Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly

29

Number 3
Fall 2006

ISSN 1084-3035

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars
P.O. Box 495
Notre Dame, IN 46556
(574) 631-5825
www.catholicscholars.org
Ralph McInerny, Editor
mcinerny.1@nd.edu

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

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

Contents

Reminder: Membership dues will be mailed out the first of the year and are based on a calendar (not academic) year.

President's Letter

by Dr. Bernard Dobranski, Ave Maria School of Law

The title of this year's convention "Sacrosanctum Concilium and the Reform of the Liturgy" is particularly appropriate as we enter the second year of Pope Benedict XVI's papacy. The Pope's much heralded efforts to reconcile the Society of St. Pius X, founded by the late Archbishop Marcel Lefebre, is one example of his strong interest in the liturgy and is a welcome sign of his concern for our alienated co-believers. Reports also indicate the possibility of a general indult being granted for all priests to celebrate the traditional Mass, known as the Tridentine Mass, as part of the reconciliation. Although for many—including this writer—this permission would be welcome news, it would be naïve to think that the celebration of the liturgy as we knew it before 1968 would replace the *Novus Ordo* (New Rite) or even become common. I believe that a more realistic and perhaps palpable approach to correcting the perceived flaws in our contemporary worship lie with a reform of the reform, and that is why this year's theme is so timely and important.

Seeing truth is the great quest of mankind. Traditional philosophy tells us that truth is reached through contemplation which is man's highest activity. Jesus calls Himself the Truth and the Mass is that act which makes Him present in word and sacrament. Over the years I believe that we have lost the sense that the Mass is first of all a contemplative action, or, as some would have it, an experience of transcendence. It is vitally important that we recapture this divine aspect for several reasons. First of all, because the Liturgy should draw us out of ourselves (singularly and collectively) and move our minds and hearts to worship and praise of God. Secondly, by this experience we come to a realization of the way

we must live through, with, and in Christ. And finally, through the Mass we receive the graces we need to live out our high calling to be sons and daughters of God. This in no way suggests a passive participation in the sacred rites but rather the full, conscious, and active participation that the Fathers of Vatican II called for in Sacrosanctum Concilium n.4. Although physicality and movement are involved in worship, this active participation does not connote the frenetic activity of the group or community building exercise model of worship now wrongly associated with the *Novus Ordo,* but rather the intellectual, emotional, and spiritual satisfaction that should come to the worshipper through seeing, knowing and experiencing the divine beatitude (happiness) that the Sacred Mysteries contain.

How can this latter and more Catholic understanding of the Mass be recaptured?

It is vitally important that the sacrificial aspect of the Mass be foremost in each celebration. Too often, this central aspect of the Mass is obscured by a political statement or a specific agenda. This, in effect, reduces the Mass to a sociological tool which is man-centered and not God-oriented. Therefore, as a *sine qua non* to protect against such abuses, a crucifix should be prominently displayed near the Altar. This serves as a potent reminder that the essence of the Mass is the re-enactment of Christ's redemptive act on our behalf to the Father.

Psychologists inform us of the value of word and symbol in any formal setting. This is especially true for the worship of the Church. It is therefore imperative that the prayer translations from the original approved Latin text of The Roman Missal be assiduously adhered to. Clear Catholic theological teaching and religious concepts must be conveyed. To this end, I encourage you to read "Theological Principles that Guided the Redaction of the Roman Missal" (1970) in *The Thomist* 67 (2003):157-95. You will be amazed at how inadequate and misleading the current translation is.

This past June, the U.S. Bishops took a very important step in improving the liturgy by approving the more accurate translation of the text for the Order of the Mass from the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL). The ICEL text captures the nuances and biblical context of the official Latin lost by the pious banalities of the current English translation.

Also, vital to reform is the reorientation of worship away from the ego-centered community to a more traditional God-focused one. This can be easily achieved by celebrating the liturgy of the Eucharist or second part of the Mass with the priest and congregation together "Ad Orientem," facing toward the liturgical East. This will serve a twofold purpose. It will prevent the idiosyncratic priest from confusing the liturgical act of the Church with the promotion of himself and will also clearly focus the community on God where it belongs.

Throughout history, music has made a great contribution to the Mass, though it is not vital. Perhaps some Masses should provide less music or no music at all since reverential silence also allows for contemplative experience. When music is provided, however, there should be a return to Gregorian chant, at the proper parts of the Mass. And, by all means there should be a greater use of Latin prayers during the celebration. Both of these suggestions would be consistent with Vatican II and the recommendations of the recent "Synod on the Eucharist" held in Rome last October.

Certainly, all of us could voice more concerns and suggestions. However, the above mentioned points are vital if we are to recapture the richness of the Catholic Mass. It is my contention that these much needed reforms are vital to provide the impetus for personal sanctification and aid in the true renewal of the Church's Liturgy that was envisioned by the Second Vatican Council. ✠

Christianity and the Poetics of Ordinary Life

by John Paul Wauck
at the Convegno Internazional,
Pontificia Universita della Santa Croce,
28-29 Aprile 2003,
wauck@usc.urbe.it

Introduction

In his fine poem "Days," Philip Larkin begins by posing a simple question, and, tellingly, rather than responding directly to it, he adds another query and concludes the poem not with an answer but with a wry observation.

What are days for?
Days are where we live.
They come, they wake us
Time and time over.
They are to be happy in:
Where can we live but days?

Ah, solving that question
Brings the priest and the doctor
In their long coats
Running over the fields.

No doubt, the comical conclusion is fitting, but, in all fairness, Larkin should have added that the priest and the doctor enter, as Shakespeare might have put it, pursued by a poet. Indeed, Larkin's own poem is a case in point: what to do with life's relentless round of days—and its hypothetical alternatives—is a question that has occupied poets like Larkin no less than doctors and priests. And, in general, their answers have been, despite their occasional force and clarity, no less problematic than Larkin's non-response.

What do poets and, more generally, literature itself—by its mimetic representations, its direct discursive reflections, and its very existence—tell us about ordinary life? Without a doubt, literature does speak to us, both directly and indirectly, about daily life, those realms of existence that could be summed up by the words "home" and "work." Indeed, not only does literature speak to us about ordinary life, but, not infrequently, it also takes a step back and speaks reflexively about itself in relation to it.

Which is, in part, what I intend to do in this paper: to look at how literature and ordinary life stand in relation to one another. But I also, and more particularly, want to look at how Christian faith might affect that relationship. Ultimately, the question I hope to raise is whether a change in how Christians see ordinary life could change the way we see, read and write literature.

I mean to examine these issues in the light of Christian faith, and especially in the light of some words of the recently-canonized Saint Josemaría Escrivá. "The Christian vocation," he wrote, "consists in making heroic verse out of the prose of each day."[1] In terms of ascetical theology, as a description of the Christian vocation, these words represent a genuine revolution and, in fact, led the current pope to pronounce Josemaría Escrivá "the saint of the ordinary."[2] Evidently, when he wrote them, St. Josemaría was speaking on an ascetical level; he was offering literature as a metaphor for life itself. Without intending any disrespect, I plan, in this paper, to misread him; I intend to take his words in a more literal, and thus more literary, sense, as referring not to how the Christian's ordinary daily life can be heroically holy, but rather to how it might stand in relation to great literature.

Literature and the Recovery of the Ordinary

Evidently, before it becomes a problem in literature, the dilemma posed by ordinary life—its simultaneous ineluctability ("Where can we live but days?") and apparent lack of special purpose or obvious value ("What are days for?")—is a "moral" problem, a problem in practice. Yet, while the question "What kind of life is worth living?" is clearly prior to the

question "What kind of life is worth writing or singing about?", the two are very closely related.

To the best of my knowledge, the modern writer most explicitly concerned with the problem of living an ordinary life is the American novelist Walker Percy, and I plan to rely on him rather heavily in this paper, in part because, as a convert to Roman Catholicism, he was deeply concerned with the same triad that concerns me here: Christian faith, literature, and ordinary life.

His biographer, Jay Tolson, tells us that, "The horror of 'dailiness' is in fact the starting point for many of Walker Percy's novels, and if it is not the central problem for many of Walker Percy's works it is always at least one of the problems."[3] Tolson uses the word "horror" advisedly, for Percy does not mince words:

> [A]s Einstein once said, ordinary life in an ordinary place on an ordinary day in the modern world is a dreary business. I mean dreary. People will do anything to escape this dreariness: booze up, hit the road, gaze at fatal car wrecks, shoot up heroin, spend money on gurus, watch pornographic movies, kill themselves, even watch TV. Einstein said that was the reason he went into mathematical physics.[4]

In a fictional setting, in the novel Lancelot, he describes one character, a scientist, as being able to "escape into the simple complexities of science," while his poor hero has a much taller task: "All he [the scientist] had to do was to solve the mystery of the universe, which may be difficult but is not as difficult as living an ordinary life."

The apparent emptiness of ordinary life is only intensified by our occasional tastes of the extraordinary, dramatic and heroic—nowhere more typically experienced, as Percy was keenly aware, than in that timeless feature of heroic literature, warfare. In Percy's case, this awareness of the tension between the epic heroism associated with war and the banality of ordinary bourgeois life was something he had picked up from his adoptive father, a poet and apostate Catholic, who was awarded the Croix de Guerre for extraordinary courage in the Battle of the Argonne and other battles in Belgium during WWI. Commenting on his time in battle, he once wrote: "That short period of my life spent in the line is the only one I remember step by step—as if it moved sub specie aeternitatis. Not that I enjoyed it; I hated it.... But it, somehow, had meaning, and daily life hasn't: it was part of a common endeavor, and daily life is isolated and lonely."[5] According to Percy, this tension and the challenge it presents, that of accepting the ordinary status quo and avoiding the horror of dailiness, is not merely a central issue in his own novels. He calls it "one of the six great themes in literature,... figuring out how you can live in the same place without being miserable."[6] Back home, after the war is over, one still must go to the office, day in and day out. After the wedding, one must face the same spouse every morning and every evening, for a lifetime.

Looking at the vast sweep of Western literature, we usually see this theme addressed in one of two ways—the first negative, the second positive. The first is in the form of a critique of romantic, heroic striving. The second is in the form of what I would call "epiphanies" of beauty.

The posthumous literary career of Homer's Ulysses, the subsequent literary responses, that is, to the Homeric hero, offer the classic example of the first form, the critique, implicit or explicit, of romantic escapes from the ordinary. Consider, for instance, the famous "Tale of Er," with which Plato concludes *The Republic* (Book X, 614b-621d). It is the tale of a soldier who, while presumed dead and lying on the funeral pyre, visits the afterlife and then, just before the pyre is lit, recovers consciousness and tells what he saw: the process by which souls choose how they will be reincarnated. From the lap of one of the Fates (Lachesis), they are given random lots, and then they must choose from various life patterns, which are scattered like playing cards on the ground.
After watching Orpheus, Agamemnon, Ajax and others pick their next lives, we read,

> It fell out that the soul of Odysseus drew the last lot of all and came to make its choice, and, from memory of its former toils having flung away ambition, went about for a long time in quest of the life of an ordinary citizen who minded his own business, and with difficulty found it lying in some corner disregarded by the others, and, upon seeing it, said that it would have done the same had it drawn the first lot, and chose it gladly.

An important lesson, then, that Plato draws from the Odyssey is the undesirability of living—or, at

least, re-living—the kind of life that makes for great epic literature.

In the *Inferno*, Dante's response to the Homeric hero is, at first glance, strikingly different, but ultimately quite similar to Plato's. Unlike Plato, Dante does not believe that Ulysses ever threw away ambition or romantic striving. That is why his Ulysses is in hell. Dante thinks that Ulysses couldn't "hack it" as a house husband; according to Dante, instead of returning home to Ithaca, he kept on sailing in a quest for more experience and knowledge. In Canto XXVI, the shade of Ulysses, wrapped in flame, tells Dante:

> When I/ took leave of Circe, who for a year and more/ beguiled me there, not far from Gaëta,/ before Aeneas gave that name to it,/ not tenderness for a son, nor filial duty/ toward my agèd father, nor the love I owed/ Penelope that would have made her glad,/ could overcome the fervor that was mine/ to gain experience of the world/ and learn about man's vices, and his worth./ And so I set forth on the open deep/ with but a single ship, with that handful/ of shipmates who had not deserted me.[7]

Despite their radically different analyses of Ulysses's character, Plato and Dante are in fundamental agreement about the lesson that should be taken from Homer's Odyssey: a renunciation of the romantic striving and over-achieving hubris which would defy the limits placed on man by God or the gods. The alternative, chosen gladly by Plato's Ulysses and rejected by Dante's, is the ordinary life: the duties of family and polis.

As a matter of fact, the critique of this romantic desire for the extraordinary could be said to constitute a genre unto itself. After Ulysses, the dominant figures would surely be Cervantes's Don Quijote and Goethe's Faust. In their dying moments, after remarkable adventures, they too renounce their striving and deliberately embrace the limits of mundane, ordinary existence. Don Quijote declares himself no longer "Don Quijote" but simply the good Christian gentleman Alonso Quijano. And Faust, after he recognizes his fault in the killing of old Baucis and Philemon (living symbols of the hum-drum and non-romantic), ends up dreaming about working with others to reclaim costal lands from the sea. A separate but important place within this genre would belong to the mock-epic tradition, running from the *Margites*, once attributed to Homer himself, through the *Batrachomyomachia* (The Battle of Frogs and Mice), all the way to La Secchia Rapita in the seventeeth century and *The Rape of the Lock* in the eighteenth—a tradition which is almost as venerable as the epic tradition itself. The mock-epic not only pokes fun at the notion of heroism but also exploits what seems to be an inherent incompatibility between the heroic verse form and ordinary life.

A somewhat subtler and perhaps more devastating commentary on the heroic tradition can be seen in W.H. Auden's poem, Musée des Beaux Arts:

> About suffering they were never wrong,
> The Old Masters; how well they understood
> Its human position; …
> In Breughel's Icarus, for instance:
> how everything turns away
> Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
> Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
> But for him it was not an important failure;
> the sun shone
> As it had to on the white legs disappearing
> into the green
> Water; and the expensive delicate ship
> that must have seen
> Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
> Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

In such examples, we can see that the importance of the ordinary is affirmed, by example or in direct statements, negatively, not by demonstrating the special value of the ordinary, but rather by means of rejecting, deflating or calling into question the heroic.

★ ★ ★

The second and more positive mode of addressing the theme of ordinary life is through what I would call "epiphanies" of beauty—renewed visions of ordinary, familiar things, usually brought about by some traumatic experience (especially in novels) or captured in unusual language (typically in poetry). These are, as it were, moments of exceptional vision within everyday life: memorable encounters with romance in relatively ordinary settings. Aside from the eye-opening raptures of human love which provide the material for most novels, one of the most com-

mon forms is a new recognition of one's own home, where the experience of "homecoming" becomes a kind of litmus test for attitudes toward ordinary life. It is natural that this should be so, since home and work are, as it were, the hallmarks of the quotidian. As Walker Percy once put it, "The true smell of everydayness is the smell of Sunday dinner in the living room."[8] We tend to take for granted that so many stories end with someone returning home, but it does not cease to be a striking fact. Moreover, the return to ordinary existence can be said to represent the "end" of the story in more than one way. It is, first, the end of what is worth narrating; it is, in crude terms, time to stop the story. The ordinary is what goes without saying—the part, precisely, that can be left out. But there is also the possibility of seeing it as the end in a richer sense: as the goal, destination, and purpose of the narrative.

Writing about Defoe's Robinson Crusoe, G.K. Chesterton admirably describes the sort of epiphany wrought by catastrophe and trauma:

> I have said that stories of magic alone can express my sense that life is not only a pleasure but a kind of eccentric privilege. I may express this other feeling of cosmic cosiness by allusion to another book always read in boyhood, 'Robinson Crusoe,' which I read about this time, and which owes its eternal vivacity to the fact that it celebrates the poetry of limits, nay, even the wild romance of prudence. Crusoe is a man on a small rock with a few comforts just snatched from the sea: the best thing in the book is simply the list of things saved from the wreck. The greatest of poems is an inventory. Every kitchen tool becomes ideal because Crusoe might have dropped it in the sea.

In his best *a fortiori* manner, Chesterton then proceeds to take Defoe one step further and show how what seems to be an exceptional situation is, in fact, universally the case:

> It is a good exercise, in empty or ugly hours of the day, to look at anything, the coal-scuttle or the bookcase, and think how happy one could be to have brought it out of the sinking ship on to the solitary island. But it is a better exercise still to remember how all things have had this hair-breadth escape: everything has been saved from a wreck. Every man has had one horrible adventure: as a hidden untimely birth he had not been, as infants that never see the light. Men spoke much in my boyhood of restricted or ruined men of genius: and it was common to say that many a man was a Great Might-Have-Been. To me it is a more solid and startling fact that any man in the street is a Great Might-Not-Have-Been."[9]

For many Americans, this experience, the rediscovery of the ordinary, has been hard-wired into our psyche by countless viewings of the final scene of *The Wizard of Oz:* Dorothy's awakening from her dream and her ecstatic exclamation, "And… oh, Auntie Em. There's no place like home!" Of course, it's not just that Dorothy is happy to be back home. What she sees around her when she awakens are the same old things, the familiar things and faces of home, but they have been renewed, because they had been lost. Recall again the last lines of the movie: "But anyway, Toto, we're home. Home. And this is my room. And you're all here. And I'm not going to leave here ever ever again. Because I love you all. And… oh, Auntie Em. There's no place like home."

She seems to rejoice in naming the familiar things, as if savoring their being and finding it very good indeed: my home; my room; all of you. As Chesterton put it, "The greatest of poems is an inventory." (The same experience—the transformation of the banal into something charged with sublime intensity—can be seen in those brilliant scenes in Frank Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life* when George Bailey discovers Zuzu's petals in his pocket and when he kisses the broken knob of the banister.)

While far less supernatural, Dorothy's renewed appreciation of ordinary things is strongly reminiscent of a scene in *The Brothers Karamazov:* the final declarations of Markel, the Elder Zosimov's brother, in which we observe the same ecstatic recognition of the goodness of familiar things, the same declarations of love, even—and this, we shall see, is not irrelevant—the same bedroom setting. Speaking of his brother's last days, the Elder Zozima tells Alyosha:

> The windows of his room overlooked the garden, and our garden was a shady one, with old trees on which the springtime buds were forming, and where the early birds came to rest, twittering and singing through his windows. And suddenly, as he looked at them, lost in wonder at them, he began to ask them for forgiveness:

> 'Birds of God, birds of joy, you must forgive me too, for against you too I have sinned.' No one was able to understand this at the time, but he wept with joy: 'Yes,' he said, 'all around me there has been such divine glory: birds, trees, meadows, sky, and I alone have lived in disgrace. I alone have dishonoured it all, completely ignoring its beauty and glory.'… 'Let me be culpable before all, and then all will forgive me, and that will be paradise. Am I not in paradise now?'

Of course, the "sin" here is precisely Markel's obliviousness to the beauty and glory that is always at hand everywhere—the ordinary beauty and glory of all created things.

As noted, the fact that Markel and Dorothy speak from beds is not irrelevant. One has narrowly escaped death; the other is about to die. (The same, it may be noted, is true of Robinson Crusoe and George Bailey.) This is the price of the epiphany. The fact that these epiphanies tend to come "in extremis"—either at the end of a life or the end of a book—has a tremendous consequence: we rarely see their practical consequences spelled out. (In *The Brothers Karamazov*, for instance, we are mercifully spared the sight of Dostoyevsky's characters dancing around and kissing all day long in the garden, which is what poor Markel declared to be the proper response to his epiphany.)

Besides the problem posed by the ephemeral, in-extremis nature of these epiphanies, there is a practical challenge: simply put, it is far easier to write a good novel criticizing the romantic escape than to write a good novel that reveals, in a convincing fashion, the grandeur of the ordinary. It is one thing to laugh at Alphonse Daudet's Tartarin of Tarascon hunting lions in the hallways of his home; it is quite another to capture the reader's imagination with the ordinary life that Tartarin should have been living. And, after all, who really wants to hear about the daily life of Alonso Quijano, the sane and sensible hidalgo from a town in La Mancha whose name no one cares to recall, who never went out in search of adventures? Clearly not Miguel de Cervantes or his readers. The *Odyssey* ends with the return of Ulysses to Ithaca; there is nothing more to say. Dorothy returns to Kansas… but no one wants to know about her life there.

So, as a general rule, we do not see the ordinary life of those literary characters who have learned to value it, and—the truth to tell—more often than not, we don't particularly care to. To put it somewhat brutally: madness is a better "read" than sanity; sickness is more fascinating than health. How does Tolstoy begin *Anna Karenina*? "All happy families resemble one another; each unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." Needless to say, this is not the tantalizing introduction to a story about a happy family.

Many writers try not only to record such epiphanies but also, by their language, to provoke the same epiphany in the reader. Their aim is to make us see the ordinary and familiar in a strange, new light—as if discovered for the first time. Listen, for example, to Coleridge describing Wordsworth's goal: "Mr. Wordsworth… was to propose to himself as his object to give the charm of novelty to things of everyday, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and by directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us."[10]

Harold Bloom goes so far as to make this effect the central criterion for literary greatness:

> I have tried to confront greatness directly: to ask what makes the author and the works canonical. The answer, more often than not, has turned out to be strangeness, a mode of originality that either cannot be assimilated, or that so assimilates us that we cease to see it as strange. Walter Pater defined Romanticism as adding strangeness to beauty, but I think he charaterized all canonical writing rather than the Romantics as such. The cycle of achievement goes from *The Divine Comedy* to *Endgame,* from strangeness to strangeness. When you read a canonical work for a first time you encounter a stranger, an uncanny startlement rather than a fulfillment of expectations. Read freshly, all the *The Divine Comedy, Paradise Lost, Faust Part Two, Hadji Murad, Peer Gynt, Ulysses,* and *Canto general* have in common is their uncanniness, their ability to make you feel strange at home."[11]

It would be tedious to belabor this point further. The quality of newness, and more specifically, a restored newness—a "renewedness"— is fundamental to the restoration of the ordinary. Thinking about the

connection between this "renewedness" and artistic creation (creation, that is, with a small "c"), I do not think it out of place to reflect on Creation itself and recall the words from the Book of Revelation, "Behold I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5) or to recall the promise recorded there about a new heaven and a new earth (21:1). Finally, it is perhaps appropriate to close these comments about the renewal of the ordinary with the familiar words of T.S. Eliot[12] from *The Four Quartets:*

> We shall not cease from exploration
> And the end of all our exploring
> Will be to arrive where we started
> And know the place for the first time.

* * *

Literature vs. the Ordinary Life?

Unfortunately, there are significant obstacles to the recovery of the ordinary via literature. For one thing, as noted, the critique of romanticism tends to remain merely negative. For another, the positive epiphanies are notoriously hard to sustain.

The recovery of the ordinary by means of defamiliarization is, by its very nature, limited. It is a stop-gap measure. It is only a matter of time before the striking turn of phrase loses its magic, before the startling metaphor becomes a familiar cliché. Novelty is a treacherous tool, whose eventual obsolescence is no less certain for not being planned. What's more, the ecstasy of the epiphany is, to start with, a second-hand ephiphany. And if something of this ephiphany reaches the reader vicariously through the poem, there is still the problem that such ecstasy is, almost by definition, exceptional, unusual—out of the ordinary. If we want to reaffirm the value of the ordinary in all its usualness, what we really need is not the vision of someone in ecstasy, outside of himself, but rather of one firmly inside himself, inside his ordinary skin, standing in his most familiar shoes. But it is precisely this everyday life that resists our interest.

Moreover, when the ordinary is in fact portrayed, it is often quite explicitly unheroic. In late antiquity, when artists tended to observe the conventional separation of styles, scenes of ordinary life were almost necessarily comic. Describing this period, Eric Auerbach writes, "[W]e are forced to conclude that there could be no serious literary treatment of everyday occupations and social classes—merchants, artisans, peasants, slaves—of everyday scenes and places—home, shop, field, store—of everyday customs and institutions—marriage, children, work, earning a living—in short, of the people and its life."[13]

No doubt, times have changed. In *The Western Canon,* Harold Bloom adopts Giambattista Vico's division of history into Theocratic, Aristocratic, Democratic and claims that we are now living in the afterglow of the Democratic age. Certainly, the great authors of the Democratic Age, the novelists of the nineteenth century, portrayed and explored ordinary life and characters extensively in their fiction. As Auerbach observes, "Old Grandet (*Eugénie Grandet*) or Fedor Pavlovich Karamazov are not mere caricatures, as Trimalchio [in Petronius's Satyricon] is, but terrible realities which must be taken wholly seriously; they are involved in tragic complications, and notwithstanding their grotesqueness, are themselves tragic. In modern literature the technique of imitation can evolve a serious, problematic, and tragic conception of any character regardless of type and social standing, of any occurrence regardless of whether it be legendary, broadly political, or narrowly domestic; and in most cases it actually does so."[n] Having said that, however, there were often significant limits to the nineteenth-century interest in the ordinary. The American novelist Shelby Foote once noted, "It occurred to me the other day how strange it is that almost no one in Dostoyevsky works for a living, has a job or has to face any kind of day-to-day life. That's no concern of his, and he leaves it out. Imagine Mitya with a job. Or even Ivan or Alyosha for that matter—they need all their time to concentrate on being characters in his books."[15]

Moreover, as Charles Taylor points out in his discussion of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* the realism of the nineteenth century was frequently less an affirmation of ordinary life than its deflation. Writing about this brand of realism, he says, "This would seem to be a counter-epiphanic art par excellence, one which was determined to show things in their crude, lowly reality and to dispel any illusion of a

deeper meaning inhabiting them—the very reverse of a transfiguration…. It all ends up as something unspeakably banal and ordinary, however lofty the dream. The goal seems to be to depict quite unremittingly the tawdriness of the mediocre. The power of the work of art lies in its extraordinary ability to capture this banality, where the almost irresistible drift of the inherited modes of representation had been to enhance or idealize."[p]

Interestingly, Walker Percy thinks that this very portrayal of alienation and ennui can have the therapeutic effect of reversing the reader's sense of pointlessness, precisely because it is now shared with others through art. But, even if this misery-loves-company brand of therapy works, it is quite different from affirming the grandeur and beauty of the quotidian.

If, in the "Democratic Age" of the novel, we look again at the ongoing literary responses to Homer, we find that we have entered ambiguous terrain. It is in the work of James Joyce that we see the first serious attempt to wed the ordinary life with the life of the Homeric hero. Joyce's *Ulysses* is an effort to make an epic out of a day in the life of an ordinary man: Leopold Bloom's June 16, 1904, in Dublin. The result is unquestionably comic, and yet it is not a mock epic. Indeed, the same could also be said for the very latest installment in this series of "commentaries" on Homer, the Coen brothers' film "O Brother, Where Art Thou?", set not in Dublin but in the American South during the Depression: it is a comic take on *The Odyssey,* without being, in any sense, a mockery; it does leave room for a certain nobility and transcendence in the life of ordinary folk. It is difficult to say, though, whether these installments in the Homeric tradition truly capture the heroism of ordinary life.

The strains on the relationship between literature and ordinary life, however, do not end with the severe challenge of capturing the grandeur of the quotidian. Literature itself can also constitute a geniune threat to the appreciation of ordinary life, for it offers the occasion not only for insights into daily life, but also for alternatives and escape. "Where else can we live but days?" asks Larkin, and one important answer is, "In books." This should come as no surprise, since it is the theme of the very first novel, *Don Quijote.* This work is, in fact, all about the danger of a certain kind of reading, which provokes a thirst for "romance" that leads to dissatisfaction with dreary, unromantic, ordinary life. Having read too many romances, Don Quijote made them the standard by which he saw and judged reality. Books, writes Cervantes, in a fine turn of phrase, were the "authors of his calamity."

