disease may ironically have contributed to a new threat to the health of millions. Needless to say, this possibility has inspired extensive political maneuvering among various national health agencies reluctant to admit that their triumphal medical achievement of the 1950's may prove to have a serious downside.

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

Reviewed by Reverend Brian Van Hove, SJ

These two little books by Denis Crouan are each just over a hundred pages which makes them into extended essays on the same subject.¹ Surely many Catholics who have been disappointed by the liturgical reform since the end of the Second Vatican Council are looking for ways to explain just what went wrong and when. To say "adapt the liturgy to the mentality of the people of today" or "go back to the old Mass" is too simplistic. What has happened to our people, clergy and laity, is deeper. Crouan tells the story.

The collapse of religious and liturgical consciousness has led to a widespread loss of the Catholic meaning of the eucharist, especially in the industrialized West. There has been a process of desacralization, perhaps latent well before the Council. But in short, people no longer know what the Mass is, and if you ask them for an explanation, they hardly know what to say.²

Occasionally a specialist still defends sacramental realism, but increasingly the faithful seem to hold that the words of consecration transform their minds and hearts into the body of Christ and that they, not the elements,³ are the unique body of Christ.⁴ Crouan says, "It is the liturgy which is the 'source' and not the believer: it is the liturgy that makes the believer, and not the opposite."⁵ Despite papal exhortations from "Mysterium Fidei" to "Dominicae Cena", and from "Inaestimabile Donum" to "Redemptionis Sacramentum", the subtle acceptance of The Protestant Principle continues.

Crouan points out, however, that in many places people have just stopped going to church. Neither the

traditionalists nor the religious left have brought them back in any significant numbers. False liturgical reform has led to fatigue and disillusionment on the part of ordinary believers. Some just do not care anymore.

Though Denis Crouan writes from France, his experience is not so different from that of North America.⁶ His analysis of the present situation is balanced and reasoned. Even so, he can provide no more comfort than any of the others who have tried to write about the disappearance of beauty,⁷ liturgical malaise, and the painful failure of reform to convey a satisfying sense of the divine.⁸

Crouan's own position is the official one. "... We believe in the grandeur and the beauty of the liturgy as restored by the Council and insofar as we know that we must work, in the Church, for a true birth at last of this Roman liturgy, so that it may be developed and become a living presence in all our parishes, as expressly requested by Pope John Paul II."⁹ He pleads for the implementation of the Roman documents and for the true "Mass of the Council" whether offered in Latin or in translation, whether celebrated *versus populum* or *ad orientem*. Only a careful implementation of the current Roman Missal is the answer,¹⁰ and he writes as a professional historian of the Roman Missal.¹¹ His writing is an apologetical defense of the authoritative reform and the official books which have been promulgated since Vatican II. If not especially original, Crouan is very Catholic. He knows that to change the liturgy is to change the faith itself *lex orandi, lex credendi*.¹² He also knows that there is no substitute for personal conversion and that the liturgy, no matter how perfectly celebrated externally,¹³ may not substitute for this growth in faith.¹⁴ Crouan defends a liturgy which is "worship and a personal relationship with God by way of the sacrifice of the cross."¹⁵

Arguments from authority are said to be the weakest. Crouan nonetheless does not hesitate to argue from authority, though not solely from it. On the subject of authority, the French bishops come in for severe criticism in the unfolding of Crouan's account. They have had the full authority at every turn to demand of their clergy the full realization in France of the authentic reform laid down by Vatican II and the subsequently published liturgical books. Still, according to Crouan, ninety percent of French parish churches do not have the normative Mass as legislated in the *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*.

The author is at pains to prove by exact textual analysis that really very little was changed between the missal of 1962 and the missal of 1969. What changes there were in terms of a sensible evolution can be proved to be welcome restorations of ancient practice, something the traditionalists should themselves applaud but never do.¹⁶ In fact, Crouan is often writing more to answer the objections of French traditionalists¹⁷ than to defeat his innovating opponents on the religious left.¹⁸ The religious left makes few "converts" and seems to be dying a slow but inevitable death, whereas the traditionalists in France (and elsewhere) are growing and they apparently have the power to attract young people to their thinking.

Yet the traditionalists, he maintains, are ignorant of the sound principles of reform desired by the Council. By articulating those principles for us once again, he hopes to show how they are wrong to reject the missal of 1969 as "watered down". He is also convinced that Indult parishes¹⁹ (he calls them ghetto chapels) set up for them can be cleverly used by the religious left as a kind of dumping ground for the disgruntled, thus merging *both* those who want the old rite and those who want the current

Roman Missal correctly applied.²⁰ The tactic of allowing Indult parishes in some dioceses frees up the innovators to continue ignoring the official Roman liturgical books with no opposition from anybody at all.

For this reviewer as a teacher, however, the utility of Crouan's work is less as an antidote to extreme traditionalism. Rather, it locates in a readable format a historical introduction to the liturgical reform and to the Roman Missal as we have it and as we had it. With the exception of someone coming from an Indult parish, students today never experienced the old rites and they are certainly not able to imagine what that era was like when those rites were in vigor.²¹ They have heard good and bad things about the "old church", but they are usually unable to sort out legend from fact. They have also grown up with a variety of abuses which they take as normative, often finding the normative unfamiliar or even foreign. Sometimes these innocents have been placed on the doorstep of gnosis without knowing it.

Crouan makes a fine comparison of ritual elements as they are now in the official Mass and as they were in the missal of 1962 on the eve of Vatican II. He gives a textual presentation that is clear and understandable, and also a discussion of ritual and symbol which is helpful. Here is an explanation which might be usable for the classroom because it is neither too popular nor too technical.

Perhaps if the faithful had better known some of these precise things when the reforms were implemented over thirty years ago we would have had less confusion and disarray. Perhaps if the pastors of thirty years ago had a firmer grasp on liturgical history they would have been more circumspect and prudent despite the mood of those times.²² But that did not happen. Since the beginning of the postconciliar trauma we have gone out into the desert to witness a liturgy which is impoverished

and shallow, spiritually superficial (balloons anyone?²³) and improvised. We may better understand the present crisis, which he describes in terms of "second-rate theatre" and "a harmful sideshow,"²⁴ by reading Crouan's books that promote both genuine reform and the Roman Missal with the current *General Instruction* dating from April, 2000. For the recovery of beauty and a sense of the sacred in our liturgy, we need only consult Vatican II and then sensitively implement the *Instruction*.²⁵ This is the Crouan formula because it is "first and foremost the Church herself who gives us the liturgy."²⁶

Footnotes

- 1 It makes their lack of an index perhaps more tolerable.
- 2 The Liturgy After Vatican II, 15.
- 3 93.
- 4 This is a common distortion of #7 in Sacrosanctum Concilium which refers to the presence of Christ in the assembly. This reference by the Council was not intended to weaken the tradition of sacramental realism with its insistence upon the transformation of the bread and the wine and all that transubstantiation means for doctrine and piety.
- 5 Liturgy After Vatican II, 56, n. 2.
- 6 Interestingly, the books never mention Cardinal Lustiger of Paris. The names of Cardinals Daneels and Ratzinger often come up for praise.
- 7 Liturgy After Vatican II, 64, 98-99.
- 8 From various directions and at different levels authors such as Richard J. Schuler, Giles Dimmock, Max Thurian, James Hitchcock, Thomas Day, Benedict Groeschel, Joseph Champlin, Dennis Smolarski, William P. Sampson, Louis Bouyer, Klaus Gamber, Joseph Ratzinger, and Catherine Pickstock have tried to address some of these complex issues.
- 9 The Liturgy Betrayed, 68-69.
- 10 90
- 11 See Denis Crouan, *Histoire du Missel romain* (Paris: Téqui, 1988).
- 12 Liturgy After Vatican II, 75, n. 27.
- 13 The icy or mechanical interpretation of the Missal of Paul VI seen in the chapels of certain small religious orders today reminds us again of the need for a deep grasp of the tradition behind the missal. A strictly legalistic approach can kill the authentic reform desired by the Council. There is no necessary antagonism between vertical prayer and communal warmth, or between

intelligence and fidelity, or between the human and the divine.

14 See *Liturgy Betrayed*, 52, 81, 90; *Liturgy After Vatican II*, 106.

15 *Liturgy After Vatican II*, 76.

16 58.

17 *Esp.* 35-39, 42.

18 One possible difference between France and the United States is that there is less of a "middle" in France. There are only the two extremes of traditionalism and ultra-progressivism, especially outside the Archdiocese of Paris. In the United States the "Mass of Paul VI" might be a bit more available in some places, chiefly in the large urban archdioceses of the East Coast and a few small Midwestern dioceses known for their orthodoxy.

19 According to *Ecclesia Dei adflicta*, July 2, 1988, issued on the occasion of the schism between Rome and Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre's Society/Fraternity of St. Pius X. An indult is defined as "a wound upon the law".

20 *Liturgy After Vatican II*, 53.

21 Pope John Paul II described this new situation aptly in *Vicesimus quintus annus*, December 4, 1988, #14.

22 *Liturgy After Vatican II*, 81-84.

23 59, 62-63.

24 *Liturgy Betrayed*, 78-79

25 *Liturgy After Vatican II*, 96.

26 100; 116-117.

A Moral Enterprise: Politics, Reason, and the Human Good, Essays in Honor of Francis Canavan Edited by Kenneth L. Grasso and Robert P. Hunt. Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2002.

Reviewed by Michael Coulter

Michael Coulter teaches political science at Grove City College and is a co-editor of Catholic Social Teaching, Social Science and Social Policy: An Encyclopedia (Scarecrow Press, forthcoming)

This festshrift for Father Francis Canavan is an excellent book filled with substantive essays and, as such, is a deserving honor to Father Canavan, a political philosopher and faithful Catholic who inspired, informed and encouraged many students at Fordham University as well as those who read his carefully

reasoned books and articles.

Festschrifts should not be encumbrances or even biographies; however, in such collections it is appropriate to speak about the life and work of the honoree, and it is natural for a reader of such a work to want to learn more about the honoree. The introduction by the editors, Kenneth L. Grasso and Robert P. Hunt, briefly describes Canavan's life and work, his academic degrees, his position as an editor at *America Magazine* in the early 1960s and his academic career that included over 20 years of teaching at Fordham University. Hunt and Grasso point out in the introduction my favorite fact in the entire book: Father Canavan was a high school classmate of two other prominent political philosophers, Harry Jaffa and Joseph Cropsey.

The introduction describes some of Canavan's major works and comments on the themes of those books and other writings. Grasso and Hunt argue that "for more than thirty years, Canavan argued—perhaps more cogently than John Courtney Murray himself—for a different view of the relationship between Catholicism and liberalism." According to Grasso and Hunt, Canavan rejected both secular liberalism and a narrow sectarian pre-Vatican II approach to politics; instead he argued for the legitimacy of what "George Weigel has called 'the Catholic human rights revolution' and its defense of constitutional democracy and religious freedom."

Some of the chapters comment on essays or books by Father Canavan. These discussions demonstrate that Father Canavan has certainly contributed to our understanding of liberalism, Catholic social teaching, and the political philosophy of Edmund Burke. This collection also includes an essay by fellow Jesuit and political philosopher, James V. Schall, wherein Father Schall considers the wit and wisdom of Father Canavan as presented in his

many book reviews. There is also an excellent appendix to the book, which has a year-by-year list of books, articles and reviews written by Father Canavan. It shows the breadth and quantity of Father Canavan's work.

The book itself has seventeen essays that can roughly be divided into three main areas: Edmund Burke, Catholic social teaching, and liberalism. These subjects were the primary concerns of Father Canavan's intellectual work. The book begins with a few essays on Edmund Burke. It is certainly appropriate to begin the work with these essays as Father Canavan's early work concerned Edmund Burke. Father Canavan's doctoral dissertation at Duke University was on Burke and the Duke University Press published a revised version of that dissertation in 1960 as *The Political Reason of Edmund Burke*. Three established Burke scholars offer essays on the famed critic of the French revolution. Peter Stanlis, long-time editor of publications devoted to Burke and author of two books on Burke, characterizes Burke as employing morality and prudence when arguing on behalf of American independence. F. P. Lock, the author of a significant scholarly biography of Burke, persuasively argues that Burke's political philosophy has an important place for human rights. Lock notes that those who simplify Burke and fail to read him carefully ignore his complete account of rights. Drawing in part on the work of Father Canavan, Joseph Pappin III, current president of the Edmund Burke Society of America, argues for the importance of Christianity in the political philosophy of Burke.

There follows several essays that consider the relationship between Catholicism and politics. Gerald McCool examines the evolution of Catholic social teaching from the time of pre-modern politics to the development of social teaching beginning

with Leo XIII to the contribution of John Paul II. Keith Pavlischek writes a provocative essay examining potential difficulties in the natural law theory developed in the work of Robert P. George, John Finnis, and Germain Grisez because those thinkers present religion—any religion—as a general good when defending separation of church and state. Robert Hunt's essay demonstrates how Catholic social teaching properly understood presents an understanding of the separation of church and state that is distinct from liberal neutrality.

A third group of essays in the book considers the meaning and practice of liberalism. Father Canavan wrote much about liberalism, both regarding its theoretical understanding and political life in a liberal state. There is a fine essay by Duke political theorist Thomas Spragens, author of *Civic Liberalism*, examining the role of church and state in the works of John Locke and Alexis de Tocqueville. There is also an essay of more practical concern—and certainly timely—by Gerard Bradley of the Notre Dame Law School on the relation between political liberalism and marriage policy.

There are some essays which don't fit directly into one of these three categories. For example, there is a very fine essay on the meaning of authority within politics as well as an excellent essay by Germane Paulo Walsh on the relationship between theoretical and practical reason in Aristotle.

For students of political philosophy, the book is certainly worth obtaining, and it should certainly merit being placed in college libraries. Grasso, Hunt and all the contributors have provided a fine work that adds to our understanding—and one that is a fitting honor to Father Canavan.

Christian Marriage: A Historical Study, Glenn W. Olsen, ed., sponsored by the Wethersfield Institute (New York: Crossroad Publishing / Herder and Herder, 2001) x + 374pp

Reviewed by Dennis D. Martin,
Loyola University Chicago

The studies that make up this book were originally papers delivered at a conference sponsored by the Wethersfield Institute in New York. They have been prepared for publication with care: individual authors appear to have had available drafts of their colleagues' papers and taken them into account in revising for publication, since frequent cross references occur. One-third of the book is devoted to the biblical period (two papers by Francis Martin), one-third to the patristic and medieval periods (three papers by Glenn Olsen and Teresa Olsen Pierre), and one third to the early modern and modern periods combined (three papers by A. V. Young, James Hitchcock, and John M. Haas). Coverage jumps from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, with the last three essays covering five centuries in one hundred pages. This strategy is not indefensible. The key shifts in Christian understanding of marriage take place in the third, fourth, twelfth, and sixteenth centuries. The massive socio-economic changes of the Industrial Revolution and the contraceptive revolution justify particular attention to the last two or three centuries. Devoting one-hundred pages to the biblical material is valuable since during all periods the theology of marriage among Christians was understood as commentary on Scripture.

Indeed, in two chapters on the Old and New Testament views of marriage ("Marriage in the Old Testament and Intertestamental Periods" [1-49]; "Marriage in the New

Testament Period" [50-100]), working carefully and inductively, Francis Martin provides a thorough basis for understanding better the contemporary theology of marriage developed by John Paul II, itself developed in significant measure on the basis of careful exegesis of Genesis.

In his treatment of the Old Testament and intertestamental period, Martin surveys Jewish law in comparison with surrounding ancient Near Eastern cultures and comes to what must be counterintuitive conclusions for those who have been impressed by the claims of the existence of a Jewish patriarchy that made women the virtual property of their husbands. Women and their children had certain built-in protections and rights. He details the circumstances under which woman in surrounding cultures could initiate divorce (non-consummation, non-support, lack of respect, annulment of matrimonial contract before consummation) and notes that some of these are found in Jewish law codes and others can legitimately be inferred (some of the above, of course, would correspond to grounds for annulment under contemporary Catholic canon law) (20). He describes a "sapiential understanding of marriage and fidelity, friendship in marriage, the duties of parents and children" based on the mystery of creation, with man and woman as the chief work of the Creator. The marriage relationship throughout the Hebrew Scriptures becomes a symbol of the covenant relationship between God and man. After the Fall, "neither the man nor the woman are cursed. Rather the form of diminished existence we now know is explicitly seen as the consequence of the rebellion of the *adam* and his wife" (29). By the time of Christ, "Most marriages were monogamous, fidelity and affection were esteemed, and children were cared for. Nevertheless, the position of women was generally

inferior to that of men, and the availability of divorce, at least in some quarters, made life uncertain for them.”

With this background, Martin develops what was new in the New Testament *ecclesia* established by Christ. With his announcement of the Kingdom Jesus “sublates” the family, even though it is the most sacred human reality, into something even greater: the Messianic Family he has inaugurated (68). After a brief survey of marriage in the late Roman Republic and early Empire (71) he turns to the [Deutero?]-Pauline “Domestic Codes,” concluding, “We have here a Christian adaptation of an existing, specific vocabulary to describe a new reality. The term *hypotassethai* is in the middle voice, addressing the woman as a free person exhorted to conform freely to the will of God in relation to her husband. Thus, while the term indicates a willingness to ‘give way’ to another, the avoidance of the usual obedience vocabulary in regard to the wife (though it is used of children and slaves) shows that something new is being suggested within a culture that could not envisage actual reciprocity between man and wife. . . . [W]e see that an advance has been made in a biblical understanding of anthropology: it is a question of love” (84).

Having established, in sociological terms, the unique and new element in the Christian “Domestic Codes,” Martin concludes with a fine summary of the theological significance of this new, *sacramental* understanding of marriage: “‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be attached to his wife and the two will become one flesh. This Mystery is great, but I am speaking about Christ and the Church.’ (Eph. 5:31-32). . . . The saving act of love by which Christ created his bride is also the act by which he sustains her and builds her up. This is more than a striking analogy. Not only does marriage pro-

vide an analogy for this relation, *it is itself a realization* on another level of this mystery of love” (90-91).

In “Progeny, Faithfulness, Sacred Bond: Marriage in the Age of Augustine” (101-145), Glenn W. Olsen sorts through the conflicted views on marriage held by Christians of this era: some disparaged marriage and championed virginity, yet that did not preclude simultaneously the development, above all in Augustine and Chrysostom, of a high view of the role of consent and companionship in marriage, of the goodness and divine givenness of marriage. Marriage does not, by the time of Augustine, represent for the Church Fathers, a fall from an original androgyny, but a fact of creation and thus necessarily a human good (128). Ruling and government of one’s wife need not mean sinful domination, since, although lust for domination characterizes humans and the City of Man after the Fall, serving each other in love characterizes the City of God (123-24). For Augustine as well as Paulinus of Nola and his wife Therasia, husbands are held to the same standard of marital fidelity as wives and have as a goal the same virtue (125). Contrary to the claims of John Boswell and Dyan Elliot, Augustine’s embrace of Paul’s identification of marriage as a spiritual *sacramentum* did not denigrate marriage. For the Fathers, Olsen insists, “*Conubium*, marriage between God and man, is the basic form of the cosmos, expressing itself primordially in the marriage of divine and human in Christ’s hypostatic union, then in the marriage of Christ and Church. For the Fathers to say that all marriages somehow reflect the primordial marriage is to hold that human marriage manifests, is connected to or an expression of, the central mystery of the universe” (126).

Modern scholars who see the Fathers as reading contemporary Roman practices back into paradise (Elaine Pagels), have misunderstood

them because their primary concerns are sociological and feminist and they thus fail to grasp the theological issues involved. Far from being “nostalgic for paradise” and living in a fantasy world, as Dyan Elliott claims, Augustine is the most realistic of his contemporaries about the present state of man and, facing the future, seeks a *reformatio ad melius*, seeks to reform the present in the light of Eden (130). Above all, Augustine and contemporaries like Paulinus of Nola were part of an increasing realization of the implications of the Incarnation.

The ambiguity of patristic views is captured well in a poem by Paulinus of Nola with which Olsen concludes his chapter. I quote from Olsen’s résumé of the verses: “Following Augustine, Paulinus insists that marriage is a part of God’s primordial plan, and he also agrees that consent is more central to marriage’s definition than carnal union. Though virginity is preferable, holiness may be found in marriage also. . . . In Paulinus’s view love and consent are central to marriage, but all things carnal remain as problematic as the idea of two becoming one flesh without becoming one flesh. This was the view of serious, learned Christians at the end of the Age of Augustine” (132).

In “Marriage in Barbarian Kingdom and Christian Court: Fifth through Eleventh Centuries” (146-212), Olsen begins by noting that monks during these six centuries represented an affirmation of the New Testament ideal: those who do the will of God are the new, true family, the spiritual family. Priests did try “to impart a Christian appreciation of marriage” (146), but people were preoccupied with the idea that virginity was better. From the time of Gregory the Great (d. 604), pious married people were more likely to abandon marriage and join monasteries than to stay together in spiritual (celibate) marriage,

though the latter did continue in various forms, calling into question the goodness of carnal union. In a time of war, brutality, plunder, and rape, women were often called upon to live lives of heroic worldly involvement and to play important roles in the conversion of their husbands.

Olsen draws on primary sources beyond the canon law and list of penances for sexual sins favored by many historical accounts of marriage in the Middle Ages. In the saints' lives we find world-entering saints as well as world-fleeing examples (148-49). A positive appreciation of marriage, a spirituality of incarnational married life, was not unknown. In *The Education of the Laity* (ca. 830) Bishop Jonas of Orleans addressed the regulation of marital life, gave instructions on conjugal morality, explained how one could sanctify marriage, and underscored family heads' obligation to give religious instruction. Hagiographers of the German king Henry I the Fowler and his wife Matilda (ca. 895-968) portrayed their marital chastity not as renunciation of sexual relations but as marital purity, living within the laws of the Church and being a good example to others (150).

Controversy surrounded the question whether marriage was defined by consent or consummation or some combination of the two, though the main debate over these issues comes later and is dealt with in Teresa Olsen Pierre's article. In the early Middle Ages, consent could be a double-edged sword, for if mutual consent alone established the marriage, could the partners not mutually withdraw consent? Roman law permitted this, which may have influenced Byzantine practice. In the West, Germanic peoples were accustomed to unilateral repudiation (175). In response, by Carolingian times popes and councils had repeatedly defended the principle of indissolubility, though "easy corre-

lation between later understandings of annulment, divorce, and indissolubility and the categories of early medieval thought" is impossible (176).

The *specula* writings of early medieval bishops held up to Christian couples an ideal of marriage as an egalitarian *societas*, in which the wife was a *socia*, not an *ancilla*, a friend or companion, not a servant. Jonas of Orléans says that a husband who has sexual relations with a servant, "dissolves the *tenderness* of . . . his own marriage" (emphasis added) (180). Although devotion to the Holy Family as a model is a late medieval and modern development, it was not entirely lacking in this period: an eighth-century Irish gospel commentary refers to the Holy Family as the *ecclesia primitiva* (182). Augustine's thoughts about companionship in marriage thus slowly developed and expanded.