This, the danger of applying aesthetic standards drawn from art to one's own life, is also the point of Walker Percy's first novel, *The Moviegoer.* In an essay written before the novel, Percy describes the effortlessly cool, mesmerizing hero of a Western movie:

> Who is he, this Gary Cooper person…? He is either nothing, that is, the unrisked possibility who walks through the town as a stranger and keeps his counsel—above all he is silent—or he is perfectly realized actuality, the conscious en soi, that is to say, the Godhead, who, when at last he does act, acts with a ritual and gestural perfection. Let it be noted that it is all or nothing. Everything depends on his gestural perfection—an aesthetic standard which is appropriated by the moviegoer at a terrific cost in anxiety. … Destry, when challenged, borrows a gun and shoots all the knobs off the saloon sign. *But what if he did not? What if he missed?* The stranger in the movie walks the tightrope over the abyss of anxiety, and he will not fail. But what of the moviegoer? The stranger removes his hat in the ritual rhythm and wipes his brow with his sleeve, but the moviegoer's brow is dry when he emerges and he has a headache, and if he tried the same gesture he might bump into his nose. Both Gary Cooper and the moviegoer walk the tightrope of anxiety, but Gary Cooper only seems to: his rope is only a foot above the ground. The moviegoer is over the abyss. … his gestures will not come off, and having once committed himself to the ritual criterion of his art and falling short of it, he can only be—nothing.[17]

Of course, the phenomenon Percy describes is not restricted to the cinematic realm. His own novel *The Moviegoer* might just as well have been called the "novel-reader"; in fact, it includes a scene in which the hero, Binx Bolling, spots a young man doing what Binx recognizes as an impersonation of a literary intellectual (he's sloached in a seat on a train, reading *The Charterhouse of Parma*) and comments: "He is a romantic. His posture is the first clue: it is

too good to be true, this distillation of all graceful slumps…. He is a moviegoer, though of course he does not go to movies." One might say that Don Quijote was the original "moviegoer" (a clinical case, to be sure)—and, of course, he did not go to movies either.

Real life, then, the ordinary life of domesticity and production, cannot compete with the life presented on the page, stage or silver screen. And this can easily produce an alienation from ordinary life. Witnesses to this phenomenon are countless; I will offer only the most disparate pair I know. Here is St. Edith Stein describing her childhood:

> I used [my free time] principally for reading, preferably drama: Grillparzer, Hebbel, Ibsen, and, above all, Shakespeare became my daily bread. I was much more at home in this colorful world of the great passions and deeds than in the everyday life around me…. Even more than reading, I enjoyed going to the theater…. It was a great delight just to sit in the theater and wait for the heavy iron curtain to be raised slowly; the call bell finally sounded; and the new unknown world was revealed. Then I became totally immersed in the happenings on the stage, and the humdrum of everyday disappeared.[18]

Closer, perhaps, to home, here is Woody Allen talking about the effect that movies had on him as a young man:

> Movies were a gigantic, gigantic medium. They changed people's lives and ruined the lives of so many people…. I remember those hot summer afternoons when the sun was just crucifying, and I would walk into a movie theater. It was dark and cool and so overwhelming. You always think, my gosh, I want to meet a woman like I've seen in the movies. You know, very beautiful, very charming, very kind, very amusing, very scintillating. You know, it causes real problems in life.[19]

The perversity of the situation is this: it is the perfection, the beauty, the grandeur of the art itself that poses a threat to ordinary life. Here, it is the high standard derived from art itself, from the imaginative, fictional creation, that is undermining the value of the ordinary and the real.

Charles Taylor, in his admirable discussion of ordinary life in Sources of the Self, sums up one dimension of this phenomenon—the real-life despair caused by the futile desire to live up to the fictional "epiphanies" of art—very well: "In contrast to the fulness of epiphany is the sense of the world around us as we ordinarily experience it, as out of joint, dead, or forsaken."[20]

★ ★ ★

Christianity and Ordinary Life

We are left, then with the tension between the thirst for the heroic, grand, ecstatic life and the reality of the life we actually live, with its humbler virtues. Charles Taylor captures it this way:

> We are in conflict, even confusion, about what it means to affirm ordinary life…. We are as ambivalent about heroism as we are about the value of the workaday goals that it sacrifices. We struggle to hold on to a vision of the incomparably higher, while being true to the central modern insights about the value of the ordinary life. We sympathize with both the hero and the anti-hero; and we dream of a world in which one could be in the same act both."[21]

We delight in "idealistic," heroic actions, with their exceptional and inspiring grandeur; we admire as well their rejection in favor of "realistic" common sense and the ordinary life.

Now, in principle, Christianity provides an answer to the practical problem posed by ordinary life. The message of Christianity—that God Himself became a man and spent most of His life working at home in Nazareth as a carpenter—should make it clear that it is possible to live a heroic and glorious life, a "superhuman" life, the life, indeed, of a Son of God, precisely *in and through* the most ordinary circumstances: family, work and friendship.

Christianity puts the goal of a healthy romanticism, the thirst for the infinite, for mystery and adventure, for what is beyond the merely human, within reach of all men and women. Indeed, according to G.K. Chesterton, this is precisely what attracted him to Christianity. In *Orthodoxy,* after offering his tale of the off-course yachtsman who discovers England under the impression that it is an island in the South Pacific, he writes (in terms reminiscent of Harold

Bloom's criteria for canonical literature):

> I wish to set forth my faith as particularly answering this double spiritual need, the need for that mixture of the familiar and the unfamiliar which Christendom has rightly named 'romance.'…The thing I do not propose to prove, the thing I propose to take as common ground between myself and any average reader, is this desirability of an active and imaginative life, picturesque and full of a poetical curiosity, a life such as western man at any rate always seems to have desired…. [N]early all people I have ever met in this western society in which I live would agree to the general proposition that we need this life of practical romance; the combination of something that is strange with something that is secure. We need so to view the world as to combine an idea of wonder and an idea of welcome. [22]

Looking at the same problem, Charles Moeller sees it as the challenge of balancing the infinite aspirations of romanticism with the acceptance of natural limits proper to classicism. He writes, "We would like to be both romantic and classical… To be at the same time Montaigne and Rousseau, Goethe and Nietzsche; that is to say, to live a life in which every instant, every minute, was, simultaneously grand, exalted, and well-balanced…. Our ideal is to live every moment greatly."[23] Translated into theological terms, he means that we need to seek the grace and the union with God that are beyond us, while respecting and embracing the limits of human nature and the earthly existence that has been given to us and shared by God Himself in Christ. While Moeller chooses to speak of combining the sanity of Montaigne and the raptures of Rousseau, we might also borrow figures from literature itself and say that the challenge is to be simultaneously and fully both Sancho Panza and Don Quijote.

It should be clear too that the teachings of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, whom I quoted at the beginning, are a specific Christian response to this need: the marriage of the heroic, mystical spirit of "romanticism" with the feet-on-ground realism and acceptance of limits proper to "classicism." He holds out the possibility of being "a contemplative in the middle of the street," of seeing one's home and office as the realm of struggle for heroic sanctity, and of transforming, in short, the prose of every day into heroic verse.

Charles Moeller also sees Christianity as the answer to this peculiar longing of man. "To be a canonized saint," he writes, "it is necessary to practice the virtues heroically, which shows that there is a profound harmony between the ideal of the hero and that of the saint," and he then goes on to address the specific consequences for ordinary life: "Thanks to Christian sanctity, all the moments of our existence are sanctified, filled to the brim with the Infinite, the Absolute,"[24] adding that "[w]ithout Christianity, it ends up being difficult to reconcile in a stable manner the two poles, the classical and the romantic, in human life…. Only He [Christ] offers every man, in the context of daily life, the possibility of preparing a stable reconciliation for the kingdom at the end of time."[25]

Ultimately, the Christian view of ordinary life offers a way to neutralize the menace of alienation depicted by Walker Percy in *The Moviegoer.* Christianity destroys the tension between the epic and the ordinary, between the heroic and the quotidian, by revealing a legitimate outlet for the heroic-romantic impulse *within* ordinary life and *in* and *through* its circumscribed routines. That outlet is the grace-assisted pursuit of sanctity.

According to Walker Percy, all the other strategies to escape the horror of dailiness are doomed to failure anyway. The ordinary cannot be escaped; it is what we are made for. The solution lies rather in embracing the ordinary. It requires what Nietzsche might have called a transmutation of values: "It takes," Percy says, "a conscious cultivation of the ordinary."[26]

It is somewhat ironic that this insight into Christian sanctity —it is the best means of satisfying the human hunger for romantic heroism nourished by literature—was glimpsed centuries ago, by none other than Sancho Panza in the extraordinary eighth chapter of the second part of the *Quijote,* when he suggests that he and Don Quijote abandon their knight errantry and dedicate themselves to becoming saints, since that way they were more quickly reach the glory and fame that they desire. It may also suggest that the reading of the chivalric romances by such saints as Francis of Assisi, Teresa of Avila and Ignatius of Loyola is something more than a youth-

ful frivolity and temptation, as it is usually presented (both by their biographers and by the saints themselves), and instead perhaps a seedbed for their later aspirations to holiness.

⋆ ⋆ ⋆

Christianity and the Literature of Ordinary Life

An important question remains. If Christianity offers an answer to the dilemma of ordinary life on the existential level, might it not also open up new possibilities for capturing the grandeur of ordinary life in literature?

In theory, this should be so. Walker Percy presents the case in very strong terms:

> [W]hatever else the benefits of the Catholic faith, it is of a particularly felicitous use to the novelist. Indeed, if one had to design a religion for novelists, I can think of no better. What distinguishes Judeo-Christianity in general from other world religions is its emphasis on the value of the individual person, its view of man as a creature in trouble, seeking to get out of it, and accordingly on the move. Add to this anthropology the special marks of the Catholic Church: the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, which, whatever else they do, confer the highest significance upon the ordinary things of this world, bread, wine, water, touch, breath, words, talking, listening—and what do you have? You have a man in a predicament and on the move in a real world of real things, a world which is a sacrament and a mystery; a pilgrim whose life is a searching and a finding….
>
> It is no accident, I think, that the three great religions of the East, especially Hinduism and Buddhism, with their devaluation of the individual and of reality itself, are not notable for the novels of their devotees.[27]

In practice, it must be admitted, things seem somewhat less clear. For starters, many of the greatest novels—in fact, many of Percy's own favorites—were written by non-Catholic Christians and even non-believers.[28] Nevertheless, while the novel has flourished among non-believers and in some Protestant countries (it should be noted that England is, on the whole, not a theologically Protestant country), it is true that there are relatively few great novelists or dramatists who could be called "orthodox" Lutherans or Calvinists, and the three giants of devout English Protestant literature, Spenser, Milton and Bunyan, produced two medieval-style allegories and one "prehistoric" epic; none of them deal with the Christian's ordinary life. (An interesting counter-example would be the domestic poetry of the American Puritan Anne Bradstreet.)

Percy's specific reference to Catholic sacramentalism is a healthy reminder that it is not really proper to speak simply of "Christianity" in relation to literature, because different "Christianities" tend to make for different literatures. A sacramental vision of reality, for example, will obviously affect one's sensibility and one's writing. Similarly, someone who believes in the utter futility of "works" for salvation, the enslavement of the will, or predestination will not write the same novel as an author who believes that God and free will and human actions all work together in the drama of salvation.[29]

In theory, at any rate, the advent of Christianity should have broken down the late-antique distinction between high and low styles. For a Christian, all of life can be seen from a supernatural point of view, and thus, all of it can be written "a lo divino"—in a divine light. Everything is tragic. Everything is comic. Everything is sublime. As Miguel-Angel Garrido has put it, "From a Christian point of view, as a consequence of the Incarnation, everything, even the most trivial of things, is the object of mimesis."[30]

Eric Auerbach has pointed out that, before its astonishing culmination in the Incarnation, this locating of the divine drama in the facticity of ordinary daily life was already a feature of Judaism:

> In the Old Testament stories, the sublime, tragic, and problematic take shape precisely in the domestic and commonplace: scenes such as those between Cain and Abel, between Noah and his sons, between Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, between Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau, and so on, are inconceivable in the Homeric style…. The sublime presence of God reaches so deeply into the everyday that the two realms of the sublime and the everyday are not only actually unseparated but basically inseparable.[31]

Building on this tradition, the Christian Gospels introduced the Roman Empire to a set of characters and actions without precedent in Roman and Greek literature. If Simon Peter were not a real historical figure, notes Auerbach, he would be one of the most revolutionary literary figures of all time:

> From the humdrum existence of his daily life, Peter is called to the most tremendous role. Here, like everything else having to do with Jesus' arrest, his appearance on the stage—viewed in the world-historical continuity of the Roman Empire—is nothing but a provincial incident, an insignificant local occurrence, noted by none but those directly involved.... A tragic figure from such a background, a hero of such weakness, who yet derives the highest force from his very weakness, such a to and fro of the pendulum, is incompatible with the sublime style of classical antique literature. But the nature and the scene of the conflict also fall entirely outside the domain of classical antiquity. Viewed superficially, the thing is a police action and its consequences; it takes place among everyday men and women of the common people; anything of the sort could be thought of in antique terms only as farce or comedy.[32]

One might expect such a figure to have a dramatic impact on literature, but, in fact, Christian writers were not quick to capitalize on the new possibilities. Some writers, like the Spanish priest Juvencus and the Roman matron Proba in the fourth century, seem to have grasped that the story of Christ called for an epic treatment comparable to that given to the heroes of Greece and Rome. The earliest imaginative works of Christian literature, however, are the apocrypha, which demonstrate a marked tendency away from the ordinary and toward the fanciful and extraordinary. Here, there seems to be a continuity with the Jewish literary imagination, which, despite the features noted by Auerbach in the scriptures themselves, often revealed an inclination toward the fanciful and miraculous. (One may recall here St. Paul's remarks about the Greeks looking for wisdom and the Jews looking for signs.) Nor can the Acts of the Martyrs, dating from the first centuries, be said to glorify ordinary day-to-day Christian life either.

It is difficult, then, to pinpoint the difference that Christianity has made in the literary treatment of ordinary life, for even when ordinary life has been treated positively, its grandeur or beauty is often not particularly Christian—at least not openly so. The specifically Christian value of the ordinary is rarely integrated into such positive treatments. In modern times, this may be due in part to the secularization of culture in general. This "secularizing of the ordinary" (one may think of it as a desacralized or anti-sacramental view of life), even when daily life is approached directly and positively (think, for instance, of Dutch genre painting or certain stories by Raymond Carver), is an artistic phenomenon that began long ago. Charles Moeller observes, "Although in the days of Louis XIV, humanism is not anti-Christian, neither is it 'Christian.' Indeed, it tends to fold man in on himself and to silence, in the artwork, Christian values."[33] Speaking very generally, we can say that, at some point after 1600 (the exact moment varies by country), it became customary to handle religion in a subjective way. Consider, for example, the enormous difference between authors like Dante and Calderón de la Barca on one hand, and authors like Sigrid Undset or Dostoyevski on the other. The latter are just as interested in theology as the former, yet what were once objective realities, like the facts of geography, for Dante and Calderón, have come to be treated as if they were subjective realities. I am referring to realities such as grace, the soul, God. In the serious modern novel, God cannot simply be one character among the others, as He is in Dante or in an auto sacramental y Calderón. In a marvelous letter to Walker Percy, the non-believing novelist Shelby Foote puts his finger on the problem and challenges Percy: show me a Catholic writer who doesn't write about doubt, putting God in scare-quotes, but instead handles religion with the matter-of-factness of Maupassant writing about sex.[34]

There have been instances of Christian writers who have explicitly set out to affirm ordinary life. Perhaps the most notable case is Alessandro Manzoni, who, in *I Promessi Sposi,* makes the first conscious attempt to write a novel that truly celebrates the common man. Whether he succeeded, however, is a more complicated question.[35] In truth, it is far from clear what a Christian literature of the ordinary should look like. We have seen some epiphanic representations of the grandeur of ordinary life in literature and movies (George Bailey kissing the banister knob;

Dorothy gushing about her home in Kansas; Markel in *The Brothers Karamazov* wanting to dance in the garden). I hope it is not taken to be churlish, however, to point out that Jesus Christ, who surely had the perfect Christian appreciation of ordinary life, has not been represented to us in the Gospels as behaving in this way. The people among whom he spent 30 years in Nazareth recalled him not as an ecstatic mystic but rather as the carpenter's son and the member of a family they all knew. Indeed, it was precisely his to-all-external-appearances ordinary manner of life that would, despite their recognition of his wisdom and miracles, become a stumbling block for his townsmen: how can this fellow, whom we all know, be the Messiah?

How might one, then, in practice, convey the heroism of ordinary Christian life? To appreciate the difficulty, consider, for example, the following point from *The Way* by Saint Josemaría Escrivá, the champion of sanctity in ordinary life:

> We were reading—you and I—the heroically ordinary life of that man of God. And we saw him struggle whole months and years (what an "accounting" he kept in his particular examination of conscience!) one day at breakfast he would win, the next day he'd lose.... "I didn't take butter... I did take butter!" he would jot down.
>
> May we too—you and I—live our.... "drama" of the butter.[36]

Now, as an inspiring point for reflection, this is fine and good, but try to imagine writing a novel or a play, or even a short story, capturing the heroic glory, the "drama," of months and years of such small mortifications.

Even Alessandro Manzoni, striving to celebrate the lives of two ordinary peasants, Renzo and Lucia, has to conclude *I Promessi Sposi* on the following note: "Besides, [our anonymous author] continues, for these good souls, there were no more sufferings and problems of the kind and intensity of those which we have recounted. From that point on, theirs was a most tranquil, happy and enviable life; so much so that, if I were to tell it to you, it would bore you to death."

It is surely telling that two of the more successful cinematic efforts to grapple with the value of the quotidian do so by using an indirect approach. They do not show one ordinary day after another. In fact, both involve radical dislocations from the ordinary. I am thinking of the movies *It's a Wonderful Life* and *Groundhog Day*. It's a Wonderful Life shows a town from which one seemingly ordinary life was missing—and what a difference it makes. At first glance, perhaps, *Groundhog Day,* in which a weatherman is forced to relive the same day over and over again, does not seem to be about ordinary existence at all. This is, after all, not something that normally occurs, not even on Groundhog Day in small Pennsylvania towns like Punxatawny. And yet, we are meant to understand that the weatherman's extraordinary problem is really, at bottom, what we all face in our own lives. A key scene in the movie occurs in a bowling-alley bar, when the weatherman explains his plight to two local factory workers and asks in desperation, "What would you do if you were stuck in one place, and every day was exactly the same, and nothing that you did mattered?" In response, one of the workers nods knowingly and says, "That about sums it up for me." The point is clear: for most people, most of the time, life is pretty much the same from one day to the next.

So perhaps it is not possible to directly portray the grandeur of an ordinary Christian life. Perhaps the ordinary is not meant to be the subject of great Christian literature. I can think of no *a priori* reason why it has to be.

And yet, might it not be that, by and large, Christians simply haven't tried to capture the drama of ordinary life? Are there really no heroes and villains, sorrows and joys, dangers and dramas to describe in day-to-day Christian existence, or are we simply refusing or failing to see them? We do, after all, in principle, believe that each Christian, every day, at home, in the office, on the street, is walking on a battlefield—a battlefield where the stakes are very high, higher even than mere life and death. That same Christian is also, at the same time, caught up in an extraordinary love story—a love affair with a God who is willing to die for him, Who gives Himself to him as food to eat every day. That same Christian is on a journey that will take him farther than Dante's Ulysses ever dreamed of traveling.

I for one resist the idea that we are still living

under the sign of Boileau, who said that the mysteries of the faith are "too majestic to be represented in a work of art."[37]

Where, then, might a Christian writer, eager to render justice to ordinary Christian life, look for inspiration? No doubt we all have our favorite authors and works that might be offered as models for a literature that captures the Christian grandeur of ordinary life, but I want to mention a few possiblities, without hoping that they will be much more than provocative.[38]

One possibility is to look for inspiration in other art forms. I am thinking particularly of a painter who was a convert to Catholicism and who, in his paintings, seems, with absolute fidelity to the look and feel of the ordinary things and people he portrays, to bath them in a light of sublime contemplation. In his paintings, we seem to see ordinary life, as Walker Percy's adoptive father put it when describing his intense experience of life in the trenches in Belgium, *sub specie aeternitatis*. Is there, I wonder, a Christian literary counterpart to Joannes Vermeer?

The second person who comes to mind may seem both obvious and implausible: Dante Alighieri—obvious because of his stature, implausible because his fantastic journey through Heaven, Hell and Purgatory is so far removed from ordinary life. I mention this extremely hard act to follow, though, for a number of reasons. Above all, he works on a very large "canvas"; nothing is beyond, above, or below his range, neither on the natural level, nor on the supernatural level. And it seems to me that such a broad focus is necessary to provide the context and perspective in which the ordinary things—the little, nameless, unremembered actions of daily life—might take on their *full,* and specifically Christian, meaning and significance. Second, Dante was a layman, writing at a time when the author of such a poem might well not have been, and he definitely brings an unclerical eye to the things of God (there is nothing shallowly "ecclesiastical" about Dante); he is open to the world of ordinary things and ordinary affairs, and for Dante there is no disjunction between that world and the world of divine things. Third, he is extraordinarily democratic. There are, of course, many famous people in the *Commedia,* but it is also full of countless ordinary figures who stand out in extraordinary relief (starting with two contemporary Florentines from good but not especially illustrious families, Beatrice and Dante himself). Then there is his realism, as seen in the homely images he constantly calls upon to explain the most unusual situations and sublime truths. These metaphors seem to suggest that, for Dante, the whole of reality is of an analogous piece; absolutely everything, God included, can be brought into comparison with everything else. Finally, there is his attention to the craft of poetry—the sheer effort, thought, planning and craftsmanship that he put into the *Commedia.* Dante knew how to work, and perhaps it is the sheer magnitude of his achievement that has discouraged others from following in his footsteps. That would be understandable, but the capturing of the grandeur of ordinary life in literature will, I suspect, require a Dantesque level of craftsmanship and effort.

The project that lies ahead of us seems to have been glimpsed already by Wallace Stevens (1879-1955), who wrote that "the great poems of heaven and hell have been written, and the great poem of earth remains to be written."[39] To put it another way: where, we might ask, is the Dante of *this* world? Surely, it would be an odd thing for a Christian to maintain that Homer and Virgil have exhausted what there is to say about the earth.

Stevens himself, a lawyer who spent his whole life working, at an executive level, for the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company, knew something about ordinary life. It is a pity that his conversion to Catholicism coincided with his death (a case, perhaps, of life imitating the *in-extremis* epiphanies of art?), for in his poem, "The Man with a Blue Guitar," he had expressed well the prerequisite mentality of the Christian poet of ordinary life, declaring, "I am a native of this world/And I think in it as a native thinks." He also seems, in a later poem, to have fully appreciated the challenge that such a poet would inevitably face:

> The way through the world
> Is more difficult to find than the way beyond it.
> —"Reply to Papini"

★ ★ ★

Conclusion

In this paper, I have tried to offer a suggestion for a new kind of reading and, more provisionally, to hold out hope for a new kind of writing.

I mentioned earlier that, in his book, The Western Canon, Harold Bloom divides literary history into Theocratic, Aristocratic, and Democratic ages. What I didn't mention is that Bloom thinks we are now in a period of post-Democratic chaos, awaiting the dawn of a new kind of "Theocratic" phase. And so, perhaps, we are now waiting, to paraphrase Alasdair MacIntyre's conclusion in After Virtue, not for Godot but rather for a new, and doubtless very different, Dante.

Christian theology provides reasons to find beauty, drama and sublime importance in ordinary life. But just as, in practice, ordinary life has been slow to receive its due in the field of ascetical theology, so it has been slow to receive its due in the realm of Christian aesthetics. Naturally, these two delays are not unrelated; one depends on the other.

Having waited so many centuries for a full-fledged Christian ascesis of the ordinary, now that it has, in theory, arrived, perhaps we will not have to wait so long for a Christian aesthetic of the ordinary. ✠

Endnotes

1 *Conversations with Monsignor Josemaría Escrivá*, (Dublin: Scepter, 1968), p. 138.

2 "San Josemaría fu scelto dal Signore per annunciare la chiamata universale alla santita e per indicare che la vita di tutti I giorni, le attivita comuni, sono cammino di santificazione. Si potrebbe dire che egli fu il santo dell'ordinario. Era infatti convinto che, per chi vive in un'ottica di fede, tutto offre occasione di un incontro con Dio." John Paul II, addressing pilgrims gathered for the canonization of Saint Josemaría Escrivá, October 7, 2002. *L'Osservatore Romano,* Anno CXLII—N. 232 (43.168), Lunedi-Martedi 7-8 Ottobre 2002.

3 Jay Tolson, *Pilgrim in the Ruins: A Life of Walker Percy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), p. 73.

4 Walker Percy, *Signposts in a Strange Land*, ed. Patrick Samway (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991) p. 407.

5 William Alexander Percy, *Lanterns on the Levee* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1941) p. 223.

6 Lewis A. Lawson and Victor Kramer, eds., *Conversations with Walker Percy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985) p.4.

7 The translation is by Robert and Jean Hollander, taken from the website of the Princeton Dante Project (etcweb.princeton.edu/dante/index.html). The print version is available in *The Inferno* (New York: Anchor Books, 2002), trans. Robert and Jean Hollander.

8 Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975) p. 93.

9 G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Image Book, 1959), p. 64.

10 Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biografia Literaria*, ch. 14, cited in Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p.581, citing in turn Lilian Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective* (London: Macmillam, 1969), pp. 245-6.

11 Harold Bloom, *The Western Canon* (NY: Harcourt Brace and Co., 1994) p. 3.

12 There comes to mind too the famous modernist dictum of Ezra Pound: "Make it new."

13 Eric Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953) p. 31.

14 Ibid.

15 Jay Tolson, ed., *The Correspondence of Shelby Foote and Walker Percy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997) p. 238.

16 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 431.

17 Walker Percy, *The Message in the Bottle*, (NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1975) pp. 94-5.

18 Edith Stein, *Life in a Jewish Family*, trans. Josephine Koeppel, O.C.D., eds. Dr. L. Gelber and Romaeus Leuven, O.C.D., The Collected Works of Edith Stein, Vol. 1, (Washington DC: ICS Publications, 1986), pp. 150, 170-1, as quoted in the unpublished dissertation, "Edith Stein and the Arts," by Elizabeth Mitchell.

19 New York Times, November 11, 2002, "So, Woody, Do You Feel Like Talking About It?"

20 Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 422.

21 Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, p. 424.

22 G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday-Image Book, 1959), pp. 10-11.

23 Charles Moeller, *Humanismo y Santidad: Testimonios de la Literatura Occidental* (Barcelona: Editorial Juventud, S.A., 1960) pp. 164-5.

24 Ibid., p. 175.

25 Ibid., p. 180.

26 New Orleans Times-Picayune/States-Item, 4 Sept. 1980, quoted in Lewis A. Lawson and Victor Kramer, eds., *Conversations with Walker Percy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985) p.4.

27 Walker Percy, "The Holiness of the Ordinary," *Signposts in a Strange Land*, (NY: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1991) p. 369.

28 For Percy, the Jewish sensibility is even closer to the Catholic historical-sacramental sensibility than the Protestant, and it is therefore more advantageous for the novelist.

29 Properly speaking, the distinctively Protestant "affirmation of ordinary life," spoken of by Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self*, is largely negative and sociological; it is nothing more than a rejection of monasticism as a "higher" mode of Christian living. Naturally, once all other kinds of Christian life are invalidated, ordinary "civilian" existence assumes a central place. But the "downgrading"

that Protestantism applied to monasticism applies far beyond the convent walls. It applies to human works as such, and a doctrine that radically devalues all human actions can hardly be the basis for affirming the value of ordinary life. Of course, Protestant praxis is a different question entirely, but in principle, for the serious Lutheran or Calvinist, nothing one does has any determinative value at all in the drama of redemption; this means that if one can't find God by praying in a monastery, then one certainly can't do so by farming, engaging in business or raising a family. For the purposes of salvation, all of these actions are equally irrelevant, mere epiphenomena of the real drama, which occurs in a transcendent act of faith or in God's mysterious predestination. Needless to say, this is a mindset far removed from one in which one's eternity may depend on how one spends a typical Wednesday afternoon, in which one's daily meandering through the apparently tedious, merely occasional, circumstantial and banal details of life is, in reality, a potential encounter with God and a tight-rope walk between heaven and hell.