Gregory of Tours (ca. 538-94) tells of a wife's body moving aside in her tomb to make room for the body of her spouse. One saint's *vita* describes how a dead husband's arms opened to embrace his wife's body, which showed those who observed this miracle the greatness of the "love . . . between them in the world, who embrace each other in the tomb" (186). The relationship of Einhard, Charlemagne's biographer, and his wife Emma, visible in their letters, or the lively conjugal relationship between Emperor Otto the Great (936-973) and his wife Adelaide and other examples from hagiographic sources indicate clearly that at least some couples understood that Christianity asked spouses to exercise a pastoral role toward each other. Indeed, Syrus of Cluny wrote a eulogy of Otto and Adelaide ca. 1000 in which he asked rhetorically: if an unbelieving husband can be saved by faith of his wife (1 Cor 7:14, 16), how much more can those who are united in Christ exercise justice through faith and be both

hearers and doers of the Gospel (188-89). Olsen offers a careful analysis of the story of the Spanish nobleman El Cid as an example of the complex ideal of marriage at the end of this period.

By the late eleventh century the so-called Gregorian Reform movements included a strong affirmation of marriage, fidelity, love, indissolubility, and affection, an affirmation of marriage built on fidelity and service, not domination. In short, marriage is beginning to be more broadly understood not merely as a God-given road to salvation but a mystery and sacrament, as a participation in the bond between Christ and the Church (194).

Teresa Olsen Pierre, "Marriage, Body, and Sacrament in the Age of Hugh of Saint Victor" (213-268), tackles the crucial twelfth century, in which both the question of the relative importance of consent and consummation was resolved and a companionate marriage ideal developed alongside growing appreciation of the sacramental nature of marriage. While Gratian (ca. 1140) held on to the requirement of parental consent (214-15), Hugh of St. Victor (d. 1141) advocated consent of the spouses alone, with consummation clearly secondary, turning his back on the Germanic emphasis on consummation visible in Carolingian prelates like Hincmar of Reims.

The development of marriage as a sacrament owes much to Anselm of Laon (d. ca. 1117), who gave new meaning to the term "sacrament" and insisted that all marriages are images of the Church-Christ relationship (217). For Anselm, to become members of Christ through the couple's service to God and the Church is the *res* of marriage (218). To be sure, marriage, unlike other sacraments, was practiced in pre-Christian times, but, while all marriages are *sacramenta* and thus images of the Christ-Church

relationship, only Christian marriages “involve spouses in the grace of a life in the Church” (218). The sign of this sacrament was sexual consummation (marriage is not complete until consummation), but the *res* signified by that sign is the indissolubility of the Christ-Church relationship. The effect of the sacrament is participation in the reality of the Christ-Church relationship (218).

Hugh of St. Victor wrote fifteen years after Anselm, affirming that marriage is primarily about human partnership (like Augustine), so Mary and Joseph were truly married (218). The great challenge to the early school theologians at Laon and Paris was to integrate marriage into the emerging sacramental system, which meant delineating which aspects of marriage corresponded to the various elements of other sacraments. All sacraments instruct the mind about truth, lead the mind toward internal order, and confer grace (224). Thus Hugh gave marriage a place within salvation history that had been only faintly foreshadowed by previous thinkers, emphasizing the affective nature of the marriage bond. He believed that creation was strewn with sacred symbols or “sacraments” which “God implanted to lead human beings to a fuller appreciation of himself.” In true Augustinian and neo-platonic fashion, for Hugh corporeal things of the physical world can draw us to God in the way God always intended, if we concentrate on them properly. Marriage is one of these (225).

Hugh insists that the consent of the couple consists in their mutual agreement to owe their entire selves to each other, to reserve themselves to each other, and not deny themselves to each other (218). Hugh found a way to preserve the Laon tradition that emphasized consummation as a fitting, even necessary, symbol for Christ’s union with his Body, hence as

an essential element of the sacrament of marriage, by inventing a second sacramental symbolism, namely, marital consent (the so-called “two-sacraments” theory of marriage) (219). Hugh of St. Victor went so far as to call sexual intercourse holy, without denying that couples need to be disciplined and to moderate inordinate passions (237).

After Peter Lombard signed on to the consent theology of marriage, it became prominent in the schools (220). Although Gratian insisted that consummation made the union into a sacrament, later canonists (decretists) gradually adopted the French consent theology (221), which found codification in the “Alexandrine Rules” of Alexander III, endorsed and enforced by Innocent III.

[FCS members may be interested to know that one of the treatises dealt with by Pierre, Innocent III’s *De quadripartita specie nuptiarum*, is available in English translation in a relatively little-known publication: Eugene J. Crook, “Lothario dei Segni (Pope Innocent III) on the Four Kinds of Marriage (*De quadripartita specie nuptiarum*), Introduction and Translation,” in *Spiritualität Heute und Gestern*, Internationaler Kongress vom 4. bis 7. August 1982, vol. 1, *Analecta Cartusiana*, 35.1 (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1982), 1-95.]

By the eve of Lateran IV (1215), marriage had already been included in lists of sacraments, since the Council of Verona, 1184, indicating how much teachings on marriage had been largely systematized. The emerging canonical definition of marriage emphasized primacy of consent but “acknowledged that consummation was in some sense proof of consent.” Lateran IV then added the insistence that marriage be celebrated publicly after public banns (229) and clarified the legitimate degrees of consanguinity (229).

Bernard of Clairvaux’s sermons on the Cantic of Canticles, by portraying the Bride in a manner recognizable to married couples of the time, link marital *affectio* with the love of God, an end so powerful that it overrides even the bonds between the separate spouses and their parents (234). Influenced by the Greek Fathers, Bernard “began to develop a more optimistic view of persons’ ability to co-operate with God in their own divinization” (238-39).

After rich analysis of marriage in some of the *belles lettres* of the age, e.g., the Arthurian romance *Eric and Enide* and other courtly literature (243-47), and after mining confessors’ manuals for a glimpse of how this teaching was disseminated (250-251), Pierre notes some social history dimensions: this era saw a decline in power of the seignury and solidifying of patrilineal succession, which put pressure on marriage relations among the nobility. “Women stood to lose husbands and children in these social conflicts; at the highest levels of noble society women could be repudiated rather easily if they failed to produce heirs for the continuance of the lineage.”

Pierre concludes her chapter with a quotation from a medieval Spanish marriage rite: “O God, who blessed the multiplication of children from the beginning of the world, look kindly on our petitions, and pour out the richness of your blessing on this, your servant, N., and this, your handmaiden, so that in conjugal society they may be joined as like companions in similarity of mind and mutual sanctity” (256). This can scarcely be called denigration of marriage.

R.V. Young, “The Reformations of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries” (269-301), begins with the heart of the changes of this era, in the theology of Protestant Reformers (notably Luther and Calvin), which removed marriage from the com-

pany of the sacraments, thus making its sacredness subjective. For Luther, since marriage is common to pagans and Christians alike, the sacredness of any given marriage must depend not on its objective sacramental status but on the holiness of the partners (271). Calvin was more cautious, but his warrant for reading Ephesians 5 in a non-literal sense was the (to him obvious) non-literal meaning of “This is my Body.” Paul could not literally have meant that marriage was a *mysterion* in the sense that the other sacraments are, but had to have meant that it is a mystery only “after a manner of speaking.” *Mysterion* can only refer to heavenly things, not to an earthly thing like marriage. Marriage was thus deprived of its heavenly dimensions and of the ability that sacraments have to integrate heaven and earth. It was, in short, secularized (273).

Young next compares these developments to the treatment of marriage in the writings of Catholic authors and artists like Rubens and Francis de Sales, devoting particular attention to Fray Luis de Leon (d. 1591), who insists that continence and virginity are superior but equally that marriage is “very honored and privileged by the Holy Spirit in Sacred Letters.” Mutual love between husband and wife are central, but above all, marriage is what Christ made it: “a signification and most holy sacrament of the bond of love with which He joins himself to souls, and He wished that the matrimonial law of man with woman would be like a portrait and living image of the most sweet and intimate unity between Him and His Church, and thus He ennobled matrimony with the richest gifts of His grace and with other goods of heaven.” (276).

Returning to Protestant developments, Young examines Philip Sydney’s idealization of desire that elevated women to an almost god-like status and romanticized mar-

riage considerably. He then turns to an extended analysis of John Donne, quoting Anthony Low: “Donne was a chief actor and influence in what may be called the ‘reinvention of love,’ from something essentially social and feudal to something essentially private and modern.” (284–85). Yet Donne is conflicted. In his poem “The Canonization” love is “a private erotic refuge from conventional respectability,” and he shows contempt for bourgeois morality (288) by subtly comparing two lovers’ devotion to each other as a form of vow, as an equivalent to or parody of the Catholic monk’s or nun’s withdrawal from the world (289). In contrast in his Anglican wedding sermons, where “marriage is not simply a metaphor for the relation between Christ and the Church or Christ and the soul: it is a means of uniting this particular man and woman, by way of their marriage, with Christ,” Donne offers a *de facto* sacramental understanding of marriage (291).

Echoing Calvin, John Milton insisted that Christ’s command of indissoluble marriage could not have been meant literally any more than Christ meant “This is my Body” literally (295–96). Moreover, “. . . in Milton’s mind the early Reformation notion of inner assurance of election had become identified with personal happiness and contentment, and personal experience thus became the measure of right and wrong. In our own day Milton’s vision has triumphed. We see the results not only in no-fault divorce, but in an entire society which measures moral norms by subjective longings. . . . We are saved not by faith in God, but by faithfulness to our own restless desires, to our own vaguely idealized inner self” (296).

In Milton’s pamphlet, *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), “in God’s intention a meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and no-

blest end of marriage.” If the goal of marriage is to make man happy by dispelling loneliness through agreeable companionship, then an unhappy marriage is no marriage at all. The aggrieved peaceable and loving husband cannot be at fault, so the only explanation is that he has married the wrong woman, one who does not fit Genesis 2:18 because she is no “help meet.” Man’s loneliness is not assuaged, so “such a marriage can be no marriage whereto the most honest end is wanting.” Terminating such an empty marriage then becomes a moral duty. But no outsider can determine when a marriage has become empty: “to interpose a jurisdictional power upon the inward and irremediable disposition of man, to command love and sympathy, to forbid dislike against the guiltless instinct of nature, is not within the province of any law to reach, & were indeed an uncommodious rudeness, not a just power” (294).

The strength of James Hitchcock’s contribution, “The Emergence of the Modern Family” (302–331), lies in part in its attention to socio-economic developments, which arguably had the greatest impact on marriage and family during the period he covers (seventeenth-nineteenth centuries). The Council of Trent “aligned the Catholic Church with a more voluntaristic approach to marriage, when it decreed that marriages were valid even without parental consent, provided that the couple were of sufficient age” but in France, when decrees of Trent were promulgated, finally, in 1597, that provision was omitted, because the aristocracy feared fortune hunters and did not want to lose parental control over property (310). The rise of the “honeymoon” among aristocrats as “a private period of sexual and psychological exploration,” indicates the growing desire for personal and emotional satisfaction for the spouses (311). Heretical Jansenism may have

understood marriage solely in terms of procreation, but Alphonsus Liguori emphasized “the love between Jesus and his disciples, between Mary and her spiritual children, and hence among family members as well.” For Liguori the begetting of children remains the primary end of marriage, but he also justified marriage for love between those unable to have children (311).

The Enlightenment in Europe, especially in France, and the American Revolution connected emancipation from political tyranny with emancipation from aristocratic arranged marriages. In New England the rejection of the absolutely authoritative Calvinist God also included weakening of patriarchal authority, so that “the post-revolutionary family was defined as a voluntary society held together by affection, charged with cultivating virtues appropriate for the free citizens of a republic” (315). But economic changes aborted the new model of family life among the industrial lower classes as work shifted to factories and took wives and children as well as husbands away from home (316). Sexual restraint (chastity before marriage, fidelity during marriage) spread largely among the middle class—which is where the new religiosity spread as well, but the romantic love ideal also encouraged sexual restraint.

Yet, with the new ideal of marriage came also the demand for divorce as a way out when heightened ideals remained unmet, and laws were liberalized in response (317). By the Civil War, 1.5 divorces took place for every 1000 marriages; by the end of the 1800s, the rate had risen to 4 per 1000, the highest rate in the world.

In Catholic life, Matthias Scheeben developed the sacramental meaning of marriage as an integral extension of the Mystical Body of Christ. Leo XIII’s *Arcanum divinae* (1880) gave Catholic ratification to the new view

of family life: “The pope extolled marriage as a companionship in which the husband rules but the wife is not a servant. Both have equal rights, and Leo observed that the Church had always rejected the ‘double standard’ of sexual behavior, even as it forbade husbands to violate their wives’ persons. The Church had also eliminated the power which parents once had to dictate their children’s choice of spouses” (319).

Ironically, just as the new ideal of companionate marriage raised expectations and thus seemed to require easier divorce, so the new ideal for children seems to have led to more birth control. Moreover, abolition of child labor made children an economic liability rather than an asset for the first time in history, yet large families seem to have helped children better cope with the complex world, “avoiding the trap of the isolated, inward-looking family circle” (321). The Holy See began to receive queries from priests about penitents (mainly women) who confessed to deliberate use of contraception. In the case of *coitus interruptus*, where the woman was a passive accomplice, she could be absolved even if it was likely the offense would be repeated—if she feared the wrath of her husband (321-22).

Thus, by 1825 “the major contours of modern family were discernible: spouses freely chosen according to romantic expectations (although middle-class courting was still highly supervised), an ideal of spousal friendship and mutual personal fulfillment, the separation of work from home, clearly separated spheres of activity for wives and husbands, tender solicitude for children and responsibility for their upbringing, a modified ideal of patriarchal authority. Although the roots of this idea of marriage and family life lay in the antireligious forces of the previous century, Christianity also played a major role in its formation,

as in Leo XIII’s *Arcanum divinae*. This modern idea of marriage came to be seen as the one appropriately Christian way for families to live” (322). Middle class respectability, increasingly sought by working class people, and with Queen Victoria, adopted even by the aristocracy, replaced the Church’s and the state’s legal penalties as the main influence in enforcing obligations of family life (323-24).

John M. Haas, “The Contemporary World” (332-359), opens by describing the well-known evidence for a precipitous decline in the institution of marriage and family in the contemporary era (332-33). He explains how the Supreme Court decision that extended legal contraception to unmarried couples (*Eisenstadt v. Baird*), defined marriage not as an “an independent entity with a mind and heart of its own, but as an association of two individuals each with a separate intellectual and emotional make-up.” (334-35). In *Planned Parenthood v. Danforth*, the Court, striking down any requirement of spousal consent to an abortion, reduced marriage to nothing but an arbitrary social contract (336). In short, whereas people in former eras grappled with questions of marriage as a contract or as a sacrament, with property rights, with the proper minister of the sacrament, with the question of consent versus consummation, in the contemporary era, our culture is for the first time asking what marriage itself is, no longer being sure that anyone knows or can say (337).

The Catholic response to threats to very basis of marriage in early twentieth began with the 1917 *Code of Canon Law*, which included a precise definition of marriage, in response to the claim of the modern State that marriage is a merely natural institution, a contract over whose validity the state has jurisdiction as with any other contract (338). The Code does recognize the contractual nature of

marriage, but insists that its reality as a contract is inseparable from its sacramental reality. While *Gaudium et Spes* never uses the word contract, this does not mean it intended to replace such language with covenant language (as some have claimed), and the 1983 *Code of Canon Law* explicitly included contract language (339). If marriage is a contract, both parties have rights and obligations, and, in order to establish a valid contract, each partner must know what he is binding oneself to. Hence the 1917 *Code's* definition: "The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children; the secondary end is mutual help and a remedy for concupiscence" (340). *Casti connubii*, decisions of the Roman Rota, and statements of Pius XII in the 1940s and 1950s reaffirmed the hierarchy of ends. Vatican II did not overturn this--the discussion concerned the nature of the text and language to be used in *Gaudium et Spes*, not contractual versus convenantal principles (344). Although *Gaudium et Spes* # 47-51 does speak of the "community of love" at the outset, it concludes (e.g., # 50) by clearly asserting that procreation is the primary end of marriage without using those exact words. *Humanae Vitae* does the same (345). Haas refutes with specific quotations the repeated claim that Von Hildebrand rejected the "hierarchy of ends" language or principle. The 1983 *Code of Canon Law* drops the language of "ends of marriage" but retains the reality (347).

Primary and secondary ends terminology can be used in different ways. They were not primarily juridical terms but were taken from metaphysics and simply passed on what Augustine had already said: the end of something is known by what the thing does: *agere sequitur esse*; action follows on being. Thus any given thing can have more than one end. If one starts with three ends (children,

mutual support, remedy for concupiscence) which is primary is readily seen. It cannot be be mutual support, since two individuals of the same sex can create a community of love and support. The only one of the three ends that is absolutely unique to marriage is children (349-50).

In contrast, if marital love becomes the *end* of marriage, then an arranged marriage (minus love between the spouses) would not be a valid marriage (352). Thus, Haas concludes, "one of the principal reasons for the grave disorder in which marriage finds itself at the present is simply that society no longer knows what marriage is or what purposes it principally serves" (352). "It must be admitted that the condition of marriage in the Church is almost as grave as it is in society." Some say this comes from lack of clarity in official documents, from unwillingness to use technical philosophical language, but Haas insists that the blame rests not with the refusal to use certain technical terms but with those who chose to interpret the Council's language contrary to the expressed intentions of the Council Fathers (353).

Though marriage is in as grave a condition as at any time in the history of the Church, no other pope in history has done as much as John Paul II to address the situation (353). His theology of the body locates the *imago Dei* in maleness and femaleness, not merely in reason and will, with the natural complementarity of man and woman reflecting the nature of the Triune God himself as the spouses surrender themselves to each other in such a way that a third person is engendered (354). Hence the bodies of all men and women have a "nuptial meaning", reflecting not only their own makeup but also God's nature, above all in the way God relates to the Church, His Bride. Quoting John Saward, Haas concludes that "Pope

John Paul II has done what M. J. Scheeben in the nineteenth century and Balthasar in the twentieth have tried to do in their theological syntheses: he has restored the nuptial mystery to its proper centrality in the understanding of faith" (355).

This collection of essays is a mine of historical information but far from merely that. One of its great strengths is the way it illustrates the presence centuries ago of themes that many associate only with twentieth-century or even post-Vatican II developments. For instance, reading Teresa Olsen Pierre's chapter on the twelfth century shows beyond any doubt that clerical authors of the high Middle Ages sought as much as any modern Catholic author to develop a theology of lay sanctity and that the "universal call to sanctity" was not invented at Vatican II.

The authors are in conversation with the best of scholarship on social history, as illustrated by James Hitchcock's assertion that the premodern family was more likely to be a nuclear than an extended family (306), though his echoing of Phillippe Aries's notorious thesis in suggesting the likelihood of a "certain degree of fatalistic callousness about the suffering of children" in light of high infant mortality (305), might be challenged on the basis of a number of recent studies. Yet the authors do not reduce the history of Christian marriage to socio-economic developments. Even more important than attention to social history is its authors' competent knowledge of the theological issues involved, making the collection useful not merely to historians but to pastors, counselors, canon lawyers, and religious educators at all levels.

The book lacks an integrated bibliography, depending instead on a full citation of each item at its first mention. On occasion locating the full citation can become quite tedious. Some might fault, in the chapter on

the Reformation era, reliance on an English-language anthology of Luther's writings, which contrasts with direct citations to Spanish sources in the original languages. *Familiaris Consortio* is not an encyclical but an Apostolic Exhortation (erroneous on p. 220, but correct on p. 356). The chapter on the twelfth century might have taken more of an evaluative position on the various theories about the "secularity" of courtly love described so competently on pp. 244-47.

It should be obvious that such minor flaws merely mar the surface of an unusually well edited and integrated collection of papers that belongs in parish, rectory, seminary, college, university, marriage tribunal, and personal libraries. Its sponsor, editor, and authors are to be commended for the extra diligence that turned a set of conference talks into a real and valuable book.

Half-Truths: What's Right (and What's Wrong) with the Cliches You and I Live By by Montague Brown. Manchester, NH. Sophia Institute Press, 2003. xi + 169, softcover \$14.95

Reviewed by John Adam Moreau, Ph.D. Richmond, VA

If you are about to give someone a gift of, say, an edition of the *Summa* or the latest treatise on what went wrong after Vatican II, stop! If it's going to be a book make it this charming, handsomely produced and delightful work.

Montague Brown has read the *Summa* and much is to be gained by reading such books of his as *The Romance of Reason: An Adventure in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas* and *The Quest for Moral Foundations* and *The One-Minute Philosopher*.

Montague Brown came out of Cal-Berkeley in 1978 as an English literature major and when he read

a gift from his wife, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, he was hooked on philosophy. His Ph.D in that subject is from Boston College ('86).

At St. Anselm College in New Hampshire he teaches all sorts of wonderful subjects such as Dante, Milton, Antigone, and Hamlet.

It is important to tell you what this different kind of book looks like. It is about two-thirds the dimensions of *Newsweek*. So, it has physical substance. On the left-hand page is the cliché, such as *Might Makes Right*, followed by a page of text, a one sentence summary and a quote. On the facing page is the answer to the cliché, a one sentence summary of the counter argument and a quote.

There are 84 of these clichés (beginning with *Actions Speak Louder Than Words* and ending with *You Scratch My Back, and I'll Scratch Yours*) and 84 answers. That makes for 168 quotes ranging from Henry Adams to Frances Wright. Along the way are such clichés as *What Is Truth? Why Trust Reason, Anyway?* and *Seeing Is Believing*.

Now, some of the clichés are just about empty of merit but most of them carry degrees of truth, otherwise they wouldn't have become clichés. The quotes which go with the clichés are not from nitwits, unless you think the likes of Euripides, Pope St Gregory I and Henry Adams are dim bulbs.

In *Experience Is The Best Teacher*, for instance, the quote is from Aristotle. On the response page Montague Brown begins the page by saying, "It's true that there are many things we can only learn through experience. We can't learn to play a sport or musical instrument without the experience of practice. We can't grow in courage or self-control without experiencing challenges and overcoming them by doing what's right. But if experience really is the best teacher, why should I listen to you?"

Cliches, he says, "are catchy and easy to remember, and they provide us with quick answers to life's many challenges. We absorb them growing up as we absorb language and culture.

"At a certain point, however, they become frustrating. Is it really the case that 'It doesn't matter what you believe so long as you're sincere?' Sincerity is good but what if you're a sincere racist? When you and I close a difficult discussion by saying, 'Let's just agree to disagree,' have we preserved our friendship or taken a step toward its destruction?"

Half-Truths is one of those imaginative books for the hearts and minds of those who delight in knowing. Each of the clichés is related to questions of truth and goodness and each takes us back to glorious ale-sodden days when, "Oh, yeah, prove it!" and "Who says so?!" were as much on the tip of the tongue as the upcoming game and the truly most profound issues of the day: Will she go out with me? Will he call me?

That was when some of us were saying *Chaos Is King* and *Familiarity Breeds Contempt* and *Live And Let Live*. As for me in those days, my adversaries had opinions, but, I of course had the *Courage of My Convictions*.

Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass by John F. Baldovin, S.J., Rowman and Littlefield, 2003. Pp. xviii + 211. ISBN 0-7425-3179-1.