30 Miguel Angel Garrido, *Introduccion a la teoria de la literatura* (Madrid: Temas, 1975) p. 39.

31 Auerbach, pp. 22-23.

32 Auerbach, pp. 41-43.

33 Moeller, p. 158.

34 Jay Tolson, ed., *The Correspondence of Shelby Foote and Walker Percy* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1997), p. 59: "Given a gifted man, why should he need to write about doubt? That's what all the religious novels I've seen are about; they seem to think nothing else is interesting. To me thats a cheap, commercial notion. There should be some really positive writing—doubt need not even be considered. Let him write of faith as coolly, as detachedly as Maupassant wrote of sex. Then I think you'd have a true religious novel."

35 The desire to capture the heroism of ordinary life is alive and well, popping up in some unexpected places. Commenting on his album "Darkness on the Edge of Town," Bruce Springsteen has said, "this was the record… where I figured out what I wanted to write about, the people that mattered to me, and who I wanted to be. I saw friends and family struggling to lead decent, productive lives and I felt an everyday kind of heroism in this. Still do." (Liner notes to "Bruce Springsteen: Greatest Hits.") Springsteen is, according to press reports, a great admirer of Walker Percy.

36 Josemaría Escrivá, *The Way* (Manila: Sinag-Tala, 1980), n. 205.

37 Moeller, p. 158.

38 In this regard, it would be unjust not to mention, at least in passing, J.F. Powers and Flannery O'Connor—Powers, above all, for his novel *Morte d'Urban* and O'Connor less for her stories than for her collection of essays *Mystery and Manners*. Although the characters and actions described in her own brilliant stories are frequently bizarre, grotesque and peculiar, O'Connor's notion of capturing mystery through manners seems eminently applicable to more conventional material.

39 Wallace Stevens, *The Necessary Angel: Essays on Reality and Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1951).

Are Catholic Schools Catholic? A Deepening Crisis

Dr Luke Saker *is a Marist Brother (fms) of the Sydney Province in Australia. Dr Saker is currently lecturing in Catholic Studies at Edith Cowan University in Perth, Western Australia. Dr Saker obtained his Bachelor of Education from The University of Queensland, his Masters of Education from Fordham University, New York and his PhD from Edith Cowan University.*

It was during my lecturing in Catholic studies to first and second year Catholic students at Edith Cowan University that I became aware that students were coming into Catholic studies classes (after completing their senior years at a Catholic school and attending religious education classes) with little or no knowledge of their Catholic faith. Although it is difficult to make generalisations I would think the problems found in Catholic schools in Western Australia would apply equally to Catholic schools worldwide. I decided to undertake research to ascertain if my observations of the lack of understanding of Catholic tradition from my Catholic university students were indeed true (Saker, 2004).

The aim of the research was to better understand students' perceptions of their senior religious education classes in Catholic schools in Western Australia. The study focussed on 1st and 2nd year university students from Edith Cowan University. At the completion of their senior studies many students from Catholic schools, move on to tertiary studies, some of them intending to teach in a Catholic school (and to teach religious education) after graduation. The research investigated university students, who have completed senior religious

education classes at a Catholic school, how they perceived the school they attended, and whether these perceptions were the same as those envisioned in official Church documents.

Background

Since the 19th century the Catholic Church, in Australia, has taken very seriously the establishment of Catholic schools and the Catholic education of their students. Collins (1984) speaks of the expectation of Catholic schools in the area of religious education:

> The historic decision taken to continue with Catholic schools in all states about 1900 was based on the expectation that the religious education offered in those schools would be a solid base for the practice of the faith and be a protection against immorality and secularism. The ethos of a Catholic school is rooted in a 2000-year-old tradition of being a Catholic Christian. The Catholicism of the school is not an optional appendium to the identity of the school but a fundamental reference point for its ethos and the shape of its education. A Catholic school will seek to celebrate its Catholic identity by drawing from the deep wells of Catholic heritage. The Catholic school community should treasure its Catholic charism.
>
> Collins, 1984:14.

The schools that the Catholic Church has established, both in Australia and overseas, are primarily for religious education, and this decision to establish a distinctive form of education came at great financial cost to the Church and to the parents who sent their sons or daughters to a Catholic school. Vast sums of money were spent in keeping these schools operational, and this is a testament to the Catholic Church's belief that all Catholic students should have access to a sound secular education and grounding in the basic tenets of their faith. Catholic parents also sacrificed, and still do, a great deal in insisting that their child receive a Catholic education. This sacrifice, especially until the Federal and State Governments began to provide state aid in 1962, (Unlike the United States of America the Federal and State Governments of Australia give financial aid to Catholic schools based on the number of students attending the school) included monetary hardship for many Catholic parents.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1998a): states:

> The Catholic school finds its true justification in the mission of the Church; it is based on an educational philosophy in which faith, culture and life are brought into harmony. The Catholic school helps in achieving a double objective: of its nature it guides men and women to human and Christian perfection and at the same time helps them to become mature in their faith. Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998a:16.

The Role of the Catholic School

The Western Australian Catholic Bishops, who are responsible for Catholic education in their dioceses, established the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia in 1971 by issuing a Mandate Letter. The Bishops' Mandate Letter clearly indicates the reasons for the establishment of Catholic schools. To implement the Bishops' Mandate they established the Catholic Education Office in 1972. The present Mandate was given by the Bishops in January 2001 and continues until January 2007. This document, being public, is open to scrutiny and questioning. The question is: Are Catholic schools carrying out the Mandate from the Catholic Bishops of Western Australia?

> We, the Bishops of Western Australia, mandate the Catholic Education Commission of Western Australia to foster the development and improvement of Catholic schools, and to act on behalf of the Catholic community for the benefit of Catholic school-aged children. The purpose of a Catholic school is to proclaim the Word of God through its Catholic tradition. In Catholic schools there are nine teaching/learning areas. The first teaching/learning area should be religious education.
>
> Bishops of Western Australia, 200:12.

Papal statements, documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy, clearly indicate reasons for the establishment of Catholic schools. It would appear from my research that these statements/documents are being, generally, ignored by those responsible for implementing policies for Catholic schools and in writing

a religious education curriculum.

Pope John Paul II (1993) in his Address to the Bishops of England on March 26th speaks of the role of a Catholic school as being one of service to the common good, a role that encompasses bringing forth a person in whom moral excellence is developed to the fullest.

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1998b) sums up the role of a Catholic school:

> From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics. An environment permeated with the Gospel spirit of love and freedom. In a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus the "Master" who, today as always is with us in our journey through life as the one genuine "Teacher", the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection.
>
> Congregation for Catholic Education, 1998b:12

Flynn and Mok (2002) state that the Catholic school should convey the Christian message to students in the daily life of the school. The Catholic School should be a milieu in which the integration of faith and life takes place in its students' lives. There is a general concern, in some Catholic circles today, about the effectiveness of Catholic schools and the quality of the religious education classes offered by these schools. De Souza (2002) speaks of the need to bridge the widening gap between students' perceptions of the Catholic school and the institutional Church as a faith community:

> Apart from promoting knowledge and appreciation of the rich heritage of the faith tradition, the Christian story needs to be re-told and experienced in a way that speaks to contemporary lives and contexts.
>
> De Souza, 2002:10.

De Souza speaks of the increasing difficulty for educators in contemporary society, where the vision of the Christian community often falls short of people's expectations and experiences. These concerns are also voiced by Parents and Friends Associations who have a close relationship with the school community. Holohan (1999) when speaking at the Annual General Meeting of the West Australian Branch of the Parents and Friends Association agrees with De Souza when he speaks of some of the challenges facing Catholic schools. The first challenge concerns the movement of Catholic schools away from their 'roots', that is, to provide a Christian (from the Catholic tradition) education for Catholic students. When Catholic schools were established in the colony of New South Wales in the 1850s' the Catholic population was marginalised and their religious beliefs, although not banned, were frowned upon by a colony founded upon the Protestant ethic. As Catholics in the 1850s had to address the problems of their day so, too, Catholic schools in 2006 have to address their problems (priorities).

Further, those responsible for the operation of Catholic schools (the Bishops) should challenge the school communities to live out the Gospel message of simplicity rather than society's message that affluence means a successful Catholic school/life. Flynn (1993) speaks of a well-conducted Catholic school being a powerful expressive symbol and a marvellous human institution. In his research he asked students what they had come to appreciate, and value, about the Catholic school they attended. One student reflected the spirit of community when she wrote:

> The College has been my home since year 5, that is, 8 years. I have been here longer than most of the teachers. I appreciate the happiness it has brought me and the friends I have made. This school, I think has made me more respectful and aware of others. It's really cool!
>
> Flynn, 1993:159.

It is interesting to note, that religious education classes, or the religious nature of the school are not mentioned by the student. Flynn justifies this by speaking of the special caring character of Catholic schools. An initial response to Flynn's conclusion is: "Could not some non-Catholic private and State schools have a similar response from their students?" The answer to this question is, obviously, "yes".

Churchlands Senior High School, in a document, Moving Forward 2004-2008: A plan for Government School Education, speaks of the vision it has for its students (very similar to the vision/mission statement of Newman College, a co-educational secondary school conducted by the Marist Brothers and St Augustine's primary school conducted by the Presen-

tation Sisters):

> Churchlands Senior High School is a diverse community, which celebrates individual differences and promotes tolerance and self-respect. Churchlands aims to develop a culture which values achievement encourages creativity and critical thinking and in which all members of the school community care for one another. The school is committed to providing a challenging, enriching and supportive environment that enables students to achieve excellence in all endeavours. Churchlands' students will be prepared to face challenges with confidence and enthusiasm and will be able and willing to make a positive contribution to their wider communities.
>
> Churchlands Senior High School, 2004:1.

Flynn and Mok (2002) argue that Australian Catholic schools have, over time, been eroded and that the correlation between Catholic school attendance and religious behaviour is falling into line with the general norm of the population, that is, those schools that have no religious education classes, for example, Churchlands Senior High School.

Flynn (1993) found there was evidence that the religious dimension of Catholic schools is being marginalised by pressures from university entry requirements, concern about unemployment and the secular culture of Australian society. Given such comments the statement from the Congregation for Catholic Education becomes significant:

> (A Catholic school) would no longer deserve the title if, no matter how good its reputation for teaching in other areas, there were just grounds for a reproach of negligence or deviation in religious education, properly so-called.
>
> Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988b:32.

Research into Catholic schools raises the question: "Why establish Catholic schools?" The Code of Canon Law (1983) states that the Catholic school is of the greatest importance since it is the principal means of assisting parents to fulfil their role in education, and that the school must work closely with parents who have entrusted their children to be educated in the Catholic The Code reaffirms the right of the Church to establish and direct schools, and Catholic lay people are to do everything in their power to assist in establishing and maintaining them. Canon 805 states that the Bishop, in his own diocese, has the sole right to appoint or to approve teachers of religion and if, religious or moral considerations require it, the right to remove them or to demand that they be removed. Further the Code (Canon 806) states that the local Bishop has the right to watch over and to inspect the Catholic schools situated in his diocese, even those established or directed by members of religious institutions. The Bishop also has the right to issue directives concerning the general regulation of Catholic schools. There are many questions being asked today by the Catholic hierarchy, and the church faithful, as to the role of the Catholic School. The answers to such questions will have a great bearing for the justification of the millions of dollars spent by the Catholic Church on education, in Australia, every year.

Pope John Paul II makes very clear the role of a Catholic school:

> It is not true that such education is always given implicitly or indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school and the underlying reason for its existence, the reason why parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the overall education of the students.
>
> Pope John Paul II, 1979:33.

Religious education and the Catholic school

The second challenge that Holohan refers to is religious education. He suggests, among other things, that the Catholic school should be promoting the importance of religious education, particularly by resisting pressures to reduce the time given to religious education so that other subjects may be studied, especially those subjects needed by students for entry into university.

Holohan states that religious education classes must be ready, and active, in playing their part in the formation of Catholic students.

> Religious education needs to point to human experiences to help students understand God's revelation. Religious education needs to help them understand the meaning of their significant experiences as human beings. This includes study of basic Christian concepts

> related to the 'formation of the Christian personality', such as conversion, vocation, commitment, and hope. Only as it does so will religious education in a Catholic school play its part in helping students to 'spell out the meaning of their experiences and their truths'. Holohan, 1999:63.

Dwyer (2002) speaks of religious education classes developing the dignity of the whole person which includes a call to action, a call to make a difference, a difference to others, to society and culture and to hasten the Reign of God. Crawford and Rossiter state the role of religious education:

> Understood correctly, it is essential for Catholic schools to have religion organised as a well-established subject. This means that religion should have an important place in the timetable with an adequate number of periods for the coherent teaching of a comprehensive program. There should be a professionally organised department of religion teachers. Most of all, religion should be taught with the same degree of skill, intellectual challenge and rigour as other subjects.
>
> Crawford & Rossiter, 1985:22.

Flynn and Mok's study of year 12 students in Catholic schools led them into the area of what students thought of their religious education classes. One student replied:

> I dislike it immensely! I believe it should be voluntary. I find it has no relevance to my life, my faith or what I believe or wish to believe. It is narrow-minded, biased and unfairly imposed on us in year 12.
>
> Flynn & Mok, 2002:282.

Another student stated:

> There should be a choice! That is the view of most of Year 12 students in Catholic schools. Many students, including myself, see it as a waste of time! It gets in the way of our difficult, more time-consuming subjects. I don't want to have to learn RE at school.
>
> Ibid.

Flynn found in his 1972-1993 longitudinal studies that religious expectations are:

> By far the lowest concern of Year 12 students. Students rank their R.E. classes amongst the lowest of their expectations of Catholic schools. Religious realities appear less important compared with careers, exams, relationships, and peer group activities.
>
> Flynn, 1993:181.

Flynn and Mok were even less optimistic in 2002:

> Year 12 students' attitudes towards religious education when faced with the pressures of their public examination continue to be a matter of concern! A marked decline in students' perceptions of religious education is also evident over the period 1972, 1982, 1990 and 1998.
>
> Flynn & Mok, 2002:287.

Angelico (1997) in her study, Taking stock: Revisioning the church in higher education, speaks of the disenchantment experienced by university students from Australian Catholic University, whom she surveyed, concerning the Catholic school that they attended and their religious education classes. She speaks of students being alienated by their religious education classes and having a widespread resentment to the religiosity of the school. Angelico's study sought to find the cause of this disenchantment. Her conclusions were similar to the findings of my research.

It would appear that the poor status of religious education, as a subject, in Catholic schools and the poor teaching of religious education, mutually reinforce each other and lead to senior students' poor perception of their classes. In the early part of Rossiter's major work, An Interpretation of Normative Theory for Religious Education in Australian Schools states that religious education is:

> Aimed at handing on a particular religious faith tradition, that is handing on the collective religious beliefs, traditions and practices of a group that identifies itself (or is identified) as a faith sharing community
> Rossiter, 1983:113.

My research builds upon the work of Flynn, Crawford and Rossiter to explain the reasons why 1st and 2nd year university students perceived their religious education classes as they do. A non-Catholic teacher would appear to have 'hit the nail on the head', as regards Catholic schools and religious education:

> I think it is important for Catholic schools to remain Catholic in nature. I see a drift away from this ideal and a desire to be all things to all people. The school must not lose sight of its Catholic character. Although a non-Catholic teacher myself, I believe it is important for religion to be valued. At times the school becomes very secular (religious education is just another class). I

> appreciate that religious education lessons should not be the 'be all and end all' of Christian education, but I feel religious education needs to be more important in the life of a Catholic school than it is.
>
> Flynn, 1993:182.

The research into religious education classes in Catholic schools indicates that all is not well. My study aimed to discover why. The acknowledged goal of a Catholic school is the Christian education of Catholic students through its religious education classes. In defining religious education, Ryan and Malone state:

> Religious education is an expression that has only been commonly used in Catholic schools since the 1970s. Prior to this an assortment of terms was used: religious instruction, Christian Doctrine, religious knowledge or, simply, the Catechism that was the basic text used. (The term) religious education is an umbrella term that covers all aspects of student learning about religion, as well as the processes of becoming more religious. In the context of Catholic schools, it includes the formal classroom activities concerned with the subject area called religion and also other aspects of the Catholic school that provides religious experiences and a sense of belonging to a Church community.
>
> Ryan & Malone, 1996:7/8.

It is in the area of religious education that my research indicated that there is a crisis in Catholic schools. The problem appears to be centred upon the methodology/pedagogy used by the framers of religious education curricula for Catholic schools. The Western Australian religious education curriculum centres upon catechesis and, for the most part, totally ignores religious education. Classroom religious education is where concern has been raised by various Parents and Friends Associations and Parish Priests in recent years. Some Diocesan Bishops in Australia (Pell, Sydney; Hart, Melbourne; and Hickey, Perth) have also expressed concern with the quality of religious education being taught in Catholic schools. All three Bishops have argued for a more content-based religious education curriculum. Catechesis is the faith development of the student, whereas religious education aims to instil the knowledge component of faith development. In the faith development of the student both catechesis and religious education are complementary. It could be argued that you can't have one without the other and justify the religious education program in Catholic schools. It is very difficult to argue a case for catechesis, alone, to meet the faith development of the student, as it is very difficult to argue for religious education, alone, to meet the student's faith development. The concern is that catechesis alone is the predominant, if not the only, methodology used in the religious education classroom in Western Australian Catholic schools in 2006. O'Collins and Farrugia (1991) speak of catechesis as referring to any instruction meant to deepen the Christian faith, even if it is given to those already baptised. The ultimate responsibility for catechesis lies with the whole community. In short, catechesis is the role of the child's parents, the parish and the child's close family, whereas religious education is the role of the Catholic school which is hopefully supported by parents.

The General Directory for Catechesis speaks of religious education classes as demanding the same scholastic rigour as secular subjects being taught at the school:

> It is necessary, therefore, that religious education in schools appear as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. Religious education in schools underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school.
>
> Congregation for the Clergy, 1998:74.

In spite of the Catholic Education Office, in the Perth Archdiocese, constantly revising the religious education curriculum for both primary and secondary Catholic schools, the last revision taking place in 2002/2003, it would appear that students who have just completed senior studies and attended religious education classes seem not to be accepting the teachings of the Catholic Church. Nor do they appear to be greatly concerned about their lack of knowledge of Catholic dogma or, indeed, their acceptance of such teachings Senior students' perceptions of their religious education classes are made up, mostly, of negative comments about the class being boring, or of no interest to them. To some students their religious education classes appear to be a 'free period' or a 'break' from the rigour of their study for the public examination.

The Apparent Problem with Catholic Schools.

If Catholic schools are primarily about the Catholic education of their students, then, it would appear that Catholic schools are not living up to their mandate, to be Catholic. After two years of attending senior religious education classes, it appeared to me that my university students intending to be teachers, in a Catholic school, and to teach religious education, had a poor perception of their religious education classes. There was little evidence of the outcomes being achieved, while acceptance of official Catholic Church dogma and doctrine is rejected by the majority of the students. This being the case, this problem needed to be addressed, which meant looking at the religious education classroom in Western Australian schools from the perspective of students who have completed their senior religious education course.

The Problems That This Study Uncovered: A Summary of Key Findings.

The study found: There are both positive and negative signs concerning the ethos/identity of Catholic schools. It was hoped that the study would encourage those in positions of leadership in Catholic education to look at both the positives and negatives of Catholic schools and religious education and then, using the positives, work at addressing the negatives so that it can be said that Catholic schools are truly Catholic and that they are carrying out the reason for their existence, that is, the Catholic education of students.

The major research question that guided the study was: What are the perceptions of 1st and 2nd year university students of their senior religious education classes in Catholic schools in Western Australia? This research question was guided by four sub-questions. The sub-questions appear below with the result of the findings:

1. Are Catholic schools in Western Australia carrying out the mandate for their existence, that is, the Catholic education of their students? Catholic schools are not carrying out the mandate given them by the Bishops of Western Australia. This is exemplified by: Students claiming that they are not practising Catholics and students rejection of Catholic teaching(s).
2. Did students perceive their religious education classes as aiding their religious development? Many students did not see: that they gained anything from their religious education classes nor did religious education classes appear to assist them in their religious development.
3. Are students accepting or rejecting important doctrinal teachings of the Catholic Church? Students are: Rejecting most of the doctrinal teaching(s) of the Catholic Church, for example, Sunday Mass Attendance, contraception and divorce and re-marriage.
4. How do students perceive their lived experience and the Catholic Church's teaching on morality?

Students' saw their lived experiences as being opposed to the Catholic Church's teaching on morality; that the Church was out of date with modern society and the Church no longer has much impact on their lives.

- The findings clearly indicate that the majority of senior students are rejecting Catholic Church teachings but they appear unaware of why they are rejecting such teachings. If Catholic identity/ethos is to be understood and accepted by senior students in Catholic schools there is a need for a more content-based religious education curriculum in senior religious education classes.
- Parents, friends/peers and teachers, although having some influence on students' religious development, are an untapped resource and could be used more productively in their religious education classes.
- Catholic schools have a good name, students are generally quite happy to attend but nevertheless Catholic schools are not necessarily carrying out the mandate of the Bishops under whose control the schools function.
- Principals and teachers need to address the issue of staff-student relationships.
- The religious education classes are not effec-

tive and the majority of students were not happy with their religion class. Many students did not see their classes relevant to their needs and subsequently they saw their religious education class as a waste of time.

- Students would, generally, see themselves as people of faith. Students are referring not to 'deposit of faith' but to 'faith', as in a belief in a higher power. This belief in a higher power is not being put into practice by the students.
- Students rejected Catholic moral teaching as being out of date, not relevant to their lives and far too restrictive on their 'freedom'. They did not see themselves as practising Catholics nor were they concerned about 'heaven' and 'hell'. They saw Catholic teachings as a guide to moral living but the decision(s) of the lifestyle that they lead is up to them and not the Church.

There can be little argument from the data that there is a crisis in Catholic schools. The crisis centres on the reason for Catholic schools, the effectiveness of Catholic schools and the Catholic school's religious education programs. Bishops, principals, teachers, parents and students need to confront this crisis as we embrace the 3rd millennium. If there is no confrontation Catholic schools will continue to be full of baptised pagans and our pews empty.

Teaching Religious Education

This study is suggesting an approach to teaching religious education by blending official Catholic Church teaching with the integral intersubjectivity (person-centred) approach: What sort of person would do that? Does that action make me a better person? Am I developing to my full potential? By approaching religious education in this way religious education teachers would give their students an opportunity to be in a position to understand, accept or reject the teachings of the Catholic Church. There is no reason why: (1) Religious knowledge: The official theological teachings of the Catholic Church and (2) Love, compassion, understanding and forgiveness cannot be incorporated into a religious education curriculum and the lesson plans of the classroom teacher.

The Catholic School

The tension for the Catholic school is bridging the gap between students' perceptions of the school and the official Church's perceptions of what a Catholic school should be. The research conducted by Saker (2004) has shown that there is an urgent need for Catholic schools to look at the ongoing mission and purpose of the Catholic school in contemporary society.

Religious Education in Catholic Schools: A Deepening Crisis.

Reported below is the data from the original study (2000). In March 2006 I decided to replicate the survey from my original study. The mini survey was completed in March 2006. The mini survey was extended to include students at Edith Cowan University as well as Curtin University to ascertain if there had been a more positive approach to senior students' perceptions of their religious education classes. The results should cause grave concern for those involved in Catholic education.

In the West Australian (23/3/06) we were told that the Catholic Education Office of Western Australia is in the process of deciding if they will implement a knowledge-based and compulsory senior religious education curriculum (years eleven and twelve). This curriculum would compulsory for all senior students in a Catholic School. The Archbishop of Perth was quoted as saying that the curriculum would be knowledge-based. My immediate reaction to the news was one of welcoming relief but reading the article further I found that some teachers in Catholic Schools were criticizing this new endeavour because secular subjects, such as, English, Mathematics or Science may suffer. My reaction to these statements made by some ill-informed teachers in Catholic Schools was one of amazement and frustration. The Bishops' Mandate speaks of nine learning areas in Catholic Schools. The Bishops tell us that the first learning area is religious education. As the late Pope John Paul II said

to the English Bishops in 1993, If religious education is not the most important subject taught in a Catholic school then the school does not deserve the name Catholic'.

The timing of the article in the West Australian could not have been more appropriate as I had just completed a 'mini survey' of students at Curtin and Edith Cowan Universities who were studying to become teachers and, in particular, to teach in a Catholic School and for most of them to teach religious education, to see if any change had occurred in students' perceptions of the Catholic School that they attended or in the moral teachings of the Catholic Church since the publication of my doctrinal thesis in 2004.

The results of this mini-survey not only support my original findings but indicate that instead of any perceived improvement, from the students surveyed of their perceptions of the Catholic school that they attended or their senior religious education classes there is a continuing crisis in senior religious education classes in Catholic Schools and if anything the crisis is deepening.

Below I have reported on the 2006 survey (quantitative) findings and also the results of my 2004 thesis. The qualitative (interviews) results of my 2004 study are not included. The percentage responses shown below are from students who answered strongly agree/agree.

Religious Influence on Senior Students:

My parents influenced my religious development:
78% in 2000 and 33% in 2006

My peers/friends influenced my religious development:
36% in 2000 and 6% in 2006.

My teachers influenced my religious development:
43% in 2000 and 8% in 2006

My senior religious education classes influenced my religious development:
42% in 2000 and 5% in 2006

The Catholic school that I attended influenced my religious development
39% in 2000 and 14% in 2006

My religious education classes were a waste of time:
56% in 2000 and 74% in 2006

Senior religious education classes did not arouse much interest among senior students:
52% in 2000 and 70% in 2006

Personal Religious Beliefs and Practice:

I believe in God:
85% in 2000 and 66% in 2006

Christ is a real person in my daily life:
63% in 2000 and 34% in 2006

I go to Mass every Sunday
12% in 2000 and 7% in 2006

I go to the Sacrament of reconciliation rarely or never:
98% in 2000 and 97% in 2006

Belief in or Acceptance of Official Catholic Moral Teaching

A divorced Catholic should be able to re-marry in the Catholic Church without an annulment:
N/A in 2000 and 52% in 2006

Any use of artificial contraception during sexual intercourse is sinful:
14% in 2000 and 4% in 2006

Having a sexual relationship before marriage is sinful:
14% in 2000 and 6% in 2006

It is sinful to live in a de facto relationship:
N/A in 2000 and 9 % in 2006

Each and every sexual act must be open to the possibility of procreation:
14% in 2000 and 16% in 2006

Missing Mass on Sunday is sinful:
18% in 2000 and 16% in 2006

I agree with the Church's teaching on Sunday Mass and Holy Days of obligation:
20% in 2000 and 1% in 2006

When the male sperm unites with the female egg you have human life:
69% in 2000 and 31% in 2006

Abortion is the murder of an unborn child:
60% in 2000 and 27% in 2006

A girl who is raped and falls pregnant should be allowed to have an abortion:
83% in 2000 and 72% in 2006

Heterosexual intercourse outside of marriage is sinful:
16% in 2000 and 16% in 2006

Homosexual acts are sinful:
20% in 2000 and 10% in 2006

The Church should allow in vitro fertilization:
N/A in 2000 and 71% in 2006

The Church should allow euthanasia:
N/A in 2000 and 71% in 2006

Student's Perceptions of Their Catholicity:

The Pope has the power to make binding statements on behalf of all baptized Catholics:
67% in 2000 and 10% in 2006

The Church's teachings are only a guide for Christian living:
75% in 2000 and 87% in 2006

The moral teachings of the Church are out of date with modern society:
57% in 2000 and 68% in 2006

I consider myself as a practicing Catholic
52% in 2000 and 17% in 2006.

From the data presented in this paper alarm bells should be ringing for those involved in Catholic Education. The data from 2000 and 2006 indicates that the Western Australian Bishops should be tasking action to ensure that Catholic Education Office prepare a curriculum, including methodology and pedagogy, with the hope that the disturbing data (reported above) may be reversed. For too long, some Bishops have not used their authority, as outlined in The Code of Canon law, to ensure that Catholic schools are, Catholic not just in name!

Conclusion

There are many challenges ahead for the successful teaching of religious education in Catholic schools. All those involved in Catholic Education need to look at the findings of this study, the recommendations and conclusions arrived at so as to ensure that our Catholic schools are institutions where Christ is the centre of students' lives and the basis for the school's existence. The challenge is to work together to ensure that the 2000-year tradition of the Catholic Church continues in generations to come. This can be assured if our Catholic Schools are citadels of the Catholic Faith, the Faith of our Fathers. ✠

References

Angelico, T. (1997). *Taking stock: Revisioning the church in higher education.* Sydney: National Catholic Education Commission (NCEC).

Bishops of Western Australia. (2001). Mandate letter, terms of reference and membership of the Catholic Education

Commission of Western Australia, 2001-2007. Perth: Catholic Education Office.

Churchlands Senior High School. (2004). *Moving Forward. Our Vision statement for Churchlands senior High Schools*. Unpublished school booklet for internal use.

Catholic Church. (1983). *The code of canon law.* London: Harper Collins.

Collins, B. (1984). (ed). *Faithful to God: Faithful to people.* Sydney: Catholic Education Office.

Congregation for Catholic Education. (1998a). *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium:* Strathfield: St Pauls.

Congregation for Catholic education. (1998b). *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*.Rome:Vatican Press.

Congregation for the Clergy. (1998). *General directory of catechesis.* Strathfield: St Pauls.

Crawford, M., and Rossiter, M. (1985) *Teaching religion in secondary school: Theory and practice.* Sydney: Christian Brothers.

De Souza. L. (2002). *The Catholic School: Nurturing young people's spirituality*. An unpublished paper delivered at the Melbourne Religious Education Conference. June 2002. Pages 10-11.

Dwyer, B. (2002). *Has religious education become a derivative subject?* Journal of Religious Education, 50(3), 50-54.

Flynn, M. (1993). *The culture of Catholic schools.* Homebush: St Pauls.

Flynn, M., and Mok, M. (2002). *Catholic schools 2000: A longitudinal study of year 12 students in Catholic schools.* NSW: Catholic Education office.

Holohan, G. (1999a). Opening address to the parents and friends annual general meeting. Given 13th July 1999. An unpublished paper delivered at the Annual General Meeting of the Parents and Friends Association. Perth, Western Australia.

Keane, R., and Riley, D. (1997). *Quality Catholic schools: Challenges for leadership as Catholic education approaches the third millennium*. Brisbane: Catholic Education Office.

O'Collins, G. and Farrugia. (1991). *A concise dictionary of theology.* New Jersey: Paulist Press.

Pope John Paul. (1993a). Address to the Catholic bishops of England on Catholic Education. An unpublished paper available from Edith Cowan University Perth, Western Australia.

Rossiter, G. (1983). A review of Australian research related to religious education in schools. Sydney: PhD Thesis: Macquarie University, Sydney.

Ryan, M., and Malone, P. (1996). *Exploring the religion classroom: A guidebook for Catholic schools.* Wentworth Falls:

Social Science Press.

Saker, L. (2004). A study of 1st and 2nd year Catholic university students' perceptions of their senior religious education classes in Catholic schools in Western Australia. PhD thesis available from Edith Cowan University Perth, Western Australia.

Saker, L. (2006). A mini-survey conducted at Edith Cowan and Curtin Universities in Perth Western Australia. An unpublished paper available from Edith Cowan University Perth, Western Australia.

Victim of Love

A Study of Oblation in the Writings of St. Therese of Lisieux Focusing on the Act of Oblation to Merciful Love

by John D. Love, S.T.D., Ann Arbor, Michigan

Pope John Paul II proclaimed St. Therese of Lisieux a Doctor of the Church in October of 1997 with his Apostolic Letter, *Divina Amoris Scientia*. With this action, the Pontiff certified St. Therese's pedigree as a master of the spiritual life in the name of the Catholic Church. The idea of being a victim, a "victim of love,"[1] in Therese's words, finds its locus in the heart of her doctrine. The concept of oblation is not limited to one period or event for the Saint, but extends throughout her life and spirituality. This study will focus on Therese's *Act of Oblation to Merciful Love*, as well as the Saint's illumination of being a "victim of love," given in Manuscript B of *Story of A Soul*.

Historical Context; Tracing Oblation in Therese's Life

It is evident that the constitutive elements of "victimhood" appear early and often in the course of Therese's life, spanning her earthly sojourn and culminating in her *Act of Oblation*. At age two, in 1875, Therese recalls thinking, "I will be a religious,"[2] already a sign of the sense of self-offering to God that finds such beautiful expression throughout her short life. The Saint also recounts that, "From the age of three, I began to refuse nothing of what God asked of me."[3] The concept of conformity to divine will also plays a role in Therese's conception of oblation. Even the fact that the first sermon Therese remembers understanding is on the Passion bears significance, revealing her disposition towards imitative, sacrificial, total self-gift in love to God. This oblation forms the heart of what it is to be a "victim of love."

The elements of love, self-offering, and suffering appear during her early years as well. Regarding her First Communion, Therese recalls, "Ah! how sweet was that first kiss of Jesus! It was a kiss of *love*; I *felt* that *I was loved*, and I said: 'I love You, and I give myself to You forever!'"[4] She adds, "For a long time now Jesus and poor little Therese *looked at* and understood each other. That day, [of her First Communion] it was a fusion; they were no longer two."[5] Finally she writes, "I felt born within my heart a *great desire* to suffer, and…the interior assurance that Jesus reserved a great number of crosses for me…Suffering became my attraction; it had charms about it which ravished me without my understanding…I felt a real love for it."[6] The tenor of these passages clearly indicates the path her spiritual life will follow.

The Saint presents an important connection in her brief recollections on Confirmation. First, she calls it, "This sacrament of *Love*."[7] Therese proceeds to recall her rejoicing at, "the thought of being a perfect Christian and especially at that of having eternally on my forehead the mysterious cross the Bishop marks when conferring this sacrament."[8] She remembers the "*light breeze*,"[x] she felt, which reminded her of the way Elijah experienced the presence of the Spirit of God.[10] Finally, the future Carmelite declares, "On that day, I received the strength to *suffer*."[11]

Therese connects several important concepts in her description of her response to Confirmation. These connections will culminate in the fruition of her spiritual life and way. She associates love, the perfection of the Christian life, the Cross, the Holy Spirit, (especially the Holy Spirit as vivifying the Christian from within), and suffering. Binding these elements together, Therese "discovers" a way of holiness and a way of life.

Therese's conversion experience on Christmas 1886 developed the Saint's sense of vocation. As her father lamented the childish coddling Therese required, the Saint realized her selfishness and said, "I felt *charity* enter into my soul, and the need to forget myself and to please others."[12] She continued, "He made me a fisher of *souls*. I experienced a great desire to work for the conversion of sinners."[13] The apostolic-redemptive element of Therese's spirituality constitutes an essential piece, without which, her charism and her idea of oblation cannot be fully appreciated.

Celine's Christmas gift to Therese in 1887 (the small ship with the word "Abandonment" written on it) and the Therese's explanation of the sacrifices she was able to offer to God at the end of Chapter VI comprise a further development of the Saint's thoughts on being a "victim of love."[14] Therese's ambition for holiness, hunger for souls, complete surrender to God's will, and her love of God ripened as she continued to pursue Jesus on the path of salvation.

Focusing on the last pages of Manuscript A, it is possible to glimpse what Therese herself realized. Explaining the trajectory of her spiritual life, the Saint relates, "With *love* not only did I advance, I actually *flew*."[15] She expounds, saying, "I understood that without *love* all works are nothing,"[16] and later adding, "And now I have no other desire except *to love* Jesus unto folly…it is *love* alone that attracts me."[17]

In a telling paragraph the Saint intimates, "I can speak these words of the Spiritual Canticle of St. John of the Cross," concluding her quotation with, "…*now that my every act is LOVE*," and "…*LOVE* works so in me…transforming the soul into *ITSELF*."[18] On the following page of her manuscript, Therese reveals, "To me He has granted His *infinite Mercy*, and *through it* I contemplate and adore the other divine perfections! All of these perfections appear to be resplendent *with love*."[19] Clearly, love comprises the focal point of Therese's spiritual life, and mercy is the gateway through which she contemplates it.

As is well known, following her reflections on those who offer themselves as holocausts to divine justice, Therese decided to offer herself as a victim to merciful love.[20] The Little Flower wanted to open the treasure chest of the Lord's Heart and allow God to pour out the "waves of infinite tenderness within [Him]."[21] She exclaimed, "O my Jesus, let me be this happy victim; consume Your holocaust with the fire of Your Divine Love."[22] The preceding context makes it possible to examine intelligently the *Act of Oblation* itself.

The Act of Oblation to Merciful Love

On June 9th, 1895, Therese, along with Celine, (Sister Genevieve), offered herself as a victim to Merciful Love. Therese formalized her spiritual insights and the deepest desires of her heart with this dramatic and uncommon act. This study will focus on the pivotal text in the final paragraphs of the *Act*, looking to the whole form of it for clarification and nuances.

Therese begins the definitive paragraph with these words, "In order to live in one single act of perfect Love..." and herein is her stated motive. For the Saint, all that she does is directed to God, and all is done in, through, and for love of Him. Chapter IX of *Story of A Soul* makes Therese's intentions perfectly clear, and these will be explored presently. For the

time being, it is sufficient to realize that the underlying and central principle behind her *Act of Oblation* is that to which she offers herself, Merciful Love.

The words that constitute her gift of self follow immediately. She simply declares, "I OFFER MYSELF AS A VICTIM OF HOLOCAUST TO YOUR MERCIFUL LOVE."[23] There are several ideas here that must be understood in order to grasp what Therese means in this bold statement. Clearly, she offers herself. As stated above, the Saint offers herself to "Merciful Love." She gives herself as "a victim of holocaust." Therese continues her statement of oblation with these words, "(I OFFER MYSELF…) Asking you to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of *infinite tenderness* shut up within you to overflow into my soul, and that thus I may become a *martyr* of Your *Love*, O my God!"[24] Therese leaves no room for doubt that this act of oblation is a total act, that is, that she gives herself completely and without any reservation. Therese gives "completely," meaning that all that she is participates in this act of giving-herself-to-God, and she gives "without reservation," signifying that the content of the gift she gives is the totality of her person.

The Saint emphasizes the totality of her oblation in the final paragraph of her *Act*. She says, "I want, O my *Beloved*, at each beat of my heart to renew this offering to You an infinite number of times, until the shadows having disappeared I may be able to tell you of my *Love* in an *Eternal face-to-Face!*"[25] Therese does not make a one-time offering, or a pious statement given and then forgotten. She dedicates herself, her entire life, in a continuous self-offering. She wishes to intimate her "*Love*" to God even in heaven, never ceasing to pour herself out to Him whom she loves.

Therese also desires and feels a unity with Jesus. Through her religious vocation, she considers Jesus her "*Beloved* Spouse,"[26] and offers his merits as her own, "begging You [God] to look upon me only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with *Love*."[27] The Little Flower continues, revealing that her desire for Jesus is paramount in her heart. She says, "I wish…to receive from Your *Love* the eternal possession of *Yourself*. I want no other *Throne*, no other *Crown* but *You*, my *Beloved!*"[28]

The Saint understands her sufferings to be a participation in the sufferings of Christ, "Since You deigned to give me a share in this very precious Cross [Christ's Cross]." Therese continues with a request, "I hope in heaven to resemble You and to see shining in my glorified body the sacred stigmata of Your Passion."[29] She sees that she is conformed to Christ as spouse, but that conformity-to-Him is an ongoing process within her, and at the same time she hopes for even a physical conformity with the Crucified-and-Risen-Again-Jesus at the Resurrection.

Without question, Therese understands her "martyrdom of love" as purgative. She says, "If through weakness I sometimes fall, may Your *Divine Glance* cleanse my soul immediately, consuming all my imperfections like the fire that transforms everything into itself."[30] Therese does not consider herself incapable of "falling," but at the same time desires to be made perfect by God, to avoid all sin, and to be pleasing to Him.

Therese ties an apostolic element into her *Act* as well. Knowing that God wants to flood the world and souls with His merciful love, The Saint laments, "On every side this love is unknown, rejected."[31] In the face of this tragedy, Therese says to God, "I want to work for Your *Love alone* with the one purpose of pleasing You, consoling your Sacred Heart, and saving souls who will love you eternally."[32]

For Therese these goals are, as she says, one, and inseparable, and thus to do so is to rob her of her genius. Her self-offering *is* apostolic—she works for the salvation of souls—but it cannot be limited to this alone. She also desires to fulfill the divine will, (to please Him), and to be united to Jesus, at the same time "consoling" Him, loving Him. An analysis that divides these elements of "loving" closes its eyes to the fullness of the reality as Therese understands and professes it.

The fundamental aspects of the *Act of Oblation*, as seen above, are as follows. The motivation in making the *Act* is, as she says, "To live in one single act of perfect love."[33] Therese offers herself and nothing less, giving herself up as "victim of holocaust to merciful love," meaning a *total* self-gift and one in which she completely abandons herself without reservation to God's merciful love. She understands in this that God is the one burning, purifying, consuming, and perfecting the sacrifice that she makes to Him.

Therese knows that being a "victim of merci-

ful love" benefits her, and that she needs it in order to attain eternal life with God. At the same time, she also realizes that God's pouring His merciful love into her soul equips her to help save souls, and she desires this. St. Therese wishes all of these things because she sees that they are in accordance with God's will.

Unity with Christ also plays an important role for the Little Flower. On the one hand, the fact of her unity with Him emboldens her to ask God for so much. On the other hand, she requests that God unite her more completely to Jesus, even to the extent of physically sharing His wounds. Her final goal is to go to heaven, and in heaven to "possess" God in and through love, and to communicate this love between God and herself "face-to-Face."[34]

There is one vital idea that draws all of these elements together and binds them as one. For Therese, this single concept is love. Understanding that this word can be among the most abused and misunderstood of any, the ninth chapter of *Story of A Soul*, entitled, "My Vocation Is Love," presents Therese's own perception of love. Comprehending love as Therese does is the only way to understand oblation as she conceives it.

"My Vocation is Love"; Story of A Soul, Chapter IX

The pages of Manuscript B are perhaps among the most treasured and the most stirring written by St. Therese in the *Story of A Soul*. Her thoughts on love recorded there open her heart to the reader and allow others to see the path she followed to heaven. Therese relates that the sum of her knowledge is "the science of LOVE," a phrase she borrows from the revelations to St. Margaret Mary Alocoque.[35] The Saint indicates the centrality of love in her spiritual life with texts such as, "The science of love, ah, yes, this word resounds sweetly in the ear of my soul, and I desire only this science,"[36] and "I understand so well that it is only love that makes us acceptable to God, that this love is the only good I ambition."[37]

Therese continues, saying that complete and trustful surrender to God leads souls to the love that the Lord wishes to pour out. A soul's loving oblation to God makes the soul, in the Saint's terms, "little," as a child who sleeps without fear in its Father's arms.[38] Furthermore, the Saint reflects that God desires only the love of His creatures, a fact in which Therese exults.[39] The next ten pages comprise the heart of Therese's reflections on love, and they are addressed directly to Jesus.

The limitations of the present study make it impossible to exhaustively examine Therese's words on love in Chapter IX, but there are a few invaluable texts for the study of oblation. St. Therese's recollections on her "vocation" produced an unforgettable passage, which culminates with the famous line, "O Jesus, my Love…my *vocation*, at last I have found it…MY VOCATION IS LOVE!"[40] Many ideas that Therese includes in her *Act* recur here, not the least of which is that, for Therese, "love" truly vivifies her entire life and satisfies all her desires in a dynamic way.

Therese continues with a reflection on victimhood and her *Act of Oblation*. The Saint begins by recalling her weakness and powerlessness, but, as she says, it is *in* and *because of* these things that she had the boldness of offering herself as, "*VICTIM of Your Love, O Jesus!*"[41] Therese recalls that before Christ, pure, spotless victims were offered to God's justice, to satisfy the demands of the "law of fear," but that the "*law of love*" has succeeded to the former law.[42] She continues, "In order that Love be fully satisfied, it is necessary that It lower Itself, and that It lower Itself to nothingness and transform this nothingness into *fire*."[43]

St. Therese adds a few more nuances to her presentation in the final pages of Chapter IX. She writes, "O Jesus, I know it, love is repaid by love alone, and so I searched and I found the way to solace my heart by giving you Love for Love."[44] In this statement, Therese meditates on the means she found of responding to God's merciful love with the words of John of the Cross.[45] The Little Flower gave Love for Love, repaying the gift of love that God first gave her with the self-same love that she received from Him—total, self-giving love.

Therese presents an allegory of the little bird, the Divine or the Adorable Eagle, and the Divine Sun for which she longs, signifying respectively: herself,

Christ, and the Father, the "burning Abyss of Love to which it [the little bird] has offered itself as victim."[46] The Saint holds the desire to be united with God in perfect love first in her heart. Therese desires to be so conformed to Love that she is truly and definitively one with Him. The Little Flower identifies Love with God, and sees the inner life of God as nothing other than the Sun of Love, the burning Abyss of Love.[47]

Therese recalls the idea of oblation in the final paragraph of Chapter IX, where she wishes for "a legion of *little* souls."[48] The Saint does not think that this gift of offering oneself totally in and through love to He who is Love by the power of His love and in response to His own primary, perfect self-gift is reserved to her alone. Rather, revealing her apostolic zeal, Therese "begs" God, "to choose a legion of *little* Victims worthy of Your LOVE!"[49] This passage also indicates the Saint's primary concern; namely, that God be loved, and that souls offer themselves to His love to be consumed, transformed, and perfected, especially souls who have no "great" things to offer, nothing save themselves—*little* souls.

Conclusions

Rev. Francois Jamart masterfully analyzes Therese's spiritual doctrine in his book, *The Complete Spiritual Doctrine of St. Therese of Lisieux*, including some observations concerning oblation. First, Therese does not directly desire suffering, but the perfect completion of the will of God and the full fruition of love.[50] Therese's attitude towards suffering is one of acceptance, while her primary object and motivation is love alone.

Second, Jamart writes that Therese's self-offering in her *Act of Oblation* cannot be simply spoken, but must be lived continually as a way of life. He who offers himself as Therese does must strive to make his entire life a continuous act of love, understanding that the full realization of this objective occurs only once one has ceased to sin, that is, in heaven.[51]

Finally, the Carmelite scholar asserts the centrality of love in Therese's spirituality. He writes, "Love is its [Theresian Spirituality's] root principle, the motive power that sustains its activity; love is also its end."[52] Jamart concludes his analysis with these words of Therese, "To love is to give everything, and most of all to give oneself; it is ONLY THE ENTIRE IMMOLATION OF SELF THAT CAN BE CALLED LOVE."[53] As Jamart affirms, this statement certainly epitomizes Therese's entire life.

Any comprehension of Therese's concept of oblation must reflect on love, and continue to return to this most pivotal reality to plumb the depths of what it means for Therese to be a "victim of love." Directed by the master of the little way, the searching soul can progress in its quest for the heavenly homeland by examining and applying to itself Theresian oblation to merciful love.

The concept of oblation in Christian theology finds its origin in the kenotic self-revelation of God, and particularly in the canonical Gospels. The clearest instantiation of a "victim of love" is Jesus, the crucified and risen-again Son of God, given out of, through, and in love.

St. Therese acts as the herald of a way that leads to holiness and beatitude. She begs that God raise up a legion of little souls to be victims of love. Becoming a "victim" as Therese understands it (i.e., a "victim of merciful love") is one way to understand and respond to Jesus' call to be His disciple. Fundamentally, being a "victim of love" is a complete expression of love throughout the whole of one's person and life. ✠

Notes

1 St. Therese of Lisieux, "Act of Oblation to Merciful Love," in *Story of A Soul*, (Trans. by John Clark, O.C.D. Washington, DC: ICS Publications, Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1972,) pp. 276-277.

2 *Story of A Soul*, p. 20.

3 Ibid, p. 279.

4 *Story of A Soul*, p. 77. Unless noted otherwise, all emphasis belongs to Therese.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid, p. 79.

7 Ibid, p. 80.

8 Ibid.

9 Ibid.

10 1 Kgs 19:12-13

11 *Story of A Soul*, p. 80.

12 Ibid, p. 99.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid, pp. 143-144.

15 Ibid, p. 174.

16 Ibid, p. 175.

17 Ibid, p. 178.

18 Ibid, pp. 178-179. The first quote is from *Spiritual Canticle*, Stz. 26 & 28. The second quote is from another of John's poems, "*Without support yet with support*," which has been printed as number 11 in Kavanaugh's edition of St. John's *Collected Works*, 1991.

19 Ibid, p. 180.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid, pp. 180-181.

22Ibid.

23 *Act of Oblation*, p. 277.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Ibid.

28 *Act of Oblation*, p. 277.

29 Ibid, p. 277.

30 Ibid.

31 *Story of A Soul*, p. 180.

32 *Act of Oblation*, p. 277.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 "Words to St. Margaret Mary Alocoque from Our Lord, as found in the *Little Breviary of the Sacred Heart*." *Story of a Soul*, p. 187, see footnote 229.

36 Ibid, pp. 187-188.

37 Ibid, p. 188.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid, pp. 188-189.

40 Ibid, pp. 192-194.

41 Ibid, p. 195.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid. Footnote 246 gives the reference, *Spiritual Canticle* Stz. 9, no. 7. Therese inscribed these words, "Love is repaid by love alone" on her coat of arms.

46 Ibid, p. 200.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Francois Jamart, *The Complete Spiritual Doctrine of St. Therese of Lisieux*, Trans. by Rev. Walter Van De Putte, C. S. SP., (New York: Alba House, 1961), pp. 155-157.

51 Ibid, pp. 149-155.

52 Ibid, p. 294.

53 Ibid, capitalization his.

Historical Perspective on the Issue of Racism and Evolutionism: The Problem of Secularism

by Fr. Joseph M. De Torre, Ph. D., University Professor Emeritus, Social and Political Philosophy, University of Asia and the Pacific, Pearl Drive, Ortigas Center 1605, Pasig City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Introduction

One of the most notorious degenerations we have witnessed in our time, with well-known devastating effects for humanity, is the ideology of *racism*, or the belief in the biological, genetic and cultural superiority of one race (*ethnos* in Greek) over the others. But it is a matter of scientific, logical and historical accuracy to see the essential links of this ideology with its twin ideology of *evolutionism*, as a degeneration of a concept of biological evolution. The latter is a scientific matter, whereas evolutionism is a philosophical matter.

The website on Racism devotes 35 pages to the topic, reporting that "since the last quarter of the 20 century, there have been few in developed nations who describe themselves as *racist*, which has become a pejorative term, so that identification of a group or person as *racist* is nearly always controversial. Racism is regarded by all but racists as an unacceptable affront to basic human dignity and a violation of human rights. A number of international treaties have sought to end racism. The United Nations uses a definition of **racist discrimination** laid out in the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* and adopted in 1966:

> …any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life."

However, the report compiles a list of no less than 27 countries affected by racism! Let us now examine the link between racism and evolutionism in historical perspective.

Overall View

In mid-18 century, the famous *Encyclopedia* appeared: it was the great work of the Enlightenment period. In the world of education (cultural spheres) the chief product of the Enlightenment was the Encyclopedia, and in the political field the chief product was the French Revolution. In the *Encyclopedia*, Denis Diderot (1713-1 784), its editor, revived the whole issue of evolution.

The theory of evolution states that all living species have evolved from lower to higher (complex) types of life. This theory goes back to the time of the ancient Greeks. They had a mythical belief, a supposition that higher forms of life must have evolved from lower forms of life. The theory did not develop very much, since no science ever took up this idea again. What about the Bible? Or in other words, the traditions of Jews, Christians and Muslims? Since the Bible is a religious book, whereas evolution is a scientific matter, God, to put it simply, is not interested in teaching man science because he can and should study it by himself. What one cannot teach his own self by science is how to go to eternal life. There is nothing in the Bible against man evolving, *as regards his body,* from other species. The Bible says that God took up a piece of matter or earth and infused his own spirit into that piece of matter to give it life. Thus according to the Bible, the human soul could not come from anything material, unlike the body.

As regards the creation of the world in six days according to the Bible (*Genesis*), the Fathers and Doctors of the Church from the very beginning unanimously said that "day" must be allegorically understood. The "day" which Moses used in *Genesis* did not refer literally to a 24-hour period. Hence, the language used here in the Bible is purely poetical or metaphorical and intends to give man a very important message, that is, that God is the creator of all things that exist. Therefore, the "day" used in *Genesis* could refer to millions or billions of years, and because of this, it is possible that there could have been an evolution. So the Bible neither affirms nor denies explicitly the theory of evolution.

However, there were scientists, particularly those who revived the theory of evolution, who thought that it was contrary to the Bible and therefore, there was a problem between religion and science. Diderot did not mention explicitly this problem or conflict for they were afraid of censorship considering that France at the time was still under the absolutist Bourbon monarchy and the *Gallican* (nationalized) Church subject to it. Attacking the Church before the French Revolution was equivalent to attacking the State. Nevertheless, Diderot managed to bring up the whole idea of the theory of evolution: the idea that this theory would go against the Church eventually.

The Freemasons during the early 18-century were behind this move of resurrecting the theory of evolution, which they thought would lead to the destruction of the Church. The Pope could hardly intervene because of the problem of communication. It was only in 1950, with Pius XII's Encyclical *Humani Generis*, that the authoritative statement of the Church regarding evolution finally came out, as we shall see later. Prior to this papal declaration, there were only opinions of theologians, philosophers and scientists about the controversial theory.

There were two different perspectives: the religious and the scientific. These two are not in conflict since they operate on different levels. Thus, one cannot answer theological questions with science, or vice versa. There can be correlations and parallels between them, but there are no direct links. Among the scientists, there were two factions: one the "fixists", led by Carl Linnaeus (1707-1778) and Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707-1788) (no evolution) and the other, the "transformists", led by Jean-Baptiste Lamarck (1744-1 829), (in favor of evolution).

Jean-Baptiste Lamarck

Diderot had already died when the French Revolution broke out, which was followed by a period of turbulence and then finally settled down with the rise of the absolutism of Napoleon Bonaparte. After his downfall in 1815, the figure of Jean-Baptiste Lamarck came into the scene. Lamarck was a biologist—a pure scientist— fascinated by the theory of evolution. His belief in the theory led him to make a thorough study of living species. He went deep into botany and zoology in order to determine how species had developed while at the same time accepting entirely the Greek idea of gradual evolution.
Taking into account the theological problem of the theory of evolution, Lamarck brought up the following questions: What determines the different development of evolution? Is there any force or any law behind the evolution that would guide the process of evolution and that would determine the changes from one species to another? What determines *mutations* of species and what are their causes? He had the distinction of being the first evolutionist to propose a theory of evolution identifying the cause of mutations or processes that lead to transformations. Soon after would come the important figures of Charles Lyell, Robert Chambers, Alfred Russell Wallace and Charles Darwin.

During Lamarck's time, the theory of evolution was also called "transformism," i.e., the belief that there is an evolution from a lower to a higher form through transformation or mutation. To answer his question about the causes of mutations, he proposed his theory. He believed that answer lies in the idea that "the function creates the organ". He explained that if a living thing needs to perform a certain function, it is the needs of the species that necessitate a certain function, and this function then, little by little, develops an organ. He tried to prove his theory through numerous examples in plants and animals.

Charles Darwin

The classical work on evolution, has been considered to be the *Origin of Species* of Charles Darwin (1809-1882)[1] published in 1859, and hailed by Karl Marx as the "scientific confirmation" of his own dialectical (evolutionary) materialism.[2] But this famous work exhibits in its very subtitle the link between racism and evolutionism. The complete title (and sub-title) of the book is *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*.

Darwin borrowed the expression "struggle for life" from Thomas Maithus's *Essay on the Principles of Population* of 1803, and the expression "survival of the fittest" from Herbert Spencer's *Social Statics* of 1850. Thus he constructed his theory of evolution as the result of a "natural selection" of the "favoured races" due to a better adaptation of these to a competitive environment. He also borrowed these ideas from his fellow naturalist Alfred Russell Wallace (1823- 1913), who published his essay on "natural selection" the year before Darwin's work, after a long period of exploration in the Amazon, and a reading of the works of Charles LyelI and Robert Chambers, on the "vestiges" of evolution.