Review by David Paul Deavel

Fr. Baldovin, a seasoned scholar of the history of the liturgy who teaches at Weston Jesuit Seminary, has produced an enticing and instructive, albeit sometimes annoying, guide to the Mass. The occasion for this volume, part of the "Come and See" series, edited by James Martin, S.J. and Jeremy Lang-

ford, is the release of the new GIRM in 2002. Thus, in addition to providing a brief but engaging sketch of the history of the Mass and a reflection on the meaning of the Eucharist “for us today,” Fr. Baldwin includes along the way an ongoing commentary on the celebration of the liturgy in light of the latest documents. Of course, as things go, Cardinal Arinze and the Congregation for Divine Worship have since released a new document, *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, clarifying further what the GIRM intends to say, but this latter document adds only a few points that would change Fr. Baldwin’s reading.

The volume is pleasingly laid out with few obvious errata (the only one of importance is a mislabeled table of scriptural accounts of the Eucharist on pp. 16–17). Given that this is a book geared toward use in parish education, each chapter concludes with a few “Questions for Reflection.” (This rarely successful feature should be removed from all books geared toward adults or teenagers. If the teacher/discussion leader can’t figure out what to ask then either the leader or the book, or both, should be replaced.) After a brief introduction scanning the contents of the book and limning the contemporary experience of liturgy (the latter a rather sanguine account given Baldwin’s own fond recollection of the Tridentine Mass and his many comments in the main text concerning how much of contemporary liturgy is badly done), Baldwin begins with a chapter briefly introducing us to sacramental reality (“Food, Glorious Food”), a chapter treating the Eucharist in the New Testament, and then a roller-skating-through-the-Met tour of the history of the Eucharist. These are all well done considering the limits of a popular book of this type. The first chapter sets the theological stage particularly well with a description of human

separation, from God, other humans, and the world, and the Incarnation by which God brings us back to life and love by becoming “literally the food of Christians” (7). The second and third chapters provide the reader with a good layout of the scriptural and historical terrain without either skimping on the interesting detail or becoming mired in it. Of particular delight is Baldwin’s argument in chapter two that a “Christian Seder,” a popular innovation for many during Holy Week, both obscures our understanding that *the* Christian Passover is the Easter Vigil and ignores the fact that our knowledge of how Jesus would have celebrated Seder is limited at best (21). Similarly, in the third chapter he dispels the false understanding of the Christian practice of celebrating the Eucharist in the catacombs: they were not among the dead for secrecy but because the sacrificial meal of the liturgy embraces the entire Church—militant, suffering, and triumphant.

Starting with the fourth chapter Baldwin helps us stroll through the main elements of the liturgy, beginning with the Entrance Rite. Baldwin embraces Alexander Schmemmann’s affirmation that the Entrance begins at home as the faithful prepare for the redemption of time, which is manifested in the Liturgy. He also helpfully reminds the reader that the Penitential Rite’s focus is on God as the forgiver of sin and not just on our own sinfulness. These two details illustrate themes that permeate this book. First, the liturgy is the way we enter into the mystery of redemption, but the way we know that it has penetrated us is that it affects our daily life. Baldwin repeatedly stresses that Scripture, liturgical celebration, and the ethics of daily life are a cord of three strands that should not be broken. This theme is reminiscent of Cardinal Ratzinger’s exegesis of Exodus in *The Spirit of the Liturgy* (Ignatius, 2000) showing that

what is at the center of the Sinai covenant, and ours, is law, worship, and ethics. Second, the theme of worship as God-centered activity is a welcome reminder of what the original nineteenth- and twentieth-century “liturgical revival” was all about. Baldwin himself notes the irony that the priest was theologically central but ritually anonymous in the Tridentine Mass, while the priest is now central to the ritual of the new Mass. For this reason he discourages the priest from the chatty greetings and asides that have come to be so familiar to modern participants in the liturgy (72). Unlike other modern critics of the liturgy like the late Klaus Gamber, Louis Bouyer, Ratzinger, and Aidan Nichols, however, Fr. Baldwin never questions the historically eccentric and theologically problematic modern practice of having the celebrant face the people when he prays the canon. Changing this practice alone would go a long way toward ritually de-centralizing the priest and thus helping us turn Godward.

The two preceding examples illustrate Baldwin’s general success at theological analysis but occasional lack of success with regard to practical liturgical suggestions. Part of the problem is his repeated appeal to the ambiguous theme of “active participation.” This concept, never defined by Baldwin, but which seems to mean “doing things in the liturgy,” guides his advocacy of having as many ministers, ordained and lay, as possible during the liturgy, singing whenever possible, always receiving communion from the elements consecrated during the liturgy and not from the tabernacle, and standing in “solidarity” until everyone receives communion. While Baldwin is certainly not unaware of the fact that “active participation” is first and foremost interior participation that results in a changed life, strangely he seems to ignore the fact

that different people are comfortable participating physically in different ways—this, despite his observation that in his studies of the early Church there is little of (his notion of) active participation to be found (xvi). Congregational singing is fine, since as Augustine noted we “pray twice” in doing so, but Baldwin’s claim that we have a great deal of good contemporary worship music from the last twenty-five years to use is debatable. I think I’m not alone in finding that the “contemporary” settings of the Mass and most of the hymnody to be of a very saccharine nature. Baldwin is on solid ground in his demand that we all eat from the same sacrifice. But in the other areas he is very shaky. He does not notice that in his advocacy of a crowded altar area we again encounter the common modern liturgical problem of turning the liturgy toward humans. This is equally true of the strange practice of “solidarity” standing after communion.

Another example of Baldwin letting vague concepts crowd out his own solid thought comes when he touches on issues of the so-called inclusive language. Baldwin repeats standard clichés about the “male bias” in using “man” to mean all of humanity, but then gives the example of Psalm 8:8, whose christological understanding of “man” and the “son of man” is paramount, particularly in its usage in Easter week (95). His suggestion to use third-person plural or first-person plural when not in Easter season is slightly ridiculous—should the christological understanding of this psalm only be visible in Easter week? Similarly he seems to think verses 21–25 of Ephesians 5 should be stricken from the lectionary because of their “harmful (sometimes tragic) effects of treating women like second-class citizens,” even though he notes that such a passage can be explained properly and un-tragically from the

pulpit (91). In yet another passage he condemns those who object to the *pro multis* of the institution narrative being translated as “for all” because Scripture scholars agree that the Greek word *poll n* “suggests inclusion rather than exclusion.” That it “suggests inclusion” is not the same as an outright declaration that the shed blood of the Lord will be received redemptively by each individual. Baldwin notes that liturgical language has never been constrained to the literal text of Scripture. Fine, but why can’t traditional liturgical phrases be translated literally so that the multivalent nature of the texts can be experienced by everyone? The answer is given—we can’t be trusted with the real thing—in Baldwin’s illogical and *ad hominem* lament that “[I]t is a pity that some people have such a small-minded religion that they insist only a few will be saved” (91). How many people would insist that “the many” equals “a few”?

One gets the feeling that Fr. Baldwin, whose pastoral experience seems to be limited to the Berkeley and Boston areas, should spend some time in fly-over country to clear his thoughts. If there is no time for that, he could read Kathleen Norris’s *Cloister Walk* and observe the regret that many of the nuns who had bowdlerized the lectionary to get rid of “violence” and “sexism” felt years later.

Parochialism of thought is evident in at least one other place worth mentioning here. Baldwin mentions frequently his desire that everyone would receive the cup. Fair enough, but his own hypothesis of why many do not is slanderous: “Perhaps people are all too aware of the awesome symbolism that is hard to avoid in sharing a cup with someone else—especially relative strangers. Lovers share from the same cup. The act is a powerful symbol of commitment and sharing. . . . It could be that some

people unconsciously but instinctively shy away from this challenging aspect of Communion with the Lord and with members of his body” (147). Has Baldwin ever asked anybody why he or she does not receive the cup? And why, contrary to the Ignatian practice, does Baldwin the Jesuit take the less charitable interpretation? Perhaps if he asked, some would say they have a tendency to spill when they drink. Some would say it’s difficult to do this when they have brought little ones up for communion. And some, particularly those who object to “receiving in the hand,” would say that to take the cup and drink for oneself seems symbolically wrong. It seems like “taking” communion rather than “receiving.” Those who have experience with Eastern liturgies know that the practice of intinction by the priest works very well and satisfies all concerns: possible clumsiness or inability to grasp a cup with one hand and carry a toddler with the other, and finally the receptive element and the concern with receiving both species. Fr. Baldwin never mentions this possible solution because he has not grasped the problem.

Despite these criticisms and many other ones like it, this is a fairly good book. As I said, the details are hit-and-miss, but only because, like so many liturgists who deplore the “liturgy wars” (xiv), Baldwin often seems unaware of whom he has shot or even that he is shooting. But when he sticks to matters of fact and not bogus analysis of his opponents’ minds, he is very good. Particularly interesting is his defense of Eucharistic prayer 4 as the only one that explicitly states that we offer the body and blood of Christ on our altar. Many other such gems await the reader. The final chapter, a reflection on the Eucharist, clarifies that “transubstantiation” is “an apt way of speaking” and not identical to St. Thomas’s (or anybody else’s)

philosophical explanation of it (168). Similarly, Baldovin identifies what a sacrifice is and why no conflict exists between seeing the Eucharist as both meal and sacrifice. And Baldovin again returns to the three-fold cord of Scripture, Eucharist, and daily life. Used with Stephen B. Clark's *Catholics and the Eucharist* (Servant, 2000), a good instructor, wary of Baldovin's blindnesses, could use Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation quite well for adult education or even college-level introductions to the Catholic liturgy.

Personal Vocation: God Calls Everyone by Name by Germain Grisez and Russell Shaw, Our Sunday Visitor, 2003.

Reviewed by
Nicholas C. Lund-Molfese, J.D.,
Archdiocese of Chicago

Disclaimer: I am no detached or impartial reviewer. I have already bought over 10 copies of this book to give as gifts to students, couples getting married and even job interviewees. I invite you to do the same. As a wedding gift, this would be a far superior choice than one more over priced dish from Needless Markup (AKA, Neiman-Marcus). Students and recent college graduates will find in this book what they may well need most—a guide to the organization of their life as a whole. Parents and teachers will benefit greatly, both personally and also in their responsibility of mentoring their charges.

The authors begin by noting that “Personal vocation is enormously important yet probably not widely understood. We have written this book with the hope of remedying that.” Indeed, one of the primary services the book renders is in introducing the reader to a more complete concept of “vocation.” In the course of doing so, it also serves as a corrective of various false understandings of vocation. Among the important errors covered, two in

particular are prominent in our culture: confusing selfishness with vocation and the idea that some Christians have vocations and others do not. As the authors point out, the restricting of the term “vocation” to refer only to Church vocations (priests and religious) obscures the fact that “Every member of the Church who seeks to know what God asks of him or her will discover a unique personal vocation of his or her own.”

It is crucial that every Christian recognize that God is calling him or her to cooperate with him in the whole of their life. No time period in a person's life is to be wasted. No part of your life is yours to the exclusion of God. Two common examples illustrate the consequences of failing to recognize this reality. Some persons feel and act as if the time they spend single, looking for a spouse or discerning their vocation, is “wasted” time. They conceptually exclude this period of their life from God's providence and purpose.

A second set of examples come readily to mind regarding money and tithing. A friend once asked me, “How much should we give to God and how much do we get to keep for ourselves?” The question seems to imply that we give God a cut of our time (one day in seven) and money (10%) and that the remainder is to be used in whatever way maximizes our utility and pleasure. The other false assumption in the question is that the only way we “give to God” is by giving to the Church. For a Christian, the answer to the question could follow along these lines: You have to give 100% to God, that is, cooperate with him in your use of every dime, every day and every minute. Fortunately, putting money in the collection plate is only one way of cooperating with God. Another way (for a father or a mother) is purchasing diapers for the child God has gifted you with.

The book's core thesis could be taken from a section entitled, “The Idea of a Personal Vocation.” Therein, the authors write,

The answer to the vocation crisis of the Church is personal vocation. Rather than there being a shortage of vocations, as is often mistakenly supposed, there is a widespread failure by Catholics to seek, discern, accept, and live out their personal vocations. To a considerable extent it comes from failure to realize that there is such a thing as personal vocation.

In delineating a rich concept of personal vocation the authors describe three senses of the term which are applicable to every Catholic. First, there is the “vocation to be a Christian” which entails living the truth of our faith. Second, there is “vocation in the sense of state of life” (single, consecrated, married, lay, ordained, etc.) which sets the context for many of a person's choices. Finally, there is “vocation in the sense of personal vocation” which refers to the unique portion of work, encompassing the whole of a person's life (without exception), that God calls a given person to embrace and to cooperate with him in performing.

Personal Vocation, at 161 pages and written in a popular style, makes for painless reading and is accessible to a broad audience. Adding to its utility is a final chapter entitled, “Putting the Idea to Work” that contains insightful and practical advice on such matters as dealing with the aftermath of past poor vocation choices, burnout, catechesis, and apostolate. Short sections are also dedicated to the application of the forgoing text to particular groups such as parents, teachers and bishops. Members of all three groups would be well served by reading this book.

I would very much like to see Our Sunday Visitor publish a shortened, pamphlet version, of Personal Vocation that omitted the current text's historical overview (as valuable

as it is) and a few passages that seem to assume a culturally conservative outlook on the part of the reader. The proposed condensed pamphlet would have young persons, college and non-college attendees, as its focal audience and would be inexpensive enough for mass distribution. Tightly focused and organized, it would set forth the outline of what a personal vocation is and how one should discern it and live it.

The Creed: What Christians Believe and Why It Matters by Luke Timothy Johnson, Doubleday, 2003, 324 pages; U.S. \$23.95/Canada \$35.95, hardback. ISBN 0-385-50247-8

Reviewed by Kenneth D. Whitehead

It ought to be good news for orthodox believers when an outstanding modern Scripture scholar turns his attention to the Creed and is actually able to affirm that “the Creed provides a guide to the correct reading of the Gospels.” *Sola Scriptura* is not enough. When the Scripture scholar in question, Luke Timothy Johnson, who, awhile back in his popular book *The Real Jesus*, so effectively punctured the balloon of the mis-named Jesus Seminar and exposed the pretensions of a too-rigid application of the historico-critical method—and who has produced generally solid and sensible biblical scholarship, for instance on Luke and Acts—orthodox Catholics might expect that a book of his re-affirming the importance of the Creed which the Catholic Church formulated and promulgated in ancient times would be a real winner.

And, in point of fact, Johnson, who knows his Scripture, has quite imaginatively, and even brilliantly, shown how a wealth of scriptural passages abundantly support and illustrate the terse and abstract formulations

of the Creed. His biblical acumen is evident throughout the book.

Unfortunately, the same thing cannot be said for his sense of the Church. He understands and shows the scriptural evidence that Jesus did indeed found a Church to carry on his word and his work in the world; and he understands that it was this same Church at her Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople that produced the Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed which we still profess on Sundays and Holy Days. He also in many respects correctly analyzes and describes the meaning and import of this Creed. What he does not advert to, or even seem to understand, however, is that the Church’s belief is not limited to what is set forth in the Nicene Creed (which is basic but not exclusive). In the Catholic Church, nineteen general councils have followed the two ancient ones with whose work Johnson is rightly concerned, for example, and these councils too form part of a living magisterium of the Church—a concept that he does not seem to grasp at all. For him the Creed which issued from Nicaea and got refined at Constantinople seems to be pretty much the Church’s last word concerning her beliefs and teachings..

Of course, in one sense that is true; the Church too believes that the Nicene Creed is definitive in the sense that she has adopted it as the basic statement of her faith. We are all obliged to profess and believe it. For the Church, however, it doesn’t stop there; the subsequent acts of popes and councils down through the centuries—including subsequent creeds down to and including Pope Paul VI’s 1968 Credo of the People of God—add to and develop the Church’s belief as set forth in the basic Creed of Nicaea and Constantinople without, of course, ever contradicting it.

For Luke Timothy Johnson, however, the Church’s magisterium, or

teaching authority, apparently became essentially fixed and complete with the Nicene Creed. He thus seems able to prescind from more than sixteen centuries of Church life and teaching. So it is not surprising that he gets the whole question of Church Tradition wrong. “The Church in every age,” he writes, “must be measured by the standard of the apostolic age as witnessed not by later tradition, but by direct appeal to the writings of the New Testament.”

That in one sense the Church must indeed be “measured” by the standards of the New Testament is, once again, true enough; but that, meanwhile, all the rest of Tradition—what the Church has become and taught in the course of her life on this earth—must or can be disregarded, or even thrown out, is far from true; it is grossly false, in fact. Johnson’s skewed notion of Tradition, not incidentally, would effectively place the task of judging the Church’s teachings and actions into the hands of—New Testament scholars and experts such as himself!

It is a task that he himself proceeds to carry out with alacrity in this book. While he specifies that his own “tradition” is “Roman Catholic,” most of what he says about the actual Catholic Church as she exists today is both carping and condescending. Indeed he seems to have a rather marked distaste for the contemporary Church (an attitude which he characterizes as being “critical” though “loyal”).

His disdain for the Church as she actually exists and functions spills over into his historical analysis. Thus, he speaks, curiously, of Nicene “theologians,” as if academic theologians as we know them today were somehow the authors of the Nicene Creed. But the authors of this Creed were, of course, the Catholic bishops of the day. How the Catholic bishops of the fourth century were somehow such

consummate and creative theologians and teachers, enjoying the guidance of the Holy Spirit, while the bishops of all the subsequent centuries in the life of Church scarcely even rate any mention in his book, is not explained. Did the Holy Spirit desert the Church's bishops after the Nicene Creed was firmly in place?

Apparently so: Johnson feels able to reject out of hand such later established teachings of the Church as the perpetual virginity of Mary, which he actually ridicules. He similarly rejects Pope John Paul II's more recent definitive teaching that the Church has no power to ordain women—a teaching which the pontiff bases primarily on the example of the Church in the apostolic age, when Christ did not call women to be among those he specifically commissioned to lead and carry on his Church, the assembly of those who would believe in and endeavor to follow Him. It would be interesting to know what specific scriptural evidence this noted Scripture scholar could adduce to suggest that the apostles or their immediate successors could ever possibly have imagined themselves competent to ordain women.

Even some of his interpretations of the Creed as it issued from the Church in the fourth century are equally mistaken. For example, he does not believe that “the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church,” in which belief is certainly required by the Nicene Creed, really refers to any actual entity. It is an “ideal,” he claims; but that is assuredly *not* how the Fathers of Nicaea and Constantinople viewed the matter. On Johnson's own evidence, they certainly believed that the Creed they had fashioned applied to the actual Church they headed as bishops. Nowhere does Luke Timothy Johnson explain, or even address, the question of how the Catholic bishops were capable of speaking “the word of

the Lord” (as St. Athanasius aptly characterized the decisions of Nicaea), but then apparently later somehow lost that capability. That he could write what he writes about the Church after what the 21st General Council of the Church at Vatican II taught in its epochal Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium* really places him in the same position as the Arians of the fourth century, who preferred their own judgment to what the Council of Nicaea had decreed.

Johnson is right that too many Catholics today simply recite the Creed mechanically and out of habit and do not really understand what a remarkable profession they are making when they do so. And he is quite good in some portions of the book in bringing out what an amazing document the Nicene Creed indeed is. However, not even a book which explains the Creed as well as this one does in some respects is going to be of much help when its author shows himself in so many other ways to be not only ignorant of Church teaching but actually contemptuous of the Church as she exists and functions today. In spite of his proven expertise as a New Testament scholar, he otherwise seems to be nothing else but another contemporary “cafeteria Catholic.” He evidently does *not* believe in “the holy Catholic Church,” or, at any rate, in many of the teachings that that concrete entity continues to insist are part of the apostolic patrimony. He himself picks and chooses and decides which articles of the Creed he is going to believe in and abide by, in other words, and he often seems to do so pretty much on the basis of today's conventional secular liberal ideology; he sees, for example, the major evils of today's world residing in such things as “inhumane treatment of . . . women, the poor, and racial and other minorities.”

To combat these evils he seems particularly to have taken up the cause

of modern radical feminism. “The Church remains one of the places where sexism can flourish,” he writes. He himself sets his face determinedly against such “sexism,” however, by the adoption of feminist so-called “inclusive language” in the writing of his book. He regularly avoids the pronoun “his” when referring to God, even resorting to such absurd phraseology as “the way God has revealed *Godself*.” Elsewhere and even in one chapter heading he speaks of God “who for us became *human*”—which is a plain mistranslation of the original words of the Creed he has set himself up as the expert on. (He does allow the pronoun “his” when referring to Christ, who was manifestly a male; and he also retains it in quotations; otherwise he bows to the radical feminists.)

That this Scripture scholar should take contemporary radical feminism so seriously as to feel the need to conform to the stilted artificial writing style which the feminists claim is necessary if women are to be “included” in modern discourse, however, unfortunately speaks volumes about where his priorities lie. That the properly constituted authority of his own declared “tradition”—namely, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments in Rome, in its 2001 Instruction *Liturgiam Authenticam*—has specifically *excluded* so-called inclusive language in liturgical—and biblical—translations, clearly affects him not in the slightest, if he is even aware of this Instruction.

And that he adheres to modern feminist ideology in preference to the teachings and judgments of the Church seriously undermines his credibility to speak on any issue from any truly “Catholic” standpoint. He cites with approval such extremist feminist theologians as Mary Daly and Elizabeth Johnson, not only as if they somehow “represented” women today, but also as if they had not long since

abandoned many positions that remain authentically “Catholic.” That such a man would presume to instruct others in the meaning of the Creed suggests a degree of obtuseness and even conceit that nobody would ever have imagined in so accomplished a scholar.

But then what should we have expected from a scholar who undertakes to instruct us in the meaning of the Nicene Creed, and, at the same time, he himself believes that the “one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church” of which that same Creed speaks is nothing more than an “ideal”?

Kenneth D. Whitehead is the author, among other books, of One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: The Early Church Was the Catholic Church (Ignatius Press, 2000).

The Breakable Vow, Kathryn Ann Clark, Avon Books, 2004. Pp. 472. \$6.99. ISBN 0-06-051821-9.

Review by David Paul Deavel, Doctoral Candidate in Theology, Fordham University, and consulting editor, LOGOS: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture.

How does one criticize a book that is “humbly dedicated to the united hearts of our Savior, Jesus Christ, and His Blessed Mother Mary”? I suppose to start we should remember former President Reagan’s stock response to reporters accosting him with news of his endorsement by some fringe group or other: they may have endorsed me, but I didn’t endorse them. Whether or not Kathryn Ann Clark’s first novel is a true act of piety is God’s business. Whether it is a good book or not is the business of the reviewer.

Clark’s plot concerns Annie McGowan, a teenage Chicagooan involved in an emotionally abusive relationship

with Kevin Griffin, a football star from a presumably abusive family himself. The setting is an all-Irish-American Catholic neighborhood in Chicago—land at some time that is nowhere close to the present judging from the absence of cell-phones and computers, the view of smoking as only a mild naughtiness, the language of “pre-paying” for airplane tickets, the complete staffing of Catholic schools by nuns whose rules are that pregnant girls ordinarily complete school at home. Additionally, there don’t seem to be any home pregnancy tests available. The characters, including Annie and Kevin, are paste-board cutouts. Annie is one of four children of a widower, but there is neither any sense that any of the children knew their mother nor any explanation of what their father does for a living. Nor is there any explanation of what the abuse in Kevin’s family consisted of—the only evidence we have is that Mr. Griffin is an obnoxious sort who thinks women are bad drivers.