Herbert Spencer

Darwin borrowed the idea about the struggle for survival and made it his own theory, i.e. the "survival of the strongest". The phrase "the survival of the fittest" was coined by Herbert Spencer (1820- 1903), a younger contemporary of Darwin who wrote his works a few years before Darwin. Spencer wrote from the standpoint of the social scientist, whereas Darwin, wrote form the standpoint of the biologist. Both of them converged into the same theory of evolution, which is in the expression of Darwin and Spencer "the survival of the strongest or the fittest." Darwin then transferred this idea to the evolution of all living species (not only to men) that struggle for survival. In this struggle, the weak are eliminated through a natural selection caused by a better adaptation to the environment.

The theory of Darwin was paralleled by Spencer, who concentrated the application of his theory to societies. But he would also talk of a "force" that brings societies and individuals into conflict with one another and those who are better fitted in combat are the ones who will survive. The theory of Spencer was subsequently applied by social scientists to the field of business-capitalism. They call this application, "Social Darwinism." According to this theory, those who are stronger in business competition swallow up those who are weaker. Hence, a businessman must

be ruthless in destroying his competitors. Of course, Marx used this as a missile against capitalism. As for Spencer's "force", it was brought to the screen later in the *Star Wars* series.

Spencer was an agnostic, a nominal Christian like Lamarck. But Darwin, an Anglican, was very much concerned with religion, and disturbed when he saw an apparent conflict with his religion. He could not see how to reconcile the Bible with the evolution of the species. According to his theory, he thought, there was no room for a Creator and a divine providence, than things happen only by chance, because the adaptation to the environment by natural selection was not guided by any outside force, but simply by the instinct for survival. This is why he ended up abandoning his Christian faith (Anglican). We shall discuss all this matter later. But we now focus our attention again on racism and its links with evolutionism.

Racism in Retrospect

The belief in the superiority of certain races had already arisen in ancient China and Greece as already noted. The Chinese term for "China" is "central kingdom", with a neat differentiation from the "outsiders".[3] And as for the Greeks, we can recall Thales' famous dictum: "I thank fortune for three things. First, that I am human, and not a beast. Second, that I am a man, and not a woman. And third, that I am a Greek and not a foreigner (*xenos* or *barbaros*). From *xenos* comes *xenophalia* (hate of the strangers), and *barbaros* is an onomatopeic sound mocking at foreign accent).[4]

The Romans inherited this racial and cultural pride which largely inspired the mutation from the Roman Republic to the Roman Empire, just as it had happened before with the rise of Alexander's Hellenic Empire from the political unification of all the Greek City States. It is a sort of collective or cultural conceit to be often found in empires.[5]

The Monotheistic Religions

The case of Israel, and later Islam, is also significant, since in both cases, the idea of a "chosen people of God" is tied to a particular race, namely the two branches of the Semitic Abraham (2000 B.C.), issuing respectively from Isaac (Israelites, later narrowed down to Jews) and Ishmael (Arabs) although in both cases too, their racial consciousness is somewhat balanced by a universalist view of an earthly "kingdom of God" to be finally established through the mediation of their chosen race. They do not regard their race as genetically or culturally superior to others, but as entrusted by God with the mission of bringing all races and nations into the people of God.[6]

The impact of Christianity, with its radical equality of all human beings (having the same origin, nature and destiny, and thereby having the same dignity) is in this respect the turning point of the history of mankind, ever since divided into two periods: B. C. and A. D., before and after Christ. This fundamental equalization of all men and women as children of the same Father in Heaven, has been consistently preserved in the Christianity of the Catholic Church, without degenerating into a "democratism" or socialist leveling or egalitarianism, let alone into an elitism or radical inequality. While essentially all human persons are indeed equal, existentially we are obviously all different.[7]

Christianity was thus and continues to be the most resolute critic of racism as we shall see below, but more specifically the Catholic Church, particularly since the momentous developments of the I 6 century, when the Council of Trent endorsed and officially proclaimed the teachings of Salamanca theologians (notably, Francisco de Vitoria) on the fundamental equality of all races (since all human persons are capable of salvation), endowed all of them with the same human rights, against those who wanted to justify the conquest of the Americas by an alleged racial superiority. The same Ecumenical Council rejected as well the Protestant inclination to an elitism of "chosen or predestined people" who would exclude the rest.[8] The main biblical texts supporting the Catholic position on salvation and predestination were Phil 2:12, and I Tim 2:4.

Further Rationalizing of Racism

The Romantic *Volksgeist* arising in the 18th century ignited the fire of racism once again, initially mingled with the nationalism of the French Revolution, and the German reaction of Johnson Fichte and George Hegel, developing into a more explicit racism with Frederick Nietzsche and Richard Wagner.[9] This Pan-Germanism was then followed by the similar movements of Slavophilism, Pan-Arabism and the alleged superiority of the Anglo-Saxon races. The influence of Catholicism however, kept Spain, Portugal and their overseas possessions[10] (as well as Poland and Ireland) almost free from those forms of racism.

Just five years before the publication of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, the Count de Gobineau (1816-1882) ushered in the modern ideology of biological (later to be called genetic) racism, with the publication in Paris of the four volumes of his *Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines*, in which, gathering ideas form Nietzsche's superiority of the Germanic race, with the gradual degradation of all other races by mixtures, and the survival of the "degenerate" Jewish race, which was therefore the enemy of civilization.

The Frenchman Gobineau was then echoed by the Englishman Houston Stewart Chamberlain (1855-1927), who, after studying in Germany became a German citizen and married Wagner daughter. In 1899 he published *Die Grundlagen des XIX Jahrhunderts*. (The Bases of the 20 Century), echoing Gobinaeau's ideas. And later the Nazi intellectual leader Alfred Rosenberg's book *The Myth of the 20thCentury* (a classic of racism) was published in 1933, the year of the Nazi victory in the national elections of the tottering Weimar Republic, about to become Hitler's Third Reich and plunge the world into the horrors of World War II.

Racism and Evolutionism

But, as observed earlier, this racism was intermingled with the ideology of evolutionism, as distinct from the biological theory of evolution, which remains a scientific theory. The ideology of evolutionism, as found in Diderot, Hegel, Marx, Spencer, Darwin, W. James, and numerous modern historicists and relativists, tends to absolutize evolution, eliminating everything permanent. And it is to be found, as at its most profound root, in Hegel's Heraclitan dialectical becoming, later adopted by Marx.

The ideology of genetic racism, after the Nazi collapse, has survived in the ideology of evolutionism with the struggle of the "favoured races" against the unfit and "non-worth-living" (a Nazi expression), now applied especially to the unborn and the elderly and handicapped. It is maintained by groups like the Ku-Klux-Klan and other dangerous fanatics convinced of their genetic superiority. The Nazis legislated *eugenics* or selective breeding in search of Nietzsche's superman, with movements along these lines revived in contemporary secularistic world.

Stand of the Catholic Church

The opposition against racism comes not only from the Catholic Church, but from all those who recognize the philosophical and scientific evidence which proves its falsehood and baselessness, and hence its irrationality, namely

(a) philosophically, the study of the human being reveals a uniform psychosomatic nature endowed with powers transcending all material conditions of space and time, regardless of race, and

(b) scientifically, human anatomy, physiology and genetics exhibit a uniform pattern to be observed substantially in all races (with merely accidental "racial differences"): this accounts for the practice of medicine with all kinds of patients, regardless of race.

Pius XII

In 1950, as already mentioned, Pius XII issued an Encyclical entitled, *Humani Generis*, dealing with this and other philosophical topics. The Pope wrote that science and religion are two different realms, two distinct fields of knowledge, and there is no conflict between them. If one steps beyond his field of inquiry then he must use a different type of methodology or approach. He may have to be theological or philosophical. If one wants to ask questions that are beyond the scope of science then he must change his approach. Science cannot go beyond realities which cannot be quantified (remember Aquinas' scientific method). The human

soul, for example, cannot be measured by science, since it cannot be quantified, as Wallace noted against Darwin.

There is nothing in the Bible against believing in evolution or in trying to study or prove it. But scientists must not be dogmatic, as Karl Popper demonstrated. In fact, they have learned that scientific theories are subject to change. One thing they must remember regarding the soul is that it is beyond science. Only philosophy can go into this question. And philosophy shows, by experience, that the human mind has the power to dominate matter, to go beyond the limits of space and time. Thus, it is impossible for matter to create a human soul because the soul exceeds the power of matter infinitely. And thus, even if one can prove that man comes from monkeys, one has to admit that a human soul cannot come from any monkey. It can only be created by an infinite being that has infinite power: only an infinite being can create the human soul. Whether one is talking about this or that man, and regardless of his origin, the spirit of the human being comes from God. Therefore, the human soul cannot "evolve" because it is a direct creation of God.

Furthermore, it is all right to believe in the theory of evolution as long as one recognizes the fact that all human beings come from one single pair. The reason for this is that every human mind is capable of infinity regardless of his race or any physiological differentiation. All men and women are anatomically the same in structure and the human mind has the same structure and functions (logic), i.e. the way people think and make decisions. Thus, all this points to a single principle, a single pair. This point is confirmed in the Bible. It is confirmed particularly when God made the first man and woman and that everybody else came from them. There is no basis then for racism.

The Pope was very careful in defending *monogenism* (origin from one pair), since *polygenism*, or origin from many pairs, can lead to racism, or the belief that some races are superior to others, which the Church condemns since it is contrary to the Bible. But racism can also be proved wrong both scientifically and philosophically, as already noted.

Thomas Aquinas

The question about evolution needs to be studied within the framework of metaphysics. Metaphysical anthropology shows the ultimate or absolute reality of man and the necessity for a Creator who creates all that exists and on whom all things depend[11]. In fact, St. Thomas Aquinas casually points out that indeed God created everything good, but that everything God created is capable of improvement, and therefore left the door open for the possible evolution of creatures. St. Thomas brings up the question, "Does this mean that God created an imperfect world? Is this not unworthy of God?" St. Thomas replies by saying that it shows more wisdom, goodness and power on the part of God to create something imperfect but capable of perfection. If God had made man perfect at the beginning he would indeed show his power; but if he made him imperfect but capable of perfecting himself by lending him all the powers he needed to perfect himself, this indicates greater wisdom and power as well as goodness by sharing his creative power with man. Hence, it is possible that there was an evolution and that the perfection of the universe is left to inner potentialities of matter and the cooperation of man[12].

John Paul II

Finally, in a speech of John Paul II to the Pontifical Academy of the Sciences in October 1996, he made a statement to the effect that the theory (or theories) of evolution can be already considered more than a mere hypothesis, although he reiterated the provisos of Pius XII[13].

Liturgical memorial of St. Martin de Porres

And as for the stand of the Catholic Church on racism, the Holy See issued an official document on November 3, 1988 (Liturgical memorial of St. Martin de Porres, born in Lima of a Spanish father and a black slave mother), in which, after giving the highlights of the history of racism and of the Church's attitude toward it, it ends as follows:

"Racism and racist acts must be condemned. The

application of legislative and administrative measures, or even appropriate external pressure, can be timely. Countries and international organizations have at their disposal a whole range of initiatives to be taken or encouraged. It is equally the responsibility of the citizens concerned, but without, for that reason, going so far as to replace violently one unjust situation with another injustice. Constructive solutions must always be envisaged.

"The Catholic Church encourages all these efforts. The Holy See has its role to play in the context of its specific mission. All Catholics are invited to work concretely side by side with other Christians and all those who have this same respect for persons. The Church wants first and foremost to change racist attitudes, including those within her own communities. She appeals first of all to the moral and religious sense of people. She states exigencies but uses fraternal persuasion, her only weapon. She asks God to change hearts. She offers a place for reconciliation. She would like to see promoted initiatives of welcome, of exchange and of mutual assistance as regards men and women belonging to ethnic groups. Her mission is to give soul to this immense undertaking of human fraternity. Despite the sinful limitations of her members, yesterday and today, she is aware of having been constituted a witness to Christ's charity on earth, a sign and instrument of the humanity of mankind. The message she proposes to everyone, and which she tries to live: "Every person is my brother or sister".

The Opposition Against Darwin

There were many who accepted these theories, popularized by Thomas Huxley, Ernst Haeckel and William James among others, though always with heavy opposition. And the debate continues up to our time, with even a revival of Lamarck's ideas and a rediscovery of Aristotle's idea of teleology or purposiveness in nature: the so called "intelligent design" theory.

According to some of his critics, Darwin's first mistake was in his logical fallacy of a "circular argument" (proving *a* by *b*, and *b* by *a*). His argument was as follows. Natural selection is what brings about mutations. But what brings about the natural selection which gives rise to mutations? The answer is the better adaptation to the environment. But what makes the species better adapted to the environment? The answer is natural selection.

Another fallacy, detected by other critics, is that of "unwarranted generalization" in affirming that all is struggle for survival in the animal and vegetable kingdoms. But the whole truth is that both in nature and in society, all is not a matter of survival or struggle. Competition coexists with cooperation, enmity with friendliness.

Alfred Russell Wallace

To refute Darwin is not to refute the theory of evolution as such but rather the way Darwin explains the theory. One must not fall into the mistake of identifying Darwin with the theory of evolution. The most effective critic of Darwin was his colleague and fellow biologist and countryman, Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913). Wallace agreed with Darwin that evolution did happen but he disagreed with Darwin's explanation. Wallace set the pace towards the reassessment of the whole issue of evolution.

Alfred Wallace began as a biologist who studied species and concluded that an evolution had taken place. However, it was impossible to believe that this evolution took place *by chance*, because there is an overwhelming evidence of *finality* (teleology) in nature, i.e. an indication that there is a *design* behind the whole process. And the role of man in the universe is precisely to discover the mind the whole process. This led him towards the Catholic position because he knew that the Catholic Church was not against the theory as such but only to a "chance evolution"[14]

Hegel was the precursor of evolutionism with his philosophy that nothing is fixed, that everything is in continuous evolution via the dialectics or clashes of opposites. Then, Marx, agreeing with Darwin, applied these ideas to the struggle of classes in society, which he called dialectical materialism.[15]

But there were many evolutionists definitely against Darwin, namely: William James (1842-1941), Henri Bergson (1859-1941), Conwy Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936), Samuel Alexander (1859-1938), Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1995). They called themselves "emergent evolutionists" because what they had in

common was that they detected a force behind the evolution that is superior to matter. They were not thoroughly materialists and therefore not in favor of reducing all evolution to the struggle of material forces. For them, the existence of the creative spirit is a necessity that reason can see by discovering the finality in nature and the existence of a superior force called by Bergson élan vital (vital thrust). The ideas of these evolutionists may lead towards pantheism, although none of them were actually pantheists.[16]

Empiricism, Evolutionism and Secularism

The British empiricist tradition dates back to Roger Bacon and the growing interest in experimental sciences in the 13th century, reaching to William of Ockhan in the 14th and Francis Bacon in the16th. This empiricism became an actual system of philosophy with Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), who was born at the dawn of the expansion of Britain into a world empire. Marxism praises Hobbes for having made a systematic and explicit treatment of Francis Bacon's implicit materialism.[17]

Empiricists agree with Descartes' rationalism in the following:

(a) the field of existence or reality in reduced in effect to what can be known by the human mind. The result is agnosticism with regard to whatever surpasses it, and faith is perceived as something irrational, emotional, or volitional—either below or above reason, in order to reach what reason cannot know.

(b) Clear and distinct ideas are taken as the model for all valid knowledge, and as a criterion for truth.

On the other hand, empiricism differs from rationalism in the meaning they attach to the terms "mind" and "ideas": for the empiricists, mind is equivalent to sensible consciousness and ideas are equivalent to sense perceptions. Empiricists consider sense perception as more clear and distinct than abstract ideas. Thus they tend to absolutize reality overreacting to the traditionalist disdain for it. In its radical form, empiricism perceived the difference between man and animal only to be one of degree, not of kind.

The Theory of Evolution

The empiricist tradition from Ockham to Hume generally ousted religion from objective reality and led to this equation of humanity and animality. And it has paved the way for the radical materialism of Marx, akin to the evolution according to Darwin, which sees human life arising totally from below, as emerging all of it from the depth of animality.

However, this is a failure to perceive the essential distinction between the essentiality active *creativity* of the former, and the *passive subservience* of the latter, thoroughly dominated by man's mind or spirit. This confusion also clouds *the true merits of the theory of evolution*.

As already noted, the *biological theo*ry of evolution and the philosophy of evolution are two different matters. The former simply observes as an empirical science that life seems to have evolved through mutation over millions of years until the human species appeared. This theory, as long as it does not step over into the field of metaphysics to claim that the *totality* of human life has emerged from matter, is compatible with both a divine creation of all reality from, and a divine creation of each human soul. This is how Alfred Russell Wallace (1823-1913) presented his theory of evolution in his *Darwinism: An Exposition of the Theory of Natural Selection* (1889) and *Man's Place in the Universe* (1903).

The Catholic Church clarified her point in Pius XlI's encyclical *Humani Generis* of 1950. This encyclical also declared itself against racism by upholding *monogenism*, (all humans originating from one single pair) against *polygenism*, on (a) philosophical grounds (the one human nature common to all humans); (b) scientific grounds (the one medical science applicable to all humans), and (c) theological grounds (the biblical account).

The materialist *philosophy* of evolution (evolutionism), on the other hand, claims that reality is nothing but pure becoming. Reality, however, is not just evolution; and change because of their potentiality, and that by abstraction, we do grasp the *permanence of things.*

Lamarck early in the 19th century presented a philosophical reason for evolution with his theory

that "function creates the organ". Evolution was rationalized further when Spencer started talking about the "survival of the fittest". Malthus in 1799 had even written of the "struggle of life" among men to convince the world to control population. When finally Charles Darwin (1809-1882) came up with the idea of "natural selection", it seemed that dialectics ruled even the biological world. The so-called natural selection refers to an elimination of the lower forms of life in the process of evolution. Many species and individuals must supposedly be sacrificed in the struggle for survival: as the stronger survives, the weaker loses (this is the cut throat competition or the rat race). Darwin was implicitly a racist: he presumed that there is a stronger race that outlives the others, just as Nietzsche's superman and Hitler's pure Aryan.

Darwin jumbled biological evidence with metaphysical ideas. Hegel already applied the idea of "natural selection" in his dialectics of the human spirit: God is continually becoming and moving toward the perfection of the human spirit. Similar ideas are found in William James, Conwy Lloyd Morgan and Samuel Alexander.

Marx, as already noted, welcomed Darwin's *Origin of Species* in 1859 as the "scientific confirmation" of his own dialectical materialism. He followed Hegel's philosophy but substituting "mankind as a collectivity for human spirit". Whichever way, both Marx and Hegel reduced all reality to idea; Marx equated reality to matter—matter in constant opposition, conflict and change. Darwin's main works appeared between The *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) and *Das Kapital* (1867). The radical absence of anything transcending matter shows up above all in Marxian economics as Thomas Sowell has conclusively shown in his *Marxism: Philosophy and Economics*.[18]

All this is secularism or also called secular humanism[19] that is, the enclosing of the human mind within itself, rejecting all transcendence. Although older than Marxism, it has outlasted it, and after the collapse of the latter, it is now as aggressive as ever, and even organized on an international basis. Having reduced all reality to evolutionary self-making matter or energy, it naturally sees human life as part of this process, to be manipulated in accordance with hedonism (seek pleasure and avoid pain) with the logical consequences of unrestricted sex, contraception, homosexual practice, sterilization, abortion, euthanasia and so forth, as well as the selfish consumerism that goes with them. All this spells the disastrous destruction of the family and its values, and thereby of human society, whose salvation, therefore, lies in openness to transcendent reality.

The **II Vatican Council**, after having stated (in no. 36 of *Gaudium et Spes*) the positive value of *secularity* or the rightful autonomy of earthly affairs, and the capacity of mankind for indefinite earthly progress, turns its attention to the evil of *secularism*.

"But if the expression, the independence of temporal affairs, is taken to mean that created things do not depend on God, and that man can use them, without reference to their Creator, anyone who acknowledges God will see how false such a meaning is. For without the Creator, the creature would disappear. For their part, however, all believers of whatever religion have always heard His revealing voice in the discourse of creatures. But when God is forgotten, the creature itself grows unintelligible".

The "death of God" (Nietzsche) leads to the "death of man", the ultimate "deconstruction" of man, the dead-end of nihilism.[18]

Conclusion

The issues of racism, evolutionism, and secularism are therefore intertwined. This paper has tried to show their connection and proposed a solution based on the transcendence of the human person. ✠

Endnotes

[1] Cf. the author's *Generation and Degeneration: A Survey of Ideologies* (Manila: SEASFI, 1995), Chapter 14; *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, (Pasig City: University of Asia and the Pacific, 1997) 2 ed. Chapter XX, 1; and *Contemporary Philosophical Issues in Historical Perspective*, (Pasig City: University of Asia and the Pacific, 2001), Chapter 14. See also Henri Daniel-Rops, *The Church in an Age of Revolution* (New York: Image Books, 1970).

[2] Cf. *The Humanism of Modern Philosophy*, Chapter XVII. Also, the author's *Marxism, Socialism and Christianity,* 2 ed. (Manila: SEASFI, 1983).

[3] Cf. the author's ("Chinese Confucian Tradition and the West: The Contribution of Matteo Ricci, S.J. (1552-1610) and Its Relevance Today"), UNITAS: UST Publishing, Vol. 77, No. 1, March 2004.
[4] A more recent example of xenopholia is expressed in the counsel of Wyatt Earp's father to his sons: Remember that what is real is blood. The others are strangers.
[5] Cf. the author's (Occasional Paper No. 8), "The Identity of Europe as Cradle of Both Imperialism and Democracy. Are They Both Utopias?" (Pasig City: University of Asia and the Pacific, September 2004).
[6] Cf. the author's, *Contemporary Philosophical Issues in Historical Perspectiv*e, Chapter 20.
[7] *op. cit.*, Chapter 2l.
[8] Cf. the author's article, "The Roots of the International Law and Teachings of Francisco de Vitoria", *Ave Maria Law Review*, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 2004.
[9] Cf. the author's *The Humanism of Modem Philosophy*, Chapters XII, XIII and XIX, 3. Also *Being Is Person: Personalism and Human Transcendence in Socio-Economic and Political Philosophy* (Pasig City: University of Asia and the Pacific, 2005), Chapter X.
[10] The "New Laws of the Indies" promulgated by Emperor Charles V, in 1542 under pressure from Pope Paul III, had outlawed all racial discriminations and given equal rights to all.
[11] Cf. the author's *Christian Philosophy*, 1 ed., (Manila: Vera-Reyes, 1980), Part V.12 See especially S. Th., I, 66, 1, and 73, 1.
[13] See the discussion on this matter in the October 1997, January 1998, May, August and September 1998 issues of *Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. More recently, another discussion flared up after an article by Cardinal Christoph Schonberg, Archbishop of Vienna, published in *The New York Times*, July 2005.
[14] Cf. his website.
[15] See notes I and 2.
[16] Cf. *The Humanism of Modern Phi*losophy, Chapter XX, 2.
[17] Cf. *op. cit.*, Chapter VIII.
[18] New York; William Morrow & Co., 1985, Chapter 10.
[19] Cf. *Generation and Degeneration: A Survey of Ideologies* (Manila:SEASFI, 1995), Chapter 15.

BOOK REVIEW ESSAY

Fr. Charles Curran and Pope John Paul II

The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II, Charles Curran, Georgetown University Press: Washington, D.C., (2005)

Reviewed by J. Michael McDermott, S.J. Pontifical College Josephinum, Ohio

Since Fr. Curran's moral theology has been judged and found wanting by the Vatican, it is scarcely surprising that the moral theology of Pope John Paul II should be found wanting when judged according to the canons of Fr. Curran. His new book, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*, continues the critique enunciated in previous writings.[1] Given the respect due to the papal magisterium in Catholic theology, it cannot be treated like any individual theologian. Neither does Fr. Curran treat the pope as just another theologian. He examines only his papal pronouncements, leaving aside the metaphysical and moral studies which K. Wojtyla previously published. This omission allows him to force John Paul into preconceived categories and judge his theology insufficient for the modern world. Although Fr. Curran avows his determination to be fair (6), the various inconsistencies turned up in John Paul's thought might have been understood better if he had analyzed the philosophical foundations of the pope's moral doctrine. *Fides et Ratio*, quoted by Curran (18-19), insisted upon the metaphysical foundations of moral theory and Curran previously admitted the

same truth in other writings.[2]

Fr. Curran does not deliberately distort the pope's teaching. Admittedly he indulges in psychologizing his opponent, attributing John Paul's failure to develop a doctrine about sexual pleasure to fear of it (172). He similarly exceeds the role of an honest broker when he rebukes the pope for what he did not do or say, e.g., not giving enough importance to self-love and self-fulfillment, whose lack allegedly explains why marriages break down (175-76, 195), nor admitting that subjective responsibility may be lessened or removed in abortion (153) or that the Church long supported patriarchal marriage (199). Annoying also is Curran's tendency to make sweeping accusations without nuance. For example, "Only in the second millennium did the church learn the existence of seven sacraments" (42). "The Vatican position starts with the presupposition that the church and the magisterium, thanks to the activity of the Holy Spirit, have the truth. Consequently no one else can disagree" (136). "The Catholic Church at the beginning of the twentieth century strongly opposed both democracy and human rights" (225). "On the basis of the concept of freedom and its relationship with truth developed by Leo XIII in the nineteenth century, that pope denied religious freedom and called for the union of church and state. Error has no rights" (228). "Leo [XIII] could not accept the teaching espoused by the Declaration of Religious Freedom of Vatican II" (230). On the whole, however, he cites accurately the pope's teachings; only occasionally does he misread the texts. For example, he falsely identifies marriage as the primordial sacrament of redemption (166), whereas John Paul saw marriage as the primordial sacrament of creation and Christ's giving of Himself to His bride, the Church, as the primordial sacrament of redemption. Again, he wrongly writes that *Mulieris Dignitatem* 8 calls God "mother" (190).

The greatest flaw of the volume consists in the superficiality of the presentation. Insofar as Fr. Curran once admitted that his scholarly career had been shaped by his rejection of *Humanae Vitae*,[3] this book seemingly offers another attempt to justify that position. Because John Paul subscribed to *Humanae Vitae*'s doctrine (115-17, 174-76), Curran appears determined to align John Paul's theology with that of adversaries combated forty years back. He fails to appreciate the novelty of the pope's thought that has provided a deeper grounding for a traditional moral doctrine. Otherwise one can hardly understand how he overlooks so much of John Paul's thought, even with his self-imposed limits.

Summary of Contents

The first chapter lays out John Paul's theological presuppositions. The pope stressed the primacy of truth to which freedom must submit. Jesus Christ, the Savior of mankind, was seen primarily as the revealer of truth, the one who "fully reveals man to himself" (*Redemptor Hominis* 10). Sin was understood as a turning away in disobedience from God, His love, and His truth, and the modern world was castigated for abandoning truth. This "crisis of truth" is one root of the culture of death. Curran opines that the sharp papal contrast between the cultures of death and life and his criticisms of modern philosophy endanger traditional Catholic teachings about the basic goodness of creation, reason's possibility of knowing God and the natural law, and God's universal salvific will. He notes also that aside from *Evangelium Vitae* natural law was hardly mentioned in papal encyclicals. Where John Paul accentuated the Church's role in teaching the truth of the gospel and the human person, Curran fears a lack of distinction: "Truth appears as a simple and univocal concept" (28). This fear is obviously concocted and exaggerated. In *Fides et Ratio* 28.30 John Paul recognized various "faces" and "modes" of truth regarding faith, moral norms, and social teachings. He also accepted the distinction between the deposit of faith and its formulation (*Ut Unum Sint* 81) and acknowledged revealed truth's transcendence of human understanding, which allows development of dogma (*Veritatis Splendor* 28, 53, 109). Yet for Curran "the impression from the encyclicals seems to be that they all fall under the same general understanding of truth and its certitude precisely because they are all proposed by the church as authentic teaching due to the assistance of the Holy Spirit" (31). That is anathema to him because in his view the Church cannot have the same certitude regarding concrete moral norms,

like those prohibiting abortion, as is possible with more general norms. Life's complexity prevents that certitude as does historical consciousness which rejects "the classicist notion of truth as something out there, which is then knowable by all" (34). Besides, for centuries the Church's reason illuminated by faith did not perceive various evils, like slavery, as intrinsically evil. The Church has no monopoly on truth but has to learn from others, for the church is human, "a sinful church—always in need of reform and repentance" (38). The pope stressed excessively the divine element in the Church, interpreting it as "the Body of Christ" and "a type of sacrament." Curran prefers other metaphors: "pilgrim people of God," preserving the difference between it and the risen Jesus, and "the herald or servant of the reign of God," preserving the eschatological tension between the fullness of truth and mankind's "shared struggle to arrive at truth" (40-41). If the church has to learn regarding truths of faith, so much more learning is demanded of the Church for moral truths which are based on the natural law. "In the areas of specific moral issues, we usually are not dealing with truths that can be said to belong to the deposit of faith or with truths of faith at all" (42).

On such premises chapter two criticizes John Paul's methodology. As a primary source the pope used Scripture considered as a whole; he did not cite contemporary scholarship nor recognize the diverse moral views of the human authors. This "creative" and "homiletic" method allegedly distorts Scripture by introducing later philosophic concepts into the text and "putting primary emphasis on obedience to the Ten Commandments and laws prohibiting certain actions as always and everywhere wrong" (53). Though John Paul did not often invoke tradition in general, his interpretations distorted the texts of Vatican II—"many people in the Catholic Church feel that John Paul II has not followed the spirit of Vatican II" (58). For he reintroduced a legal model of interpretation favoring a more abstract, deductive approach to social analysis instead of one stressing induction and allowing more room for freedom. An unresolved tension is uncovered in John Paul's appeal to Christ while addressing all men of good will: how can a premise of faith appeal to unbelievers? Curran sees a partial answer in John Paul's use of solidarity, God's universal salvific will, and Christ, the perfect man who "fulfills the 'deepest aspirations of the human spirit'" (69). But John Paul's Christology from above, which subordinates love to truth and overlooks Christ's struggles and doubts, tended to absorb anthropology into itself just as his ecclesiology did. "A more fundamentalist Christianity might insist that Jesus Christ is the only revealer to us of the truth about humankind, but such has never been the Catholic position; nor is it the position adopted in practice by John Paul II" (77). He should have been more nuanced and recognized reason alongside revelation as sources of moral wisdom and knowledge. Measuring papal thought on H. R. Niebuhr's template, Curran finds that a Christ-transforming-culture model was preferred in the social encyclicals, which accepted the notion of sinful structures and developed a theology of work, but *Evangelium Vitae* employed a Christ-against-culture approach denying the goodness of creation and ignoring a common morality based on reason.

The third chapter concerning ethical foundations and method underlines the centrality for John Paul of the dignity of the human person created in God's image. He saw man as one naturally drawn to God whose freedom exists for love's sincere gift of self. Man thus lives in relation to God, himself, his fellows, and all creation. Though John Paul manifested some aspects of teleological thinking and in social morality favored the "relationality-responsibility model" preferred by Curran, his main emphasis for personal morality is deontological, "a legal model based on natural law" (104). *Veritatis Splendor*'s classicist approach stressed deduction, universal norms, and intrinsically evil acts, and the encyclical "at times seems to follow the new natural law theory of Germain Grisez" (112). Curran criticizes the pope for too readily transferring to the natural law characteristics of the eternal, objective, and universal divine law, for identifying the physical or biological act with the moral act (thus failing to acknowledge Pius XII's principle of totality whereby the body is subordinate to personal and spiritual ends), and for ignoring historical conditioning and other limitations affecting reason. No absolute certitude can be claimed for specific moral issues.

The fourth chapter is dedicated to conscience,

human acts, and human life. Fearful that many "emphasize human freedom at the expense of truth," John Paul developed a legal model for conscience, demanding obedience to law, instead of Curran's view whereby subjective peace is "the criterion of a true and correct conscience" (126-29). That view follows from Curran's positions that it is impossible to qualify morally in advance concrete, complex issues and that papal decisions on abortion, contraception, etc., are not infallible teachings of the ordinary magisterium. After a section justifying dissent Curran rejects the papal notion of intrinsically evil acts because of its "physicalist" presupposition and the imperfection attendant upon every human act. Yet Curran allows for intrinsically evil acts, if "described in moral terms," and "some absolute and universal moral norms" (144-45). Regarding human life issues Curran sees *Evangelium Vitae* relying greatly on tradition and using a deductive legal model to defend absolute prohibitions of direct killing, direct abortion, and euthanasia. He disagrees with such prohibitions, whose tradition is not as certain as the pope implies and which are in need of greater qualification. In the case of capital punishment he considers John Paul's extreme limitation of its practice a laudatory new development in view of personal dignity.

Chapter 5 deals with marriage, sexuality, gender, and family. After a short summary of *Theology of the Body* Curran notes that such a theology leaves out singles, widows, and widowers and, focusing too much on the conquest of passion and lust, fails to "acknowledge a fundamental goodness about sexuality" (170). Married love is viewed romantically and unrealistically without proper awareness of erotic enjoyment, human fulfillment, and proper self-love. So the pope overestimated marriage's indissolubility and, demanding too much symbolism from every marital act, insisted on contraception's illicitness. Though John Paul claimed that marriage and virginity are complementary, his recognition of virginity's superiority "seems to downplay and even denigrate the role of the body itself in marriage" (186); moreover his recognition that charity is the Christian life's perfection undermines virginity's alleged superiority. Curran also faults John Paul's doctrine on sexual complementarity because he used it to prohibit women's ordination and overemphasized the culturally conditioned roles of women as wives and mothers entrusted with supporting morality. Finally John Paul's understanding of the family as a community of persons serving life, developing society, and promoting the Church's mission is presented, but he is criticized for ignoring how his metaphor of the "domestic church" disturbs people insofar as the church is hierarchical and excludes women. In addition, he is accused of overlooking "the real struggles of families today" and faulted because for him "the two-parent family is not only the ideal but is also the only type of family developed in the document" (199).

Curran is much more favorable in chapter 6 to John Paul's social teaching which is based on the dignity of the person and human solidarity. The pope is also interpreted as departing from a natural law foundation to a more Scriptural, theological, and Christological vision that emphasizes subjective creativity and personal freedom. In economic questions John Paul developed a theology of work, defended workers' rights, and supported the increase and just distribution of material goods while criticizing the materialism basic to Communism and capitalism. Regarding the state he stressed its basis in solidarity with a respect for subsidiarity or shared responsibility; he also supported strongly democracy and human rights. Yet insofar as John Paul shared with Leo XIII the view that freedom depends on truth, Curran suspects the consistency of his program of dialogue: "At times, John Paul II gives the impression that dialogue is a method for others to accept his truth" (229). No encyclical of John Paul explicitly accepted the "basic principle of the free society" enunciated in *Dignitatis Humanae* 7, viz., that "the freedom of man be respected as far as possible and curtailed only when and insofar as necessary" (230). Similarly the pope's emphasis on government's role in promoting the common good is faulted for overlooking the analogous character of truth in moral and political spheres. Finally the pope's struggle for peace, narrowing of the just war theory, and search for a global ethic are praised but also criticized as too optimistic, insufficiently universal, and neglectful of the role of power.

Critical Reflections

From Curran's reading of John Paul II, papal thought must appear terribly confused, even more eclectic than Curran's moral theology. Although there may be some validity in the charge that *Veritatis Splendor* 80 overinterprets *Gaudium et Spes* 27 in considering certain acts, e.g., homicide, "intrinsically evil" (59-60, 138-39), the pope's doctrine is on the whole misunderstood. He is in turn bound to a classicist mentality, yet aware of freedom and historical development. Now he supports a Christ-transforming-culture model, now a Christ-against-culture model. Now he is too negative in denying creation's basic goodness, now he is too optimistic in his view of man's ability to change the world for the better (the man who faced down Nazism and Communism fails to appreciate the use of power in the world). Now the pope represents an antiquated view of truth as objectively "out there," now he is seen as stressing subjectivity and creativity in the acquisition of truth. His foundational morality is the strangest combination of deontological (i.e., legal), teleological, and "relationality-responsibility" aspects. Despite John Paul's explicit recognition of many modes of truth, Curran finds his concept of truth univocal; despite his encouragement of dialogue, Curran suspects the pope of employing it only to impose his view of truth; despite his support of democracy and human rights, Curran faults him for not accepting the principle of a "free society" affirmed in *Dignitatis Humanae*, to which K. Wojtyla subscribed at Vatican II. Such a presentation seems inevitably to portray the pope as a babbling idiot and/or an immoral manipulator of words. Curran actually refers to his moral theology as well as the previous magisterium's as "somewhat schizophrenic" (103) in the use of models of the moral life. This "truth" is obviously in the subjectivity of the beholder.

A recurrent tactic of Curran's critique uncovers discontinuity where the pope finds continuity: among the authors of Scripture, between Scripture and philosophy, between speculative and moral truth, between faith and reason, between subjective and objective truth, between virginity and marriage, between Leo XIII and Vatican II, between Christologies from above and from below, among "metaphors" of the Church, between eschatological fullness and the present, between *eros* and *agape*. Though the distinctions often serve as a stick with which to beat John Paul, they also involve Curran in contradictions. For example, while noting John Paul's lack of citation from contemporary critical scholarship and criticizing him for introducing philosophic notions in his exegesis, he notes that modern exegetes have to fuse the horizons of the scriptural author and of the contemporary person (48-49). Entering into particulars, Curran criticized John Paul for finding equality in Eph. 5:21-32, where the text subordinates the wife to the husband (54-56). Yes, the wife should be subordinate to her husband (5:24), but the husband should also be subordinate to his wife (5:21) and the man's headship is in terms not of power but, like Christ's headship of the Church, of self-sacrificial love and service (5:23-29).

On another point Curran faults the pope for use of Mt. 19:16-22 to demand obedience to the "moral commandments already revealed in the Old Testament," whereas the story deals with a particular person and its thrust "is the question of riches and not the question of all Christians being called to obey the commandments found in the Old Covenant" (52). Then to support his position against the primacy of obedience to commandments Curran refers to Mt. 25:31-46. There "a difference answer" to the question about eternal life is allegedly given: "The love of neighbor, revealed especially in taking care of the neighbor in need, is proposed here as the criterion for entry into eternal life" (52)

Curran misinterprets both passages. In response to the youth's question about what he should do to gain eternal life Jesus refers him to the Decalogue's second tablet; when the man, having kept those commands, senses something still lacking, Jesus tells him to follow Him at all costs. Poverty was just a precondition for discipleship; for Jesus took the place of the first tablet, demanding total commitment to Himself. He fulfilled the Law (Mt. 5:17). Consequently Paul identified Him as the Law's goal and end (Rom. 10:4). Since the Law's fulfillment is also love (Rom. 13:10), Jesus must be incarnate love. This explains why in the temple confrontation Jesus identified love of God and neighbor as the Law's great command: in Him both were to be fulfilled,

even though the Jews were to reject both in Him (Mk.12:28-34). Then, on Mt. 25, since most exegetes recognize that "the brothers" of the Son of Man are believing members of the Church whom Jesus taught to pray "Our Father" and with whom He identified Himself (Mt. 18), no separation between loving Christians and loving Christ is tolerated by those seeking eternal life. Where Curran separates, John Paul rightly synthesized. Furthermore, the youth's question was retold in the gospel not because it concerned a single person, but because it was of paradigmatic interest to the whole Church: obedience to the commandments is the presupposition for the total dedication to Jesus.

Curran's separation of the Church from the risen Jesus was not accepted by Wojtyla, who proclaimed at Vatican II that "Body of Christ" is not one of many images but designates the reality of the Church. Indeed, explicitly agreeing with so many Council Fathers on this point, the Theological Committee entrusted with writing *Lumen Gentium* deliberately highlighted "Body of Christ" by placing it in a section of its own after other biblical images of the Church.[4] Curran overlooks that New Testament eschatology consists in the tension not between "partial" and "full" but between fullness and superabundance: the kingdom has arrived, the fullness of time is present, God has delivered His people, and more is to come as believers let themselves be assimilated to the One who is filling up all in all. That is why Jesus is the truth (Jn. 14:6) and the Church is already commissioned to preach His message to the ends of the earth, calling for obedience to Jesus' commands with full authority to bind and loose (Mt. 28:18-20; 16:18-19; 18:18). The claim that Jesus doubted (75) or, in another book, erred about the kingdom's arrival is unsubstantiated.[5] If Jesus had erred, where are men to find truth? In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3); He is Himself God's Wisdom (I Cor. 1:24). That John Paul should have referred all knowledge to Jesus Christ in no way implied that Christ's fullness evacuates the human. On the contrary, because "all things have their consistency in Him" (Col. 1:17), He can be recognized everywhere in creation except where sin reigns (cf. Rom. 1:19-21). That is why John Paul was truly open to dialogue. Indeed, earlier Fr. Curran held that the "natural" is provisional and must be understood within a Christological horizon, that the "natural law is itself Christocentric," and that "the Christian needs to understand all things in the light of the uniqueness of the once-for-all event of Christ Jesus."[6]

That Curran so decisively separates knowledge of the natural law from Scripture and faith is amazing in view of his heavy dependence upon the transcendental Thomism (Rahner, Lonergan, J.C. Murray), which underpins both his "historical consciousness" and his proportionalist fundamental option theory. At the center of that interpretation of St. Thomas stands the "paradoxical" natural desire for the supernatural.[7] (To my knowledge no philosopher has ever explained why the paradox's contradiction is only "apparent.") Although Rahner and Lonergan strained to preserve the validity of concepts required by thought and necessary for the natural-supernatural distinction, Fr. Curran switches perspectives without further justification: now stressing the unity of the natural and supernatural orders, now their diversity. His oscillation apparently depends only on the advantage given to his criticism. The real problem is that of truth and the validity of concepts. If truth is located either in an insight previous or subsequent to concepts or in a judgment of which a concept is only a part, then the concept is relativized by its reference to the concrete reality intuited or affirmed. It becomes difficult to preserve the concept, which is a universal. Because in traditional Thomism the abstract concept grasped the form of a concrete nature, once the concept was relativized in transcendental Thomism, the difficulty of grounding universal moral laws based upon "natures" became apparent. Rahner upheld the validity of universal moral prohibitions (e.g., abortion and marriage's indissolubility) because he recognized the validity of concepts.[8] Unfortunately, since his justification of concepts was weak and his thought increasingly stressed the existential *conversio ad phantasma* (as judgment or intuition), which *de facto* occurs under grace, the majority of his disciples neglect or deny the validity of universal concepts. This not only has led to moral confusion but also threatens basic intelligibility: men cannot coherently think without valid concepts. Furthermore, that Curran borrows indiscriminately from transcendental Thomism and Niebuhr's Protestant methodology shows that he is

unaware of their basic ontological incompatibility or he interprets transcendental Thomism in such a way that only in grace is truth perceptible, a truth which reason of itself cannot securely attain.[9]

Although Rahner recognized that the relativization of concepts in morality necessarily implies the relativization of dogma, Curran distinguishes moral from speculative truths, giving as an example of the latter the 180 degrees of a triangle (34, 132).. But he neglects to discuss the truth of algebra and seems ignorant that in Riemannian geometry, on which Einstein's physics relies, the interior angles' sum can exceed or fall short of 180 degrees.[10] The epistemological problem is unavoidable and by Curran unresolved. If concepts are not valid, no judgment can affirm them, for their grounding, the ultimate synthesis of subject and predicate which judgment affirms, is not yet perceived; otherwise no further question could be asked and transcendental Thomists would be stopped dead in their tracks. But as long as the evidence for the synthesis is not apparent, its truth cannot be affirmed. Without truth available to man on earth, how can an eschatological truth be affirmed? If "none of us is able to see the total picture—we only have a partial and limited perspective" (119) and "no approach, including the pope's, is truly universal" (242), how can anyone know that truth is real? The more intelligent transcendental Thomists recognized the oscillation between truth of judgment and its final grounding in Truth and tried to justify it by an analogy based on participation. They did not want to undermine the truth of judgments, and for that reason they likewise upheld the validity of universal concepts. A greater Truth does not abolish other truths. This is a philosophical mystery but it corresponds to the ontological structure of Jesus Christ, the Absolute in the finite, the eschatological plenitude who does not destroy finite intelligibility for the creature to whom He reveals Himself, but "fills up all in all" (Eph. 1:23) so that His Body might "grow the growth of God" (Col. 2:19).

The proportionalists and consquentialists, with whose position Fr. Curran identities his own at least in part, have long been criticized for moral relativism. Given Curran's strong emphasis on subjective creativity in morality, it is surprising to read that he finds room for absolute, universal norms and laws (106, 145) such as those prohibiting adultery, torture, and rape (140, 144). There can be "intrinsically evil acts" (145). "I have no problem with insisting on the primacy of the object, provided the object is the moral object of the act" (143). This quote, however, with its condition of "the *moral* object" goes on to distinguish the moral act from the physical act considered in previous natural law morality. For "morality" implies subjective involvement, including the agent's intentionality in the face of "pre-moral goods." No objective act in itself, in Curran's opinion, can be intrinsically evil. Notice that the examples of rape, torture, and adultery concern the infringement of another's freedom, not the physical act itself. For Curran contends that when a marriage ceases to be psychologically fulfilling, it dies.[11] In such a case the breach of a marriage contract recognized by the official Church would not be adultery. The prohibition against rape concerns not the act of sexual intercourse outside of marriage—Curran refuses to condemn all premarital sex[12]—but violence done to another's will. "The moral object that is always wrong is to show disrespect to another person" (143). Of course any disrespectful act is wrong; that is tautological in morality. The difficulty comes in determining what is disrespect? Was Wilhelm Tell sinfully disrespectful? or the American colonists in 1776? When can sexual intercourse outside of (or in) marriage be considered violence? In what does torture consist: imprisonment, enforced sleeplessness, infliction of pain, a legally mandated death penalty? And how much? According to Curran's own norms, the answer would depend upon the purpose, circumstances, and intentions of the agents. No physical act *per se* can be considered violent. It would have to repress the sufferer's freedom without proportionate reason in those imposing it. So his norms are not so objective after all. "Authentic subjectivity and true objectivity coincide" and the joyful peace of the individual conscience is the ultimate criterion of morality (129). Objectivity and subjectivity perfectly coincide only in God. In the meanwhile the *Kommandant* peacefully plays Mozart, convinced that he is fulfilling his *Pflicht*. In such a world where pacific subjectivity can be obtained by following the natural law interpreted by one's own conscience, is there really need of Jesus Christ and His call to conversion?

Conclusion: John Paul's Moral Vision

Lack of metaphysical depth invalidates Curran's analysis of John Paul's theology. Actually the pope sought to surpass the difficulties inherent in the main Thomistic schools by starting with man as incarnate freedom, created by God to respond in love to Himself and his fellow men. From the beginning this freedom is both the person's possession and a gift to be realized in relation to others. More than a rational nature, man is called to love. Freedom is located not primarily in the nature or the natural will, but in the person who actuates the will: the person acts. Not that a created person acts apart from a nature but in and through the nature. Hence an intelligibility is inherent in nature and the natural ways of knowing proper to man (including concepts). That is why John Paul usually expressed his morality in terms of love, responsibility, and solidarity, in personalistic terms.

John Paul realized that there could be no final opposition between good natural tendencies and the demands of personal freedom. A good Creator would never have condemned man to such an irresolvable internal conflict. Since the body is one with the soul and, indeed, a symbol of the soul (ultimately of the person), bodily functions can reveal the requirements not only of nature but also of love: love is unity in diversity, a self-giving that receives without demanding fulfillment, and a perpetual, expansive commitment to God and one's fellows. That is why *Veritatis Splendor* could appeal to natural law theory and use more traditional language. Only after sin did "natural" tendencies develop their selfish, self-fulfilling demands, and these excesses have to be resisted and moderated. Admittedly the scandal of suffering raises questions about man's interpretation of reality that he cannot answer on his own; indeed suffering tempts him to deny the reality of love and use his reason to justify "natural" selfishness. Hence revelation is necessary for fallen man. It has to purify his heart and right his reason.

Faith and reason are neither opposed nor extrinsic: freely given faith in God's love both presupposes and justifies the intelligibility of reason. That is why the pope's insistence on truth as the prerequisite for freedom is not a commitment to abstract dogma and laws to be forced upon others, but fidelity to the person of Jesus Christ, who lives and speaks the truth of love. For His humanity reveals the truth of the person who He is. Concrete commitment demands some norms of concrete intelligibility, which can prohibit certain actions as incompatible with love: e.g., denial of the Christ, bestiality, sexual relations with a child, etc. Given the intelligible structure of reality and the inherent capacity of man to respond to love, it is possible at the same time to praise the goodness of creation and call a wayward freedom to task. Was it a contradiction in Jesus to use both apocalyptic and sapiential language as He attempted to call sinners back to the Father's love? Hardly, for Wisdom knows how to employ both gentle persuasion and terrifying threat to bring men to their senses.[13]

Such is the balanced vision of John Paul II, a tremendous thinker as well as a holy man, whose greatness was apparent to all except those closed in upon their own dissent. More has to be done elsewhere to explicate his vision, but already anyone familiar with his writings should recognize that he has far surpassed the outmoded, inadequate categories in which Fr. Curran seeks to encapsulate him. An old adage says, "You cannot teach an old dog new tricks," especially when he is not aware that there are new tricks. It is a pity that dissent warps the vision of a priest like Fr. Curran who possesses an appealing style that might have better served Christ's Church.

A Final Reflection: The Shortcomings of Dissent

The shortening of vision is manifested in this paragraph on *Veritatis Splendor*'s position on dissent:

> As a second step, *Veritatis Splendor* goes on to strongly [sic!] condemn dissent, but dissent understood in a very narrow sense—"in the form of carefully orchestrated protest and polemics carried on in the media" (113.2). I know no Catholic theologian who has disagreed with papal teaching who would accept that interpretation of what the theologian is trying to do (135).

It is very hard to see how Fr. Curran's disclaimer

matches his own story of dissent. He organized opposition to *Humanae Vitae* before its publication. In his own words, "We tried in vain to raise enough publicity to prevent the issuance of the encyclical."[14] Besides writing various articles favoring artificial contraception, he told the *NY Times*: "It is incredible that the Pope could even be thinking about using a statement reaffirming the past teachings…. Since the majority of the special commission called together by the Pope to study the question of contraception has recommended a change in present thinking, how could the Pope come out with the opposite?"[15] A day after the encyclical's publication he held a press conference in which he presented a list of 87 Catholic theologians opposing the encyclical. In the consequent imbroglio he stirred the cauldron by interfering with Catholic University's search for a theology chairman.[16] When in 1986 the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith finally withdrew his canonical mission to teach Catholic theology, which resulted in dismissal from Catholic University, he brought the University to civil court and, after the court's rejection of his suit, has accused the University of repressing academic freedom and abandoning its institutional academic commitment. How all of that does not qualify as public and organized dissent or can be reconciled with I Cor. 6:1-11 must puzzle most people.

The habit of dissent seems also to have clouded Fr. Curran's vision in dealing with John Paul's moral theology. He has treated him neither as the supreme teaching authority in the Catholic Church nor as a reputable scholar. Had Fr. Curran respected the pope's authority expressed in his official teachings he would not have branded that doctrine "somewhat schizophrenic," but, in an attempt to avoid scandal and build up the Church's unity, would have interpreted benevolently its tensions and adapted the doctrine intelligently to the American context. Had Fr. Curran treated John Paul's teachings in a scholarly manner, he never would have omitted the philosophical studies which K. Wojtyla wrote previous to his election to the papacy and which serve as their intellectual foundation. This double failure manifests perhaps the need of a core conversion, a profound reorientation of life in faith, hope, and charity. Fr. Curran does not lack intelligence, but one wishes that it might better serve the Church in which he is ordained.[17]

Just after Vatican II "liberal" theologians were constantly confessing the sins and failings of Holy Mother Church and urging others to have the courage to do so. It is certainly easy to confess someone else's sins but to admit one's own failings is quite difficult. We may only pray that before his final meeting with the Son of Man Fr. Curran will recognize the partiality and limitations of his own theology and reconcile himself with the teachings of the Body of Christ, which is visible and structured, i.e., hierarchical.

Endnotes

[1] C. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington: Georgetown U. 2005), x + 262pp. Unless otherwise indicated, all numbers in parenthesis refer to the pages of this book.

[2] C. Curran, *A New Look at Christian Morality* (1968; rpt. Notre Dame: Fides, 1970), 233-36, 243-44; *Critical Concerns in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame, 1984), 12-14, 16-17.

[3] C. Curran, *Ongoing Revision: Studies in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1975), 269, 273, 282-83

[4] *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II* (Vatican: Vaticana, 1970-78) II/2, 857; III/1, 173.

[5] C. Curran, *The Catholic Moral Tradition Today: A Synthesis* (Washington: Georgetown U., 1999), 50, 91; cf. also *Directions in Fundamental Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: U. of Notre Dame, 1985), 71. Curran is apparently unaware that more recent exegesis has overturned the principal texts on which A. Schweitzer's hypothesis about Jesus' mistaken eschatological expectation rested: cf. J. McDermott, S.J., "Mt. 10:23 in Context," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 28 (1984), 230-240; E. Nadone, *La Transfiguracion de Jésus y el dialogo sobre Elias según el evangelio de San Marcos* (Buenos Aires: Patria Grande: 1976); M. Öhler, "Die Verklärung (Mk 9:1-8): Die Ankunft der Herrschaft Gottes auf der Erde," *Novum Testamentum* 38 (1996), 197-217.

[6] C. Curran, *Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1970), 99-101, 135-36.

[7] For a long list of transcendental Thomists admitting the paradoxical quality of their basic natural desire for the supernatural cf. J. McDermott, S.J., "The Theology of John Paul II: A Response," in *The Thought of Pope John Paul II*, ed. J. McDermott (Rome: Gregorian, 1993), 63-64, n. 36.

[8] Cf. P. Burke, *Reinterpreting Rahner* (New York: Fordham U., 2002), 1-46; J. McDermott, S.J., "The Analogy of Human Knowing in Karl Rahner," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 36 (1996), 201-216; "Dialectical Analogy: The Oscillating Center of Rahner's Thought," *Gregorianum* 75 (1994), 675-703; "The Context of *Veritatis Splendor*," *Prophecy and Diplomacy*, ed. J. Conley and J. Koterski (New York: Fordham U., 1999), 140-156.

[9] On Niebuhr's Protestant presuppositions cf. J. McDermott, S.J., "Christ and Culture," *Studia Missionalia* 44 (1995*), 105-10.*

[10] A. Einstein*, Relativity: The Special and General Theory*, 15th ed., tr. R. Lawson (1952; rpt. New York: Crown, 1961), pp. 108-14, 135-157; on the underlying epistemological questions and viewpoints cf. C.

Parsons, "Mathematics, Foundations of," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2nd ed., ed. C. Borchert (Detroit: Thomson Gale, 2006), VI, 20-53.

[11] Cf. p. 175 in view of *Ongoing Revision,* 95-99; *New Perspectives in Moral Theology* (1974; rpt. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1976), 228-29

[12] C. Curran, *Contemporary Problems in Moral Theology* (Notre Dame: Fides, 1970), 179-80.

[13] The sapiential and apocalyptic aspects of Jesus' preaching actually reflect the sacramental structure basic to His vision and the Church. Cf. J. McDermott, S.J., "Jesus: Parable or Sacrament of God? An Ecumenical Discussion on Analogy and Freedom with E. Schweizer, K. Barth, and R. Bultmann," *Gregorianum* 73 (1997), 477-99; 74 (1997), 543-64, esp. 492-98, 560-64, and "La struttura sacramentale della realtà," *Scuola Cattolica* 128 (2000), 273-99. For a defense and development of John Paul's moral stance cf. our "Science, Sexual Morality, and Church Teaching: Another Look at *Humanae Vitae*," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 70 (2005), 237-261.

[14] Curran, *Ongoing Revision,* 279.

[15] *New York Times*, July 28, 1968, pp. 1, 28.

[16] .C. Walton, "Academic Freedom at the Catholic University of America during the 1970s," *Catholic Historical Review* 76 (1990), 555-563, esp. 559-60.