Kevin and Annie are married after the birth of a daughter, Mary, and, significantly, after the onset of Kevin’s physical violence. Kevin, a “football star” whose position is never mentioned, accepts a scholarship at an unnamed university in what we later find out is west Texas. From there the violence escalates and the rest of the book takes the form of a thriller in which Annie attempts to extricate herself from the relationship, despite the complicity of the old-boy Texas law-enforcement officers who love the football coach at this un-named Texas university. The solution to her problems comes in the form of a *deus ex machina* named “Buddy” who is involved in a “business” and has had “dealings” with the law and owes a favor to Annie’s brother, Danny, whose own career is similarly shrouded in vagueness rather than mystery. Buddy apparently beats up Kevin, wrecks

his car, and threatens to kill him, thus convincing him to stop attempting to murder Annie.

If all of this sounds impossibly badly written, then perhaps I have understated things a bit. Perhaps the only note of realism is that the Catholic elements in the book are so impossibly confused in ways that indicate they could only have come from a Catholic catechized in the last forty years. I’ll just mention a few. Everyone in the book thinks that the Immaculate Conception is the same thing as the Virgin Birth. In one scene a priest tells Annie that God created all the souls at the beginning of the world and then drops them into bodies when women get pregnant. In another Annie’s father tells her, “Now, the Holy Father doesn’t like these annulments, so we’ll need to work fast, while we can still get one in this country.” Don’t close the borders, yet! We need to get to a Mexican marriage tribunal or otherwise these marriage vows will have to be breakable. Oy vey. Of course this last element is present throughout the book, beginning with the title: is the vow breakable or is it a question of the possibility of free consent in the situation of a threatening abuser? Clark doesn’t seem to know at all.

What is the problem with this book? The cover tells us that this “inspiring debut novel” brings “clarity and compassion” to a “hotly debated issue” and comes equipped with a “resource guide” for identifying abusive relationships. So it’s not really a novel, but an extended case study of an abusive relationship that is meant to help young women identify their situation and then seek help. Is the abusive, controlling behavior depicted realistically? Well, yes, I suppose—at one point in the book Annie reads over a list of ways to tell your spouse is an abuser just in case we don’t get it yet—but the problems are at least two-fold even viewing this book as

simply a dramatized case study for use in helping young women.

First, because the story has almost no foot in any social or technological reality recognizable since approximately twenty years ago (bizarre Catholic utterances excluded), it is severely difficult to see how any woman of any sort could relate to this book in the concrete. Second, and more worrying, even if some young woman does identify with it, does this book really present the kind of clarity we want her to have? Annie doesn't seek shelter, but instead calls an unknown man, a man of whom she is not sure whether he is a contract killer or not, to "take care of the problem" by roughing up her husband—once. Annie then resolves to stay in Texas because she has a "scholarship" rather than go back to Chicago where she would have support, encouragement, and more eyes looking out for her as she raises her daughter alone and tries to go to school.

Given that this book, with its overt religious droppings, is probably aimed at Catholic high school girls, educators should be aware of how bizarre this story is. Clark is herself a victim of abuse. Did she escape it by contacting mysterious enforcers who may or may not be hit men? Did she live a thousand miles from home? Does she recommend these solutions for young girls? This plan of action is not recommended in the resource guide at the back of the book, but it's a safe bet that the story trumps the social work literature if the girl is interested in this at all. *The Breakable Vow* is not only horribly written, but distinctly unhelpful and potentially dangerous for modern victims of abuse. Catholic librarians, teachers, and social workers should keep their money and look for something else if they want literature. If they want a resource guide for abusive relationships, there are cheaper ways of getting them than buying this book.

Credo: Historical And Theological Guide To Creeds And Confessions Of Faith In The Christian Tradition by J. Pelican, New Haven, CN: Yale University Press, 2003. Pp 515 BP \$ 27.20

*Review by Rev. Michael Orsi, Ph.D.
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Jaroslav Pelican, preeminent American historical theologian and a recent convert from Lutheranism to Eastern Orthodoxy, has provided a valuable book on the etiology of Christian creeds. One suspects that *Credo: Historical And Theological Guide To Creeds And Confessions Of Faith In The Christian Tradition* is an apologia for his personal faith journey. His emphasis on the Church's first seven councils resonates well with Orthodoxy's belief system and ecclesiology. Nevertheless, his outstanding scholarship puts in perspective the development of the many creeds and confessions that followed the original Nicene Creed of 325 or Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. Whether creeds emanated from the combined Church of the East and West, the Middle Ages, the Reformation, or as adaptations of older creeds expression for missionary lands, Pelican emphasizes that they are all attempts by systematic theologians to put the faith of the bible in doctrinal form. Creeds, he says, militate against a purely subjective faith and set bright lines as to what beliefs one must adhere in order to be part of a particular faith community. He shows how the development of specific creedal formulas in the early centuries often emanated from the liturgical rites, especially baptism. Pelican takes care to explain the close connection between believing and confessing. He says that the former has an inner basis while the latter requires outward expression which highlights the common and corporate character of the statements of faith. The purpose of the "doctrine" in all the creeds and confessions of faith,

according to Pelican, is "to promote, strengthen and regulate, but also and first of all to articulate the orthodoxy of the body of the faithful."

The foundation principles enunciated in the doctrinal decrees of the early councils give priority to the Trinity and the Incarnation. These beliefs are contained in the Nicene Creed, Athanasius' Creed and the Apostles' Creed. Pelican says that creedal development—for example, the Middle Ages' emphasis on Christ's "substitutionary atonement" for sin and the expansion of Mariology—are important but derivative doctrines. Faith statements, he says, define the confessing institution and establish a nexus between faith and order. The numerous Protestant confessions are an obvious indicator as to why organizational structures differ so radically from one another. The reader will find especially interesting Pelican's historical analysis of the theological and related structural differences that separated the Church of the East and West. He gives a succinct analysis of the "filioque" problem in the Creed and connects the Western addition to a theology that recognizes implicit truths present in scripture, tradition and the early creeds. On this issue he quotes extensively from the Church Fathers, Thomas Aquinas and John Cardinal Newman. After reading his citations to this elite company, one wonders if Pelican's next step in his faith journey will be Roman Catholicism.

Often enough the production of creeds, he says, is polemical. Creedal statements may be response to a threat against orthodox teachings and may even anathematize those who contradict the proclaimed truth. For instance, Ulrich Zwingli in his "Sixty-Seven Articles" (1523) to emphasize the primacy of the bible over the teachings of Rome said: "All who say the gospel is nothing without the approbation of the church err and slander God." On the other hand Pelican shows how

statements of faith may act as instruments of concord between denominations as in the case with the “Common Declaration of Pope John Paul II and Armenian Catholicos Karckin I” (1996) which affirmed the Council of Calcedon’s (451) teaching of the two natures of Christ as the one hypostasis of persons.

Politics play an important part, according to Pelican, in the formation of creeds and confessions. He claims this to have been the case from the time of Constantine who used the Council of Nicea to unify the empire. Pelican lists numerous Reformation confessions that served a similar purpose, for example the Augsburg Confession of 1530. Latter statements of faith, he says, have often been specific in naming a geographical area in order to give both indigenous identity and a political voice to the faithful of a region. The Manifest of Korean Christian (1973) is a perfect example. Pelican says that creeds act in many ways like constitutions and therefore establish a rule of law. Indeed he shows how Creeds or Confessions even undergo a ratification process. “The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England” (1571), for example contains a section entitled “The Ratification” which explains the reception of the confession. Pelican raises some serious issues regarding ratification in the East and West split, particularly in regard to the authority of the Roman Pontiff who holds that only his approval legitimizes a council’s efforts. The concepts of “conciliarism” and “collegiality” are prominent quite early in the rift between the old Rome and the new Rome (Constantinople).

In the final chapters of the book Pelican deals with some modern attempts to bypass creeds in favor of action. The motto “creeds divide work unites” became increasingly popular among liberal Protestants in the early part of the 20th Century. Pelican shows how historically this route has led to a

loss of Christian identity since creeds motivate deeds and keep future generations in conformity with Christian truths. He gives an interesting parallel example emphasizing the necessity of creeds by focusing on a secular document, “The Universal Declaration of Human Rights” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. He says the ongoing effectiveness of this document shows the intimate connection between creeds and deeds. The Declaration, he says, aspires to function as a shared rule of belief and of conduct much as the creeds do. He quotes Ps. 116, “I believe and so I spoke,” to support his assertion.

In concluding this tome, Pelican reiterates the importance of creeds. From pastoral experience, it is not enough just to recite the Creed on Sunday but it is vitally important to explain the Creed’s faith statements. Contemporary Catholics, it seems, have lost the significance of what is being proclaimed in the words. The divine truths being enunciated arise from the faith experience of the community and therefore have the power to form the Church’s organization and its direct actions. This book reminds us that pastors need to preach on dogma before they call people to action.

Anglican Difficulties: A New Syllabus of Errors by Edward Norman (London: Morehouse Publishing, A Continuum Imprint, 2004), 152 pages.

Reviewed by Stanley L. Jaki

U ntil the Spring of 2004, Edward Norman was the Chancellor of the Minster of York and one of its Canons. He now presents in this book a new syllabus of errors prevalent today within the Church of England. The errors can be summed up as a chronic indecision, which the Church of England has shown in the face of problems, doctrinal, moral, and disciplinary. The

root of this indecision is as old as the Church of England itself, although this is what Canon Norman would not admit. He does not see that the studied vagueness of the Book of Common Prayer, the intentional ambivalence of the Thirty-Nine Articles and of the Homilies have from the start imposed a systematic evasiveness on those who were supposed to speak in the name of the Church of England from its inception on.

Surely, an ecclesial group that wanted to appear a Church, indeed the sole legitimate part of the Church Catholic in the British Isles, was not supposed to tamper with the episcopal consecration and priestly ordination formulas it had inherited. But it did tamper, so that clarity may not stand in the way of ushering in heresies. The Anglican hierarchy has invariably taken refuge in equivocations in respect to the theological meaning its version of those formulas meant to convey.

That hierarchy chose to lay supine when matters came to the very foundations of anyone’s being a Christian. This happened when in 1850 the Privy Council decided against the bishop of Exeter, who did not want to install the Rev. G. C. Gorham, a dissenter from the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. After putting up the semblance of a fight, the bishop himself submitted to the Crown’s ruling. The two Archbishops and then the entire Anglican hierarchy meekly followed suit by urging caution and patience, a typical case of the failure of nerve and leadership. Their failure prompted such prominent Anglo-Catholics as Manning and Hope to “secede” to Rome, as conversions were referred to until recently in the Crown’s domains. Recently the failure of the Anglican hierarchy to stand firm against the pressure of women’s ordination resulted in the conversion of Dr. Graham Leonard, bishop of London.

Disagree as one may with Dr. Norman’s suggestion that the present failure of leadership is somehow novel,

it cannot be doubted that today the failure is simply astonishing. Evasion is raising its treacherous head in the call, which the present Archbishop of Canterbury issued for a “civilized” approach to the question of the ordination of homosexual clergymen. If the failure is novel it is so only because of the novel depths of moral depravity which a “good” Anglican is supposed to condone within the Church of England. So much about “Failure of Leadership,” or chapter 1 in this *Anglican Difficulties*. Its author strangely does not mention that a century and a half ago John Henry Newman delivered in London a series of twelve lectures which became known as *Anglican Difficulties*. They constitute Newman’s supreme literary achievement and his finest piece of apologetics in ecclesiology. That such is the case is documented in this reviewer’s re-edition of that work (RealView Books [877 247 6886] 1994; reprinted 2004).