[17] Cf. also W. May and E. Brugger, "John Paul's Moral Theology on Trial: A Reply to Charles E. Curran," *The Thomist* 69 (2005), 279-312, for another review of Fr. Curran's volume and our own "Charles Curran's Moral Theory: Foundational and Sexual Ethics" to be published in *Anthropotes*, second issue of 2006, for an overview and critique of his moral theory.

Book Reviews

Living the Catholic Social Tradition: Cases and Commentary,
edited by Kathleen Maas Weigert and Alexia K. Kelley (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005)

Reviewed by Dr Catherine Althaus, Research Fellow, Centre for Governance and Public Policy, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

The recently promulgated *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, London: Burns and Oates, 2004) explicitly states that making the Church's social doctrine known is a 'genuine pastoral priority' and forms part of the 'new evangelization'. To the extent that co-editors Kathleen Weigert and Alexia Kelley have taken this message to heart and drawn together contemporary material on the message of the Church's social doctrine, they are to be applauded. As Weigert notes in her Introduction and Overview, there is undoubtedly a marked need for Catholics today (and here I would suggest not only 'ordinary' Catholics but also those with official authority) to more fully understand the social teaching of the Church and to engage with the rich tradition it provides.

Whether the book provides a full appreciation of the theoretical content and development of that tradition is something about which I hold some reservations. A number of fundamental building blocks and perspectives are missing:

(1) despite Monika Hellwig's acknowledgement in her Preface of the need for biblical and doctrinal background, the book generally focuses on the modern period associated with Catholic social teaching from the time of Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum*. It is a pity that the volume did not explore more fully the historical development of core concepts and doctrinal underpinnings that are rooted in Scripture and Tradition from the time of the Early Church;

(2) such an historical perspective is essential to the exploration of 'living the Catholic social tradition' as Catholic social teaching emerges as a response to the needs of her people throughout the centuries as they face new social problems. The teaching develops in response to changing needs and must be examined and assessed against the historical background of the periods of which it was the product. If we are to understand the modern context we face as a contemporary society, we need to learn from the lessons of the past and the enduring nature of what has been taught by the Church and for what reasons. My reading of the volume suggests that attention to the historical and Magisterial underpinnings of the Tradition is lacking;

(3) in large part, this lack of historical perspective perhaps explains the strong focus of the book on 'social justice' to the downplay of the other major side to the social doctrine coin, social 'charity'. Thomas Massaro SJ himself, in his chapter entitled "From Industrialization to Globalization: Church and Social Ministry" speaks of there being room for both the 'justice path' and the 'charity path', yet the two cannot be set against each other. The volume content generally runs a little thick on 'social justice' such that, while the case material is a step in the right direction, it runs the risk of being labeled another confusing social justice 'diatribe' where Catholic social teaching is treated as

something akin only to 'grassroot rallying against the political and economic injustices of the age'. While Catholic social teaching undoubtedly opposes such injustice, it is much more than that. Christ bequeathed to the Church a religious mission, not a political, economic or sociological one. This religious mission inspires Christian consciences. It witnesses to the centrality of God's love in achieving the true measure of human dignity and the necessity for humanity to participate in this love and respond to it and outpour it for the betterment of the world. In fact the Church has even more insistently taught in recent times that there is an inescapable need for Christ if we are to fully live as human beings. Such a vision and ideal spans the entire ambit of human behaviour and includes not only political and economic situations but also the full spectrum of moral living including that of the civic society which encompasses religious practice, family and sexual morality, environmental stewardship and community peace-keeping;

(4) in fact, scriptures, living tradition and the Magisterium provide the methodology of Catholic moral theology, of which the social teaching of the Church is a branch. An injection of rigorous commentary on the role and value of the Magisterium would add to the theoretical and practical material presented in the volume. In the field of the social teaching of the Church, praxis and theory go hand in hand, with orthodoxy of doctrine logically preceding orthopraxy. Thus, it is important to comprehend and disseminate this orthodoxy of doctrine and Magisterium if orthopraxy is to be achieved;

(5) while the focus of globalization is rightly marked out by the contributors for special attention as a central component of the modern context, the US-centric nature of the book perhaps gives only the response of the Church in the United States to the issue of globalization and how it might shape the lived witness of Catholic social teaching. In this regard I am uncertain why the case material is limited to labour, employment and housing issues and does not include the immense pro-life activities occurring in the United States or perspectives on foreign aid, foreign policy, terrorism and war that are so influential in the global village we face today and which the United States shapes so powerfully.

The chapter by Todd David Whitmore on the significance of the common good to Catholic social teaching is, for me, the highlight of the theoretical component of the book. His attention to the Trinitarian element of Catholic social teaching and the emphasis on personalistic communion inspired by John Paul II is laudable. This is so, even if he: (i) fails to articulate a full appreciation of what is meant by the 'preferential option for the poor' (ie it includes poverty of spirit as well as poverty of physical goods and cannot be solely isolated to a particular 'class' of people); and (ii) fails to explain or justify his own take on the Church's so-called 'presumption to hierarchy' over equality (it can be historically shown that the Church supported egalitarianism and equality since its beginnings as well as, in a political sense, contributed as a forerunner to democratic concepts and practices including that of representative government. Moreover why is 'hierarchy' in itself wrong?).

The greatest asset of this book, however, is the case study material. There we find some useful primary perspectives on practical witness given by 'ordinary' people in various communities across the United States—from the 'Resurrection Project' in Chicago focusing on poverty, crime and lack of employment and affordable housing in marginalized communities, to the work stoppage and hunger-strike activity of the Coalition of Immokalee Workers in Florida to gain workplace dignity, to the students against sweatshops movement that protests against appalling worker abuse and degradation in garment factories. The selected cases do not do justice to the spectrum of social engagement available to, and demanded of, Catholics if they are to be authentic to the demands of the social teaching of the Church (as already mentioned, the exclusion of pro-life activity from the cases is astounding given the fundamental issues of human dignity at stake for all parties and for humanity generally). Nonetheless, the cases emphasize the significance of praxis in appreciating opportunities for improvement and witness to human dignity that matches the call of Christ made through the Church. The title of the book 'Living the Catholic Social Tradition' is indicative; while there is a weakness in its historical and Magisterial appreciation of the Tradition, the strength of the volume is that its case study material emphasizes the lived aspect of that Tradition.

A thought-provoking observation about Catholic social teaching came from a case study participant, Alexie Torres-Fleming, one of the founders of the Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice faith-based center for urban ministry in the South Bronx. Based on her reflections about Catholic social teaching and how it impacted on her contribution towards practical social action she stated "it's all written in the affirmative…. It affirms things: the dignity of human life, the dignity of work, solidarity…. The main thing that pushes you is the positive force

and vision" (p103). To the extent this volume promotes the positive vision of Catholic social teaching it deserves attention. It could, for example be employed as a useful supplement to the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, issued by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, which provides a clear summary and analysis of the doctrinal corpus available to Catholics in modern times and stands now as the standard against which all material in the field of Catholic social teaching must be assessed.

An Exorcist Tells His Story, Fr. Gabriele Amorth, S.S.P., Translated by Nicoletta V. MacKenzie, Ignatius Press: San Francisco, (1999), paperback, 205 pages, no index
ISBN 0-89870-710-2

Reviewed by Brian van Hove, S.J., White House Retreat, Saint Louis, Missouri

Upon the publication of the ad interim *Rite of Exorcism,* Father Gabriele Amorth wrote a criticism and a complaint in 1990 called in Italian *Un escorista raconta* (Rome: Edizioni Dehoniane; tenth and expanded reprint 1993) but only in 1999 did it appear in English.

The completion in 1998 and the appearance in 1999 of the Latin editio typica of the new Rite of Exorcism[1], mandated by the Second Vatican Council, have answered some of his questions. But the fact that it took thirty-five years for this revised rite to be completed by the competent authority is an unfortunate sign for Amorth of misplaced priorities in the church of our day.

Underlying his rather short and anecdotal essay of fewer than two hundred pages is the observation that today bishops and priests of the Catholic Church, influenced by rationalistic theologians, have abandoned their duty of pastoral concern for those suffering from demonic activity. Many bishops have never personally performed an exorcism, and therefore lack sensitivity to this issue. Other bishops simply do not believe in the devil. As a result, the faithful are left unprotected from these manifestations of evil that are permitted for a time by God.

Despite some preaching by the post-conciliar popes, Amorth attributes this abdication of responsibility to a loss of faith in the supernatural, which includes satanic forces.

Sometimes Amorth himself has had to "pick up the pieces" when other pastors, especially in Western Europe outside Italy, should have been more generous in exercising their traditional ministry. He is wrong (p. 15), however, in insisting that only Protestants today treat of the devil with any seriousness[2]. There are Catholics, especially those associated with the charismatic renewal in the United States and elsewhere[3],who have written on the topic and who are just as competent in the field as the Protestants. And perhaps Father Amorth would be disedified by certain Protestants who place so much emphasis upon deliverance ministry that it becomes an unbalanced kind of Christianity, reducing the centrality of charity.

Some may claim that the emotionalism of the Italian context prohibits a more sober Anglo-American readership from identifying with what Amorth has to say. On the contrary, the growth of dangerous cults and sects in all countries affected by Western secularism affirms him. The occult thrives today alongside business in the decadent West, whether European or American. Among the victims of this phenomenon are women and children, the historical targets of a more emphasized pastoral care in the Church. Whether Amorth expressed himself well or not, and whether he succeeded as well as he should have or not, is beside the point.

A fact that establishes Father Amorth credibility is that he did not wish to become an exorcist. He did not aspire to it but was simply appointed by Cardinal Ugo Poletti (1914-1997) who made him assistant to Father Candido Amantini (1914-1992). For thirty-six years Father Amantini, a Passionist stationed at the church of the Holy Staircase, was chief exorcist of Rome. Amorth became his apprentice and then eventually became his successor.

The author shows that he knows the traditional distinctions among the kinds of demonic activity—infestation, oppression, possession. But surprisingly, he explains that the rite of exorcism is diagnostic and intended to discern whether a person is possessed or not. The average reader might have thought it was only practiced after this had been determined. According to Amorth "the starting point and the first purpose (of exorcism), that of diagnosis, is all too often ignored." (p. 44) The wise exorcist learns to detect the signs of an evil presence before, during, and after an exorcism. (p. 45) As to the question of an unnecessary exorcism, he maintains the best practitioners claim it never harmed anyone. The goal of exorcism is not just liberation but also healing, and the process may be slow in some individuals or communities. Yes, whole societies may be collectively affected by the world of the demons.

Exorcism typically works in tandem with psychiatry and not in opposition to it. Amorth maintains that church officials stated as early as 1583 that mental illness should be distinguished from diabolical possession. He never sees any conflict between

exorcism and mental health, except that secular mental health professionals do not believe in exorcism, and therefore at times misdiagnose cases where true demonic presence is at work, whether by infestation, oppression, or possession.

For his ministry as exorcist Father Amorth believes in using the full assortment of signs and symbols found in the Catholic religious tradition. Exorcism is not a private devotion but a sacramental and a prayer of the whole church, and as such it shares in the intercessory dimension of the universal Church. (p. 186)

Three of the most important signs which he uses, and to which he dedicates a chapter showing their role, are salt, water, and oil. Since he adheres very closely to the formal liturgy of the Church, he was disappointed that the 1999 revised *Rite of Exorcism* made no reference to oil in the *Praenotanda*. However, in the section on local adaptations made possible if requested by the episcopal conferences of the various regions throughout the world, there is clearly room for petitioning the Holy See to allow anointing with oil[4] to be part of the official *Rite of Exorcism* in a particular part of the world[5]. The same can be said for a restoration of the office of exorcist as part of minor orders or a revived ministry. (p. 187)

Father Amorth is a man of simple and naive faith who has not produced for us a literary masterpiece. He learned from Father Amantini, and perhaps priests ought to be afraid to try performing an exorcism without this type of apprenticeship, even if requested by their bishop, simply on the grounds of inexperience. It could be dangerous and unpredictable business. Deliverance ministry is not for the foolhardy. However, Amorth answers such an objection in the following way:

> Often priests do not believe in exorcisms, but if the bishop offers them the office of exorcist, they feel as though one thousand demons are upon them and refuse. Many times I have written that Satan is much more enraged when we take souls away from him through confession than when we take away bodies through exorcism. In fact, we cause the devil even greater rage by preaching, because faith sprouts from the word of God. Therefore, a priest who has the courage to preach and hear confessions should not be afraid to exorcise. (p. 67)

In his introduction to *An Exorcist Tells His Story,* Father Benedict Groeschel asks the reader to keep an open mind. Skepticism on this subject is widespread, and some will refuse to read the book out of prejudice. In fact, on spiritual grounds, it is better not to cultivate any type of curiosity here, because curiosity can grow and become distorted and lead to no good. But for those seeking information on this traditional religious theme, Father Amorth's testimony may serve as a point of departure. It is not the last word, but an introduction, especially for those who may be suffering from some unidentified evil presence. Amorth wrote the book with the hope of reestablishing the pastoral practice of exorcism in the Catholic Church. We will only know in the future if his influence along with the publication of the new rite have been successful.

Amorth followed this first book with a second, *An Exorcist: More Stories* (Ignatius Press, 2002). It may be astonishing for some to learn that with the publication of the new Rite of Exorcism, which Amorth calls "useless", there was separately published a Notification from Cardinal Jorge Medina, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, that the old rite of 1614 can still be freely used with permission.

All of Father Amorth's concerns about the ineffectiveness of the new rite were settled by that *Notification*.

End Notes:

1 *De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam*. Editio typica (CittB del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1999). 84 pp. +Index.

2 He is also inconsistent on this point since, in more than one place, he admits there are still Catholic exorcists. In fact, he rejoices that they are increasing in number. (p. 17) This happens when an author does not revise his text but merely adds a new introduction years later.

3 Amorth is enthusiastic about the charismatic renewal, especially in Belgium, where it was led by Cardinal Suenens and in Assissi where there is a center. (p. 157 and p. 185).

4 Recent confusion in the Western world over the difference between sacramental oil blessed on Holy Thursday by the bishop, and the use of plain oil for simple prayer and blessing, has made the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments anxious over this question in recent years.

5 "Signa et gestus ipsius ritus, si hoc necessarium vel utile iudicatur, attenta cultura et genio ipsius populi, de consensu Sanctae Sedis, aptare." *De Exorcismis et Supplicationibus Quibusdam, Praenotanda*, #37b

Christianity and Extraterrestrials? A Catholic Perspective, Marie George, iUniverse: New York, 2005)

Reviewed by Glenn Statile, St. John's University

(1) Christianity as a Universal Religion

Baruch Spinoza concludes his Ethics with a recognition of the rarity of excellence. Marie George, a professor of philosophy at Saint John's University, is indeed in rare company, for her excellent recent book entitled Christianity and Extraterrestrials: A Catholic Perspective is nothing less than a masterly presentation and analysis of a question which is often noticeably absent from the diet of those who specialize in the dialogue between science and religion. What is the relation between scripture and tradition, especially as pertains to redemption and the incar-

nation, and the possibility of non-human persons, either fallen or unfallen, existing in other parts of the universe? Can the Catholic Church be truly universal in the etymological sense and yet be governed by a planetary provincialism?

As in the best of vocal collaborations, the book consists of four harmoniously woven parts. After a concise and carefully constructed Introduction which spells out the purported conflict between Christian belief and extraterrestrial intelligence, as well as her purposes for writing the book, Professor George then tackles the issues of the possibility and the improbability of extraterrestrial intelligence in light of Christianity in Parts 1 and 2 respectively. Part 3 delves into the deficiencies of the arguments and the evidence employed to support the existence of intelligent extraterrestrial life from the standpoints of science, philosophy, and logic. Part 4 addresses the related issues of whether Church teaching would have to bend under the pressure applied by any future discovery of intelligent extraterrestrial life, and what the posture of the magisterium might be in responding to the present status of the problem. The endnotes and bibliography are extensive, and the index, like Gaul, is divided into three parts—by name, subject, and scripture.

While I cannot even begin to do justice to the entire book, I can at least try my hand at a caveat lector, for unsuspecting readers should beware that they are in for an intellectually profitable and stimulating experience. I will limit my remarks in the next two sections to but a small sampling of what Professor George offers us on the issues of science and theology respectively, although in so doing I am thereby forgoing the pleasure of revisiting her wonderful chapter on the recurring fallacies which carry the message of extraterrestrial hope to a public that is not fully equipped to read between the lines. Oscar Wilde once said that he lived in fear of not being misunderstood. He would not like this book. It is well written and I would venture as lucid for the academic layman as it is for the professional student of science and religion. While many of the arguments advanced by Professor George are admittedly only probable, as she herself attests, there is nothing wrong with this given the speculative nature of the subject matter. It would be a refreshing change to see some of what passes for speculation in contemporary cosmology handled with the same degree of humility in face of a dearth of actual evidence.

(2) The State of the Scientific Evidence

Let us survey several of the scientific issues and deficiencies raised by Professor George. Chapter nine highlights the hyperbole which exists by way of the exaggerated confidence espoused by many in the scientific community as regards the possibility of some form of extraterrestrial life. Professor George correctly castigates the vastly overrated Drake equation, which is nothing more than a "mathematical way of saying who knows." (p. 135) Two decades ago in the Cosmos series Carl Sagan practically elevated the Drake equation into a dogma for the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) generation. Not only is each of the factors which make up this equation for calculating the likelihood of contact with extraterrestrials unknown to any degree of accuracy, the equation is itself burdened with the weight of being highly theory-laden by current astrophysical commitments. Even so, an advocate of the Drake equation can maintain that its purpose is to illustrate the likelihood of such contact given the most conservative of estimates for each factor. Professor George quickly counters such a defense, for there is ample evidence to suggest that even the minimalist values customarily accepted by SETI exponents of the Drake equation are overly optimistic. Professor George does an excellent job in reaffirming what we should already know, that scientific speculation concerning the possibility of extraterrestrial life cannot rise above the poverty of its empirical foundations. That is why literature departments recognize the genre of science fiction.

Professor George points to both astronomy and biology as the scientific disciplines which bear most upon the possibility of extraterrestrial life. Astronomy provides the statistical basis for the determination of raw probability while biology provides the promissory note for any mechanism by which such extraterrestrial life might originate and evolve. The Drake equation represents a prima facie case of the infancy of astronomical speculation in regard to extraterrestrial life. Biology as yet is really in no better shape to promise us anything substantial about either of these two vital extraterrestrial issues. As to the origin of life by purely scientific means Professor George reviews the now badly discredited Miller-Urey experiment which still serves as a kind of textbook paradigm for any effort to create life in the laboratory. In dealing with the issue of the emergence of life she makes the valuable point as to how necessary and sufficient conditions are often conflated within exobiology, with the former being mistaken for the latter. While the availability of each and every

necessary condition for life does indeed add up to a sufficient condition, the scientific inventory of just what constitutes the complete set of such necessary conditions is still an unknown.

Of much greater interest however is the discussion and analysis which Professor George provides on the issues of contingency and convergence in regard to the complexification of life to a degree which warrants the label of a fully rational child of God. She is very good on the issue of equivocation in the meaning of intelligence. Just as John Locke never seemed to use the word idea in the same way twice, a number of those who toil in the vineyard of writing about evolution are often guilty of referring to adaptive intelligence as if it were the equivalent of being able to conceptualize and abstract. Professor George ably argues that neither the vagaries of contingency nor the directedness of convergence can account for the characteristic of an immaterial human intelligence. As she puts it: "Strictly speaking human-like intelligence cannot evolve." (p. 131)

If I may be permitted to play the devil's advocate or agent provocateur, perhaps Professor George, given the opportunity, could elaborate this position in response to the obvious counterargument that the demonstrated intelligence within the human species does seem to have progressed over the millennia for which we have evidence of human achievement. It would seem that her response might have to take the form that a difference in degree does not amount to a difference in kind, or that an actualization of intellectual potential does not result in any transformation of substance. While it is easily granted that an immaterial mind cannot undergo any material evolution, it is not so obvious that evolution cannot be memetic as well as genetic, to use the current lingo. I happen to be in sympathy with the point that Professor George is trying to make, but the growing literatures of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology hold an opposing view in regard to the evolutionary prospects of what we might classify as pure intelligence.

(3) One of a Kind

In Hamlet (Act II, scene ii) Shakespeare continues his recurring dramatic inquiry into the status of mankind, as midway between that of the roguish slave and divinity itself.

"What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! How infinite in faculties! In form and moving, how express and admirable! In action, how like an angel! In apprehension, how like a god! The beauty of the world! The paragon of animals!

Human beings, as proper descendants of Adam, are members of a fallen race whose redemption was purchased for us by the Incarnation of our Lord, Jesus Christ and his ensuing death upon the cross atop Calvary. If it exists, the question which has to be answered then becomes that of which rung upon the soteriological ladder, if any, should intelligent extraterrestrial life be placed. Would such extraterrestrial life be, on the order of the sentiments expressed by Hamlet above, more akin to that of a god; or, on the other hand, closer to that of the beast of the terrestrial field? The primary purpose undertaken by Professor George is to prove that the Christian faith is compatible with extraterrestrial intelligence, should it exist. Her secondary goal is to make the case that it does not. To make a long and fascinating story short, Professor George argues in favor of the possibility that an unfallen species of embodied intelligent beings with human-like natures could, in principle, exist elsewhere in the universe without running afoul of such non-negotiable Christian beliefs as the redemption and the Incarnation. It would be interesting to extend her analysis to another more down to earth possibility. What would be the theological status of those descendants of humankind here on planet earth after centuries of biogenetic tampering with the somatic key of what makes us truly human?

Let us now briefly consider a subset of her overall argument against the probability of intelligent extraterrestrial life. Chapter five contrasts the well known principles of plenitude and redundancy. Professor George contests the argument from plenitude which suggests that God's overwhelming goodness requires a universe teeming with a diversity of life with the countervailing claim that plenitude is trumped by the uniqueness of humankind. For an entirely different set of reasons Professor George implicitly agrees with the satirical mantra of Voltaire's Dr. Pangloss. There is no valid theological sense that can be given to the concept of a fully realized best of all possible worlds or universe, for the realization of such a goal would result in the exhaustion of God's infinite creative power. This being the case, it stands to reason that God has the fiat to be arbitrary in the selection of whatever and whomever he chooses to create. Reinforcing the uniqueness claim is the set of engineering constraints that may be imposed upon any bodily form that could be at the service of a human-like intelligence. The laws of science are everywhere the same. Hence a race of aliens, so the argument goes, could not possibly be that physically different from us in a functional sense. Therefore it would be redun-

dant of God to create other forms of intelligent life which duplicate the likes of us.

An interesting connection can be made between the corporeal limitation argument referred to by Professor George and the Eternal Life Postulate of Paul Dirac. According to the current cosmological consensus the universe will end not with a bang but with a whimper, as continuous expansion produces increasingly colder temperatures. The universe is, according to this scientifically bold interpretation, quite literally heading for a Dark Age that will last forever. Given such an eschatological picture the human race will not be able to adapt says Freeman Dyson unless we shed our bodies and become pure spirit. The destiny of the universe thus correlates to the demise of physical beings. The human species cannot live forever, even should it expand its sphere of influence to the ends of the universe. If what Professor George maintains about the probable uniqueness of humanity with the overall plan of creation has the ring of truth, then when the Lord returns in glory to judge the heavens and the earth it is only we who will know for whom the bell tolls.

(4) Conclusion

We the readers owe Professor George a debt of gratitude that can only be repaid by both reading her book and taking it seriously. While the kingdom of God is indeed within us, it is no easy task to try and make sense of the Lord's remark in John 10:16 that "I have other sheep, that are not of this fold." As bona fide children of God it is heartening to ponder the possibility that it is only we who are destined to inherit the earth. The words of Plotinus come to mind when we contemplate the prospects of those who are alone in pursuit of the knowledge that is ultimate truth. The centrality of human beings, according to Professor George, does not need to be overhauled by another Copernican Revolution which reconfigures where we stand in the plan of salvation. We remain at the center in relation to the Son, the beauty of the world and the paragon of animals.

***The Decline and Fall of the Catholic Church in America*,** David Carlin, Sophia Institute Press (2005), 250 pp., hardcover, ISBN 1-928832-79-2, $24.95.

Reviewed by Rev. Leonard A. Kennedy, C.S.B., Ph.D., Professor of Philosophy, the Academy of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, Barry's Bay, Ontario, Canada.

The author of this book is a devout Catholic, a former Rhode Island Senator, and a professor of sociology; and its publishing firm is noted for its adherence to the Magisterium of the Church. The first twenty-six of the book's thirty chapters are a sociological study of the Catholic Church in the United States, and the author's conclusion is: "I am, on the whole, pessimistic about the chances for a revival of American Catholicism." And, of course, no one could think that the situation in the United States is different from that in Canada.

The book identifies three causes of the decline of the Church in the last forty years: (1) the Vatican Council, which left the widespread conviction that the Church could change; (2) the coming of age of Catholic immigrants financially and politically, their acceptance by the wider society, and their desire to be the same as all other Americans, going to secular schools and colleges, and marrying non-Catholics; (3) the collapse of Protestantism and, with it, the ruling culture, into secularism and moral liberalism. Perhaps one of these causes might not have done so much harm, but the three together proved to be devastating.

The older Protestantism was strongly Christian. When its different streams settled down with one another, the culture became less strongly Christian, as was bound to happen because the culture retained what was common to them all and left out what was not characteristic of all. When Catholicism joined the culture, the culture had even less common Christianity. The same happened when the Jews were socially integrated, and even more so when non-Christian religious groups came in. Today an accommodation has been made with atheists and agnostics and nominal Christians since the number of them has grown so much that the alternative would have been a kind of warfare, a warfare the larger society was not prepared to fight. And thus the present culture is only nominally Christian, hardly distinguishable from secularism. Its only virtue is tolerance, and its only vice intolerance. And the leading morality is the personal liberty principle, that one may do whatever doesn't harm another person, a principle glibly stated but impossible to validate, indeed false but clung to in order to justify a widespread hedonism. And the decline in Christianity has not stopped; it is continuing apace.

The author points out that "a 'modernized' Catholicism is a contradiction in terms," and that "the Church in America must cease to compromise—or cease to exist."

In the last four chapters the author states what must be done if the Church is to continue to ex-

ist in America. First, the Church must decide that it cannot be fully a part of a secular society. It must acknowledge that secularism is its greatest enemy. It must continue to believe and declare that the fullness of religious truth lies in the Catholic Church alone. It must turn its colleges and universities into truly Catholic ones (there are only a few at the moment that are such). It must not pretend in its censuses that nominal Catholics are Catholics. It must focus first on real Catholics, not, as it does now, on the liberals. The Church must identify itself in opposition to its enemies; it must emphasize the sinfulness of contraception, abortion, and homosexual sexual activity. It must oppose many things that secularism permits, including pornography, cohabitation, divorce, non-marital teenage sex, out-of-wedlock childbearing, physician-assisted suicide, and mercy killing. It must stress devotion to the Blessed Virgin and the Blessed Sacrament, and the importance of chastity. If the Church is seen as not having any significant enemies it will be seen as standing for nothing.

There are two appendices in the book. The first lists signs of the decline of the Church in America. One sign is: "In the year 2000, the percentages of lay religion teachers in Catholic elementary schools who agreed with the Church's official teaching on the following topics: contraception, 10 percent; abortion, 27 percent; infallibility of the pope, 27 percent; an exclusively male priesthood, 33 percent; the Real Presence, 63 percent; life after death, 74 percent; the Resurrection, 87 percent; the divinity of Christ, 91 percent; and the existence of God, 98 percent." The second appendix shows the fallacy of the personal liberty principle.

The book is very clear and very well written. I found it hard to disagree with anything in it.

***Sexing the Church: Gender, Power, and Ethics in Contemporary Catholicism*,** Aline H. Kalbian, Indiana University Press (2005), 176 PP. Hardback, $45, Paperback, $19.95.

Reviewed by Rev. Leonard A. Kennedy, C.S.B., Professor of Philosophy, The Academy of Our Lady Seat of Wisdom, Barry Bay, Ontario, Canada

This book is about Catholic sexual ethics. What Catholicism teaches in these matters is well stated here, but the reasons for it are not dealt with, except to say that Catholics claim that the doctrine is divinely revealed and that it is also evident in the natural moral order. God's purpose for marriage is not examined in a detail that would provide a study of the important role of marriage in serving human needs and in doing so from the beginning of the human race.