In chapter 2 on “Worship,” Dr. Norman begins with the damage which “the practical abandonment” of the Book of Common Prayer has done, not so much “to the guardianship of a great spiritual treasure, but to its teaching office.” This reviewer finds it difficult to agree, and again because of Newman. The book, *The Church of England as Viewed by Newman* (Real View Books, 2004), in which this reviewer collected and analyzed all the pertaining statements of Newman, both Anglican and Catholic, contains Newman’s dictum that the Church of England had from its inception on been an “empty treasure chest.” Newman gave many even more devastating appraisals of what the Church of England really is, appraisals that are hardly ever encountered in the increasingly trendy Newman literature.

Had an “ecumenical” Newman not been a principal contention of Newmanists, who would have us believe that Newman today would walk cheek and jowl with at least Anglo-

Catholics, Dr. Norman would have hardly confined himself to a mere two references to Newman in his book. There is in this book nothing of Newman’s fierce and unrelenting insistence that the Church of England is not a Church. To speak of the Church of England in such a vein makes sense only if one takes a resolutely doctrinal or dogmatic standpoint and sees, as Newman did, the Council of Trent, with all its declarations and anathemas, to be the authentic continuation of the Church of the Fathers. They held the Church to be the One True Fold and the only Ark of Salvation. Conversion to that Church made sense only if one wanted to save one’s soul. In fact Newman many times urged prospective converts not to convert unless they could bring themselves to believe that the Church of Rome spoke in the name of God. Those who find this assertion un-Newmanian should consult this reviewer’s more than five-hundred-page long *Newman to Converts: An Existential Ecclesiology* (Real View Books, 2001).

In this present *Anglican Difficulties* one finds little if any confrontation with dogmatic truths and errors. Dr. Norman rather deplors the abandonment of the traditional texts of the Prayer Book. He fails to see that those texts did not prevent the Church of England from parting with all Christian belief, an outcome he himself admits. Anglo-Catholics do not see that their Church can now glory only in the heresy of aestheticism as its sole remaining treasure. This heresy has been its chief badge ever since Cranmer, whose sole forte was to write good prose. Cranmer’s style was surely an enormous advance over the belabored English of his older contemporary, John Fisher. But whereas Fisher witnessed with his life to Truth, Cranmer chose to save his own hide by promoting equivocations, couched in pleasing turns of phrases, as he composed the Book of Com-

mon Prayer. But if one shuns dogmatic perspective with all its sharpness and clarity, one will find it difficult to present a convincing case against the Church of England.

This problem runs through Dr. Norman’s entire book. It is not with pleasure that I point this out, but certain things must be seen clearly to make a proper appraisal of Dr. Norman’s *Anglican Difficulties*. Its Chapters 3 and 4 portray the present Church of England’s “ambiguous ethical teaching,” first in reference to social and political morality, then in reference to “human sexuality.” Newman, so keen on purity and so outspoken on the little respect given to that virtue by the Anglican clergy of his day, would say: I told you so, or Nothing is new under the sun. Dr. Norman does not notice the inclined plane on which the Church of England has put itself when its Lambeth Conference of 1930 threw the door slightly open to contraception. It is not overly instructive to bemoan the present abyss, unless one sees it as a logical terminus of earlier experimentations with sinister slopes. It was not a day’s work to let such disasters manifest themselves in the Church of England as the endorsement of homosexuality by the present bishop of Oxford, who did this on the ground that the Gospel’s moral teaching is not static but dynamic. About this, Newman would simply say that it represents the onset of the desolation of abomination in once sacred places. Whatever Dr. Norman’s displeasure over the sad welcome given in the Church of England to gay manners, he does not burst into outrage, although Newman certainly would.

Chapter 5 deals with the established character of the Church of England. Newman is again conspicuously missing when Dr. Norman traces the present misgivings of Anglicans about their Church’s established status to the rise of the High Church

Movement in the 1830s. The movement was the Tractarian Movement, which, under Newman's spirited and most spiritual leadership, fulminated at every opportunity against Erastianism, the doctrine of the State's supremacy over the Church. As to the present, Dr. Norman registers the fact that "the Church of England cannot even be a *symbol* of the nation's higher aspirations, for symbols are only effective if there is clarity and agreement about the ideas being symbolized." This would have been better said with a reference to two facts. One is that England has become perhaps the most dechristianized nation in the West. The other is that without a retraining in some form of the Penny Catechism, even Catholics will fail to help raise the low levels of social mores in England.

In chapter 6, on "Indifferentism," we encounter a reference to the Syllabus of Errors of Pius IX, who threw down the gauntlet to his day's liberalism with that all too often denigrated document. Missing here is a reference to Newman's *biglietto* speech, the summary of his life's work as a battle against the indifferentism of liberalism. It fell on deaf ears among Anglicans, and today many Catholic theologians are unsure about what to do with it, let alone with the pope's Syllabus. Newman, let it be noted, devoted a special chapter to Pio Nono's Syllabus in his famous reply to Gladstone's charge that on account of papal infallibility Catholics can no longer be loyal subjects of the State. The reply, which entered theological and literary history as *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*, made clear a point which, as will be seen, Dr. Norman does not entirely perceive, as he bemoans the loyalty of the Church of England to the State as being a chief source of its troubles. Incidentally, that *Letter* of Newman was edited by this reviewer only two years ago, again with a long Introduction and many notes, though with a

new title: *Conscience and Papacy* (Real View Books, 2002). Familiarity with it would serve well American Catholics, clergy and laity, who gladly grant the right to communion to politicians supportive of abortion.

Chapters 7 and 8 of the book deal with the crisis of authority in the Church (of England, that is). First comes a discussion of the causes of that crisis, and here Newman turns up briefly, though hardly in a convincing way. Dr. Norman sees one of the causes of that crisis in the inevitable recognition in Newman's time of the need for doctrinal development in the Church. Here, as one who re-edited the first edition of Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (Real View Books, 2003), I may be allowed to deplore Dr. Norman's rather anemic presentation of what Newman said. There Newman also praised Saint Augustine for never calling the Donatists a Church. Sapienti sat. Newman would repeat that there can be no crisis of authority in a Church which never had authority, precisely because it would never, unless the State pushed it, enforce whatever teaching its majority held normative. To recall a much ignored but most prophetic phrase in the very first chapter of Newman's *Anglican Difficulties*, an authority which does not enforce its norms is no authority at all. This dictum of Newman, addressed to Anglo-Catholics, may cast in a fearsome light some present-day pastoral indecision in the Catholic Church.

In chapter 8, Dr. Norman surveys the effects of the crisis of authority again, of course, in reference to the Church of England, although here, too, he cannot help bringing in the Catholic Church. He seems to derive some comfort from the Roman Church's undeniable difficulties as if these would diminish those of the Church of England. It is very difficult for an Anglo-Catholic to understand that there are no Branch Churches,

and not even, to use the modern cliché, partially realized Churches and sacraments. Once more, *serious* attention to Newman, so different from repeating clichés about him, would have greatly helped to make matters clear.

As he comes to the final chapter, "Does the Church of England Have a Future?" Dr. Norman takes the view that there will always be a Church of England and an Archbishop of Canterbury, though not more than hollow labels: "Something like the Church of England is likely to continue. Anglicanism is so ideologically insubstantial that it is capable of incorporating seemingly any set of ideas. . . . The infrastructure of the Church will surely collapse; the surviving marginalized clergy, wrapped, still, in ceremonial attire once hallowed by historical resonance, will be there in small numbers mostly unnoticed. At the edge of society they will seek a function or a purpose with the same admirable tenacity that they have always shown."

This passage by Dr. Norman has a Newmanian pathos and one cannot read it without emotion. But a Newmanian logic is missing here, as well as throughout the book. There is no point in singing the praises of a once proud ship, which had built-in holes from its construction on and is therefore destined to go down. It has been kept afloat not by the "admirable tenacity" of Anglicans, as Dr. Norman would have it, but by their obsequious devotion to their Sovereign as the Head of the Church, as if the English Nation had a right to a Church of its own. This illusion can only be dissipated if one exposes it to the beam of dogmatic truth.

Insofar as they refuse to face the searing light of that beam, serious Anglicans create ever further difficulties for themselves, so many reasons for their going on with agonizing lamentations over an irretrievably lost cause. One cannot help being sad over the

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tragic predicament of Anglo-Catholics (the only breed of Anglicans worth considering according to Newman), but one would not serve their best spiritual interest were one to go soft on hard truths. Such a policy would only add to their painful agonies and further encourage their disconsolate but useless lamentations.

The Rev. Stanley L. Jaki is Distinguished Professor at Seton Hall University (South Orange, New Jersey) and winner of the Templeton Prize for 1987. For his almost fifty books, see his website: www.sljaki.com. Concerning Real View Books, consult www.realviewbooks.com

If you would like to receive a complimentary copy of one of the books below in order to review it for a future issue, please email your request to Alice Osberger at osberger.1@nd.edu.

Christian Humanism: Creation, Redemption, and Reintegration by John P. Bequette, University Press of America, Lanham, MD, (2004), 160pp. Paper.

A Mother's Rule of Life: How to Bring Order to Your Home and Peace to Your Soul, by Holly Pierlot, Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, NH (2004), 203 pp. Paper.

Death and Dying, A Reader: Readings in Bioethics, ed. Thomas A. Shannon, Rowman and Littlefield Publishing Group, Lanham, MD, (2004), 140pp. Paper.

Catholic for a Reason III: Scripture and the Mystery of the Mass, ed. Scott Hahn & Regis J. Flaherty, Emmaus Road Publishing, Steubenville, OH, (2004), 203 pp. Paper.

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Prophets and Apostles: Come and See, Catholic Bible Study, by Fr. Joseph Ponessa, S.S.D. and Laurie Watson Manhardt, Ph.D., Emmaus Road Publishing, Steubenville, OH, (2004), 205 pp. Paper.

The Heretic, a novel by William Baer, PublishAmerica, Baltimore, (2004) 211 pp. Paper.

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A Flock of Shepherds

Should members of the bishops conference be allowed to receive communion? Giving aid and comfort to their fellow Democrats is so ingrained a habit that it has fuzzed episcopal minds as to whether a soi-disant Catholic politician who champions abortion is rejecting Church doctrine and thereby qualifies as a public sinner who should be denied the Eucharist. Of course it could be argued that being a politician is already to be a public sinner, but that would be as facetious as my opening sentence, even if one can invoke the authority of Mark Twain for the identification.

Thomas Aquinas, in a quodlibetal question, asked if being a bishop outranks being a theologian. The question may seem quaint in a time when bishops have established a long track record of silence on dissenting theologians. It has become hard to tell the one from the other. Perhaps the episcopal conference fears being charged with inconsistency. After all, to act manfully in the case of dissenting politicians would be in stark contrast to their hands-off policy on theologians who deny the creed.

Father McBrien has advised Catholics to attend to the silence of the bishops on the matter of giving communion to Catholic politicians who are in the vanguard of the Culture of Death. But we have been hearing the silence of the bishops on important matters for decades now, so much so that when a few of them actually act like successors of the Apostles they cause one to check his hearing aid. One had come to think that they were all Trappists of the old observance.

The shambles of the post-conciliar Church is all around us. Most Catholics are unaware of what the Church—by which I mean the Holy Father, Vatican II, the Catholic Catechism—teaches or, if aware, have been led to think that their acceptance of it is optional. Now they have episcopal sanction for this heterodoxy. Who was the saint who wondered if bishops can go to heaven? Another quaint question when the fearful either/or of heaven or hell is also enveloped in episcopal silence. ✕

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