What is attempted here is an account of the possible approval of many actions which the Catholic Church condemns as being contrary to the dignity and the welfare of the human being, and to the will of God. These actions are involved in same-sex marriage and in the use of assisted reproductive techniques, which is what the book is chiefly concerned with.

The basis of this possible approval is the claim that the Catholic Church teaches that the human male is superior to the female (and that this approval would concern, for example, the liceity of same-sex marriage and the use of assisted reproductive techniques). The argument for this claim is that certain gender metaphors used by the Church implicitly involve acceptance of this male superiority, an argument which of course is denied by the Church. The author of this book says that she takes a neutral position concerning this claim, but she is very interested in it.

The bibliography of this work contains a number of non-Catholic authors, a few well- known orthodox Catholics besides the popes, and a good number of die-hard well-known Catholic dissenters also.

The argument of the book is that Catholic teaching concerning same-sex marriage and the use of assisted reproductive technology may well be wrong since the Church uses gender terms in some of its metaphors, and these terms can not be squared with its teaching concerning the relationship of the sexes. Unfortunately the book does not stick to its thesis in relation to same-sex marriage and assisted reproductive technology but deals just as much with abortion, contraception, clerical celibacy, women's ordination, sterilization, etc. And the last four pages of the book deal with clerical abuse of minors!

The problem with gender metaphors, the book says, is that they can lead to the conviction that men are superior to women. The Church teaches that husband and wife are equal in dignity, that they are to respect and cherish one another, and that the husband is the head of the household and the wife is its heart. The dissenters are convinced that the feminine is passive and therefore not as powerful as the masculine. Though this is true of physical power there is great difficulty in proving it for power in general. There is no acceptance of the old adage, "the hand that rocks the cradle rules the world."

For the author, one cannot call the Blessed Virgin the mother of Catholics, or call Catholics the Body

of Christ, or call the Church the bride of Christ, without running the risk of implicitly becoming radical feminists. For example, let us consider the fact that the hierarchy of the Church is male and yet the Blessed Virgin is female. "The danger of those feminine metaphors of the Church is that they tend to subsume and obscure unequal gender roles" (p. 131). Does this necessarily mean that a gender metaphor, when it says something metaphorically about the Church, also brings out something about the relations among human persons? Yes, there is a "connection between the symbolic reality the metaphors create and the lived reality of male and female roles" (p131). For the author, "these metaphors appropriate certain human experiences and place them in a larger religious scheme that reinforces a gendered order that has profound implications for Catholic sexual ethics" (p. 132).

The working-out of this transposition from female gender metaphors to the inferior status of women is a complicated and unconvincing process. The author of this book says the same thing, but is still convinced that this process is very important and a serious problem for Catholic sexual ethics. She says: "It might be impossible to know exactly what these metaphors mean. One could try to find the intentions behind their use or to quantify the exact effect of these metaphors, but even then it would be difficult to arrive at conclusive evidence. Perhaps the best we can do is to note the ambiguity these metaphors pose in the context of Catholic sexual ethics. Unlike gender complementary, which tells us ambiguously how Catholicism understands gender, these metaphors complicate the order that Catholicism tries to achieve. As far as conclusions about the ultimate effects of this complication, I can only venture that it provides an opening for those eager to see change in Catholic sexual ethics" (p. 100).

Theology in India. Essays on Christ, Church and Eucharist, Sebastian Athappilly, CMI, (Bangalore: Dharmaram Publications, 2005) ISBN: 81-86861-76-9, pp. 280, Rs 210; US $ 12

Reviewed by Dr. Paulachan Kochappilly, C.M.I., Dean, Faculty of Theology, Dharmaram College, Bangalore, India

Theology in India is a significant, scholarly and substantial volume on Christ, Church and Eucharist published in the Eucharist Year, a collection of ten articles of Prof. Dr Sebastian Athappilly, CMI, dedicated to Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara.

In his foreword, Very Rev. Dr Antony Kariyil, CMI, the Prior General of the Congregation, acknowledges the historical and theological merit of this work placing it in the lineage and legacy of Blessed Kuriakose Elias Chavara, the founder of CMI congregation, who safeguarded and guided the Church from imminent danger of a probable schism of his time, as "praiseworthy attempt in this regard and an appeal for concerted efforts at the theological level to counter the dangers, threats and attacks against the Church and her teachings" (p. 9).

In the general introduction, the author claims that "The self-disclosure of God in Christ reveals that God is not merely God for us, but also God with us. Love is essentially oriented not only to be for but also to be with the beloved" (p. 19). The primary concern of the author in this volume is to defend the Christian faith regarding the role of Jesus Christ as the unique and universal mediator of salvation.

The title, *Theology in India,* "intends to convey the idea that the articles are primarily against the background of the present Indian scenario of theological, liturgical, religious and socio-political discussions and debates" (p. 22). In his theological investigation and interpretation, S. Athappilly is convinced of the basic guiding principle, "faith is truth, not because it is ***my*** faith, but because it is my ***faith***" (p. 22). While the author criticises the uncritical approach of certain authors in the name of Inter-religious dialogue, he is sincerely and seriously committed to it, provided it is understood properly, "this does not mean that we can advocate a plurality or parallelism of economies of salvation, for God is one, so too his history of encounter with humanity. We constitute one family in so far as we are created and interrelated in Christ in the single economy of salvation" (p. 23).

Again, the author rightly and consistently holds the view that rather than speaking of an Indian Church "we can speak of Oriental, Syro-Malabar, Latin, Syro-Malankara, and Orthodox Churches in India. It is in this sense that we think also of theology *in* India" (p. 23).

"The Uniqueness of Jesus Christ and the Plurality of Religions," the first and key article in this volume, presents the central concerns of the author and challenges those who compromise or reject the corner stone of the faith of Christians, that is, the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in the name of inter-religious dialogue and religious plurality. This lengthy article, mapping one third of the volume, that is, pp. 25-98, is a clear sign of the erudite scholarship, enlightening arguments, excelling clarity, intellectual honesty, logical consistency and the zeal of a Christian mission-

ary concerning the conviction of and commitment to Jesus Christ, unique and universal mediator of salvation.

The article invites the readers to the core of Christian faith, which is "not merely sharing and professing the faith *of* Jesus Christ, but essentially faith *in* him" (p. 25). The author sincerely and seriously holds that the faith in Jesus is the unique mediator of salvation is the "very core of Christian faith" (p. 26). He is of the conviction that "it is against Christian faith and theology to reduce Jesus Christ into just *one* of the many saviours or incarnations" (p. 26). Without denying the role and value of any religious figure and, at the same time, without compromising the truth of salvation, the author has this to state, "When we speak of Jesus Christ as the only Saviour, we focus on his role as the only ultimate mediator of salvation of and from God" (p. 27). Though we can and may *distinguish* between Jesus and Christ, but "this does not mean that we *separate* the Christ from Jesus or vice versa, for Jesus and the Christ are personally the same one" (p.30). Criticising the 'relativization strategy', Athappilly argues, "Faith does not distinguish 'truth for me' and 'truth for others'. If something is true, it is true and valid for me and *all*" (p. 32). He examines the witness of Scripture and Tradition and establishes the truth of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ in salvation (pp. 33-60). The author conducts an interesting and important tour through the woods of Scripture, Fathers of the Church, contemporary theologians and magisterial teachings in highlighting the deposit of faith in Jesus Christ. In the following section, the professor picks up some authors, like, John Hick, Raymon Panickkar, Paul F. Knitter and criticises their tendency, "It is not necessary to sacrifice the uniqueness of Christ as *the* unique saviour at the altar of dialogue for the sake of a pluralistic co-relational theology of religions" (p. 73).

Upholding the Christian claim of Jesus Christ as the one ultimate mediator of salvation, the author brings into focus the temptation of many authors "to water down the claim" in the false perception of pleasing all (p. 76). Prof. Athappilly makes the fundamental requirement for a genuine inter-religious dialogue. It is "possible only between persons who are committed to their respective religious faiths; hence it is wrong to think that committed statements of one's faith will hinder dialogue" (p. 79). The author consistently and convincingly brings to light the emptiness of the authors who are not convinced of or committed to their faith, "the partners discuss not their faith convictions or religious truths, rather they bracket out their faith and then discuss as though no one has found any truth" (p. 85). Refuting the unfounded allegations of 'boastful hybris' levelled against the Christian claim, the author discloses the personality claim of Jesus to be "his ultimate kenosis" (p. 93). According to the author the proper mindset of a Christian should be "be tolerant, humble and yet firm towards all non-Christian religions" (p. 97).

Consistently, the author argues that "The other mediators share in Christ's mediatory efficacy and do not offer a salvation bypassing him" (p. 97). Emphasising the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the article highlights that "There is, was and can be no comparable claim of uniqueness for any person as that for Jesus Christ, for no one else has really claimed and been claimed as God Incarnate in the real sense; no one else also has been confirmed in this claim" (p. 97). Showing the baseless and pointless argument of those who sacrifice the uniqueness of Christ, S. Athappilly gives a warning, "By sacrificing the uniqueness of Jesus Christ at the altar of inter-religious dialogue a theologian may eliminate a scandal or stumbling block of Christian faith; but he will be building his theological edifice without the corner stone and the foundation that God himself has laid" (p. 98). Encouraging the Christians and their faith in Christ, the author presents the pattern of Saint Paul in preaching the Christ crucified, "The stumbling block of the uniqueness of Christ may similarly turn into a stepping stone in the service of truth and salvation to many" (p. 98).

The second article "The Affective and Affectionate Dimension of the Syro-Malabar *Qurbana*" is a testimony of personal appreciation and conversion of the author to the celebration of the *Qurabana*, the Eucharist. In this article, the author presents the hidden treasures of truth and beauty of Qurbana (p. 115). The article is first of its kind on the *Qurbana*, experiencing and expressing the affective and affectionate dimensions of the Eucharistic celebration of Syro-Malabar Rite.

"Theological Dimensions of the Anaphora of Mar Addai and Mari," explores the Trinitarian, theo-logical, Christo-logical, pneumato-logical, liturgio-logical, proto-logical and Eschato-logical dimensions in the anaphora. The anaphora "entails the grateful *anamnesis* (commemorative representation) of the entire Paschal Mystery of Christ, especially the celebration of his death and resurrection in view (hope) of his second coming" (p. 148). It has four *g'hantha* prayer-circles consists of praise and thanksgiving in four parts. The first cycle renders praise and thanks to God the Father for all the his gifts in

general and for the priestly ministry. The second one praises the triune God for the work of creation and for bestowing grace on humanity. The third is a praise to the Sond for his work of Incarnation and redemption. And the fourth is praise and thanksgiving to each of the Divine persons (p. 149). The author successfully illustrates the liturgy as an important source of theology and highlights the basic and significant tenets of the Catholic faith in the anaphora and it "signifies and celebrates the various phases of the dispensation of salvation, beginning with Creation, through the redemptive work of the Paschal Mystery, culminating in the sending of the Holy Spirit, and anticipates the eschatological fulfilment" (p. 149).

In a similar vein, the article on "The Theological Anthropology of the Syro-Malabar Qurbana" is an exploration of the significance of the liturgy in displaying the theological content. According to the author the *Syro-Malabar Qurbana* is rich in biblical and theological insights about man and the world. It is an enactment of the "blending of the heavenly and earthly, the divine and human, the spiritual and material; the eternal and temporal; the past, present, and future" (p. 184). The Eucharistic liturgy bears witness to the "holistic and cosmic vision in Trinitarian, Christological and anthropological perspective" (p. 184).

The next article, "Is Christian Revelation Theocentric or Christocentric?" is a theological investigation into the core of Christian faith. Having analysed different sources and studies, the author arrives at a synthesis, "Christian revelation is Theo-centric, with its specific trait on Christo-centricism. It is Theocentric in its Christo-centrism and vice versa" (p. 200).

In his article "Universal Magisterium and Reception in the Local Church: An Oriental Perspective," Sebastian Athappilly observes that "The Orientals in general do not approach the issue from a purely rationalistic point of view, rather spiritually and without much ado about the distinction related to the type of assent to be accorded to each magisterial pronouncement" (p. 227). The author explains the three types of the doctrines according to the new formula of the Profession of Faith, requiring types of assent of the faithful. Nevertheless, the author makes it abundantly clear that the Oriental mentality "is not so much a juridical act of acceptance as it is an ongoing spiritual process in the life of the Church" (p. 228).

The article "The Special Synod for Asia: Story of a Pastoral Voyage" is a travel narrative and personal appreciation on the celebration of the historical synod held in Rome, to which the author also was invited to participate in the category of *adiutor*.

"Jesus Christ needs no life certificate from Sita Ram Goel," is a logical and thrashing response to the book entitled *Jesus Christ: An Artifice for Aggression* written by Sita Ram Goel. The comments attached to the book "unscholarly, selective approach and its preconceived and forced conclusions betrays the causes that have given birth to it, namely, feelings of hatred and antagonism against Christianity" illustrate the mind of Prof. Athappilly (p. 238). At the outset, the author attacks the mindset of Goel, "The author is really (but necessarily) worried about the positive approach of the many open minded Hindus towards Jesus" (p. 238). This article challenges the arguments of Sita Ram Goel one after another and by way of counter arguments, the author, establishes that Jesus of New Testament is not a man of aggression, instead he is humble and meek who instructs the disciples not to resist one who is evil, but to love the enemies (p. 255). He also rightly points to the tradition of Thomas Christians of India and their legacy of co-existence and cooperation with the Hindus and Moslems of the locality (p.255). At the same time, the author invites the Christians to make a self criticism on present trends "of an undue and exaggerated Westernization" (p.257).

The article "Is John Hick—A *Theologian* of Religion(s)?" was originally a book review published in *Journal of Dharma* on D. Cheetham's book, *John Hick. A Critical Introduction and Reflection,* Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003. The overall impression about Hick's works, according to our author, "is that they are not of a *theological* nature, for he is not operating with theological tools, but purely philosophical ones" (p. 259).

The other features of the volume, like, the abbreviations, glossary, general introduction, selected bibliography, and index , etc., are useful and helpful tools for easy reference and continued research.

Theology in India is an enlightening, empowering and enriching reading on **Christ**, the unique and universal mediator of salvation, **Church**, the sign of salvation in the world and **Eucharist**, the celebration of the history of salvation and the mystery of Christ. Though the author deals with fundamental and subtle issues concerning Christian revelation and response, it is an interesting, important, and illustrative work, which must be read by all the faithful and all others who would like to know Jesus Christ and Christianity in truth and depth.

Hence, Sebastian Athappilly, CMI deserves our recognition and appreciation for his intellectual pursuit and

integral approach in interpreting the faith about the truth of Christ, Church and Eucharist in a manner logically consistent, theologically correct and officially right.

***Team of Rivals*: *The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*.** Doris Kearns Goodwin, Simon & Schuster, NY, (2005), pp. 754. BP. 35.00.

Reviewed by Rev. Michael P. Orsi, Research Fellow in Law and Religion, Ave Maria School of Law

In *De Re Publica* (51 B.C.) Cicero describes the ideal statesman as one who contemplates eternal truths, articulates them eloquently and then strives for agreement on what is right (consensus juris). Cicero also says that he should not fear death. Herein he effectively describes Abraham Lincoln.

Presidential historian Doris Kearns Goodwin's *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln* is a meditation on Lincoln's leadership during the greatest crisis in America's history, The Civil War. To preserve the union, he collected the greatest talent and some of the biggest egos in the nation to serve in his Cabinet, four of whom had been his rivals for the Republican Party's nomination in the election of 1860. Each of them fervently believed, even after the election, that they should be President. Goodwin makes the case that because of Lincoln's unique character, which the *Chicago Tribune and Press* described to be "the natural consequence of an equitable nature and a mental constitution that is never off balance," none was more suited for the task than he. The book provides biographies of William Henry Seward, his Secretary of State, Salmon Chase, who he named Secretary of the Treasury, Edward Bates, who became his Attorney General and William Stanton, who replaced Simon Cameron as Secretary of War. Though their contributions to the war effort were important, Goodwin shows how their effectiveness was only possible because of Lincoln's clear articulation of the principles upon which the Republic was founded, his steadfastness in the goals he wished to achieve, his patient nurturing of each man's gifts, and his sensitivity to their unique personalities.

This book is a meditation on leadership. Lincoln's success as a leader was due to the fact that he was preeminently a moral man. His innate goodness caused others to like him. His compassion enabled him to truly feel others' pain and his intuition kept him in touch with the pulse of the nation. These attributes enabled him to hold together a fragile coalition of war Democrats and conservative Republicans who wanted to save the union and maintain slavery with the radical Republicans who wanted immediate abolition and the full rights of citizenship accorded to all Negroes. Lincoln's impeccable timing and his understanding of the power of words enabled him to maintain the alliance and sustain the public support necessary for winning the war. His lawyerly skills and use of executive power inherent in the Constitution also allowed for the gradual elimination of slavery: first, he issued the Confiscation Act (1862), which punished Confederates who did not surrender by freeing their slaves; the next year he issued the Emancipation Proclamation (1863), which freed all the slaves in the Confederacy; and finally he shepherded through Congress the 13th Amendment (1865), which ended slavery forever in the United States.

There are other qualities important to Lincoln's effectiveness that cannot go without note. He was not averse to sharing the blame when something went wrong; he was magnanimous even to those who opposed him; and he apologized when he was wrong or harsh. In the first instance, Goodwin relates the story of Lincoln's first Secretary of War, Simon Cameron. Cameron's laxity in administration and questionable contracts, which led to his dismissal, elicited a public letter from the President to Congress stating that the haste in which he enjoined Cameron to enter certain contracts for the war effort made him partially culpable. For this he won Cameron's undying friendship. As to his magnanimity, no better example can be given than the case of Salmon Chase. The troublesome Treasury Secretary had unbridled presidential ambitions and continually tried to undermine the President he was supposed to be serving. After finally accepting Chase's oft-tendered resignation, he latter appointed Chase to be Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court because, he said, "It is right for the country." In the last case, Goodwin relates how Lincoln once sent a hastily written note that upset a general. It was followed by another stating, "I was a little cross. I ask pardon."

Lincoln was the original "Great Communicator." He knew that storytelling was an especially effective way of getting across a moral and shaping public opinion. His empathy for Dred Scott, a slave denied the right to be freed by the Supreme Court in 1857 after having lived in a free state for a number of years, well illustrates this point. Lincoln said, "Scott's life is as valuable to him as that of any person in the land. You remember the remark of a Scotchman about the head of a nobleman

who was decapitated. It was a small matter of a head, but it was valuable to him, poor fellow, for it was the only one he had."

The pressures on the President were enormous and Lincoln knew how important it was for him to relax in order to function properly. He enjoyed spending time with friends, especially William Henry Seward, who in time became Lincoln's closest confidant and greatest admirer. He took time to go to the theater and to read, and he loved to tell stories. His secretaries, John Nicolay and John Hay, attest to his enjoyment of these activities since they were often his audience when he was especially taxed. It was not unusual for the President to go to their room in his nightclothes in order to unwind by reading aloud to them and sharing a good laugh.

Throughout the latter part of the book Goodwin weaves in the theme of the personal danger that confronted Lincoln. He displayed a fearlessness that bordered on recklessness much to the consternation of those charged with his wellbeing. This bravery, however, won Lincoln the admiration of many, especially the soldiers in the field for whom he too great risks to visit. Goodwin provides anecdotal evidence that Lincoln had premonitions of his own death. Early in the book Goodwin quotes Lincoln as being desirous of the "esteem of his fellow men." The classical man accepted death as the cost of fame or to enhance his legacy. Unfortunately, Goodwin fails to develop this theme at the cost of failing to appreciate one of the primary factors that has made Lincoln a civil saint.

For anyone who wishes to lead others, this book is essential. Lincoln shows us how to harness the best in others, build consensus, heal the alienated, and welcome back disenfranchised. He exhibited profound common sense in dealing with personnel problems, he displayed diplomacy in adversity and never wavered from his principles. From this exquisite presentation of Abraham Lincoln we can learn many valuable lessons.

The Limits of International Law, Goldsmith, Jack L. and Eric A. Posner. Oxford University Press, New York, (2005). 262 pp.

Reviewed by Jude P. Dougherty, The Catholic University of America

As the United Nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Court, and other institutions seek to expand their reach, often invoking the concept of "international law," this is a welcome volume insofar as it contributes to an understanding of the meaning of the term and the limits of its applicability. Goldsmith and Posner are well aware that international law plays mainly a rhetorical role in international relations. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as international law. "International law," they write, "emerges from states acting rationally to maximize their interests, given their perceptions of the interests of other states and the distribution of state power." Goldsmith and Posner recognize that "state" is an abstraction, and so too is the notion of "state interests." Concretely, within every state there are certain individuals or groups, i.e., intellectual elites, bureaucracies, corporations, and the military, that have a disproportionate influence on the conduct of state policy. That influence may or may not be exercised in the interest of the public good. "State interest" therefore may be merely a description of the preference of the ruling elite or of an influential group. Given that states can act irrationally because their leaders act on behalf of special interests or make mistakes, the basic question remains: can a state over time even have coherent policy, let alone firmly adhere to "international law?"

Viewing what they believe is the evidence of the last century, Goldsmith and Posner conclude that it would be naive to believe that states comply with international law for non-instrumental reasons or that they comply because compliance is the morally right or legitimate thing to do. Where compliance exists, it is the result of the coincidence of interest, cooperation, coercion, and perhaps coordination. It is wrong to assume that there is a normative component to international law or that there is a commonly recognized moral order that obliges states to act contrary to their interests. Why, then, even talk about international law, let alone refer to a nonexistent international moral order? The answer: international law insofar as it speaks to obligation can improve cooperation and coordination by clarifying what counts as cooperation and coordination just as treaties do. "More often, international legal rhetoric is used to mask or rationalize behavior driven by self-interest factors that have nothing to do with international law." We should not be disturbed, therefore, to find states using the language of obligation while following the logic of self-interest. Such is the human condition.

The authors' position is reminiscent of that of Carneades in Hugo Grotius's De iure belli ac pacis (1625), wherein the fictional character argues that there is no such thing as a universal obligatory natural law "because all creatures, men as well as animals, are impelled by nature

towards ends advantageous to themselves." Each man, Carneades holds, seeks his own advantage; human laws are dictated simply by consideration of expediency; they are not based upon or related to a natural law, a supposed law that simply does not exist. Grotius will argue against that position by acknowledging that man, to be sure, is an animal but that he is more than that. As rational, he is impelled by a desire for social life, a peaceful, organized, social environment in which he can achieve his full potential as a human being. The desire for social order flows from his very nature and is at once the source and *raison d'être* of law. "To this sphere of law," writes Grotius, "belong the abstaining from that which is another's (and) the obligation to fulfill promises." Grotius will speak of the great society of states and the law of nations that should govern their interests. Just as the laws of each state have in view the advantage of that state, so by mutual consent certain laws originate as between all states or a great many states that have in view the advantage, not of particular states but the great society of states. This he called the "law of nations."

The pragmatic naturalism of Goldsmith and Posner parts company with Grotius on the issue of expediency. The former acknowledge no moral obligation to act against self-interest, whereas Grotius will speak of natural justice. Although Goldsmith and Posner do not discuss claims of exploitation made by underdeveloped countries against the industrialized world or of colonies against former colonial powers, *The Limits of International Law* may be an aid in clarifying discussions of obligation at the international level.

***The Appropriation of Divine Life in Cyril of Alexandria*,** Daniel Keating, Oxford University Press: New York, (2004), 315 pp.

Reviewed by Dr. Edward Peters, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit MI, USA

While at a popular level invocations of the Holy Spirit are common in post-conciliar pastoral practice, deeper developments in pneumatology are also being made in our lifetime, albeit with less fanfare. Advancements in studies of the Spirit are not easily achieved, however, despite the relatively underdeveloped state of these studies in the West as compared to, say, Christology or ecclesiology. Scholars wishing to make serious contributions to understanding the Third Person of the Trinity must have solid backgrounds in Scripture, patrology, systematics, and the language skills necessary to support critical research in such fields. Put another way, pneumatologists need to be very comfortable in Minge, and all that implies. Happily, Dr. Daniel Keating's monograph, *The appropriation of divine life in Cyril of Alexandria*, a significantly expanded (by some 25,000 words) form of his doctoral dissertation from Oxford, shows him to be the kind of scholar capable of advancing our understanding of the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

Dr. Keating, I rather suspect, did not set out to write work on the Holy Spirit: his stated aim in *Appropriation* was to present the great Patriarch of Alexandria's explanation of divinization, specifically, the process of our entry into the divine life over time from a God who works outside of time, and to answer, or at least to refine, some vexing questions about Cyril's Christology (especially his understanding of the Incarnation). But one can read hardly a few paragraphs past the seminary professor's excellent overview of Cyril's life in the introduction, before encountering Keating's first remarks on Cyril's hitherto under-appreciated efforts to explore the role of the Holy Spirit in Christ's salvific work.

Keating examines in detail Cyril's use of Scripture, of course, and carefully assesses the latter's creative juxtaposition of, for example, baptismal and Eucharistic narrations (and some elaborations thereon in other Old and New Testament passages) on its own merits—though certainly not in a way that ignores modern exegesis of these texts. Indeed, in several places, Keating confronts modern commentators on Cyril (e.g., Burghardt, Chadwick, Grillmeier, and Meunier) and gently but firmly asks of these and others whether, say, the conventional explanation that Cyril simply moved from a pre-Nestorian physicalist explanation of divinization, to a post-Nestorian "divination by spiritualization" needs some refinement.

Keating repeatedly makes the point that Cyril's eclectic interests (aside from the saint's fundamental focus on Christ, of course) and his incomplete (even by fifth century standards) systematics lead to some inconsistencies in the patriarch's theology. Cyril is accused, for example, of falling into a bifurcated theological anthropology, with the Eucharist feeding the body, and the Spirit (especially in baptism) nourishing the soul. But I think it a special strength of Keating's work that, besides frequently looking at Cyril in comparison to Athanasius and Origen (and in a semi-independent essay in chapter six, at such figures as Augustine and Leo the Great), Keating underscores the importance of Cyril's diffuse, and therefore somewhat neglected, biblical commentaries for their purely theological

insights. Drawing on these wider sources, Keating can plausibly suggest that there is a greater harmony in Cyril's writings as a whole than some have seen to date (correcting perceived deficiencies that in large part arose, I think, precisely because students undervalued Cyril's appreciation of the pneumatological). Thus, to address the example mentioned above, while Keating acknowledges Cyril's equivocal descriptions of the source of divine life in us, he argues that Cyril views the fundamental effects of the Eucharist and baptism as being the same pneumatologically, while the manners of appropriation are different. It was not, for all that, a point Keating pressed hard; he set out the textual evidence and a cogent assessment of same, and leaves others to draw their own conclusions.

Keating does not write for the beginner. Those, such as myself, with spotty backgrounds in patristics will, I frankly say, need to read this book slowly, a comment that has nothing to do with Keating's writing style, which is consistently accessible. Keating's commentary, for example, explaining from several angles Cyril's account of the Fall as being fundamentally a loss of the Holy Spirit followed by the Spirit's return in Christ, I found especially approachable and compelling, and (to highlight but one of the many shorter topics) Keating's short remarks on Cyril's interpretation of the interplay between our Lord's tears and groans before the tomb of Lazarus were insightful. In any case, the reasonable effort required to move through Keating's work will be rewarded at several levels, including: first, one's coming away with renewed confidence that, underneath the at-times superficial shouting about the Holy Spirit's being at work today, there has always been a sophisticated and rich bedrock of doctrine waiting to be mined; and, second, that in scholars such as Keating, the Church has thinkers capable of bringing that theology to surface for the rest of us to use and enjoy.

Medicine and Philosophy in Classical Antiquity: Doctors and Philosophers on Nature, Soul, Health, and Disease, Philip van der Eijk, Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, (2005). 404 pp. Cloth, $95.00

Reviewed by Lorenzo Marcolin, Orthopedic Surgeon (retired), Rockville, MD

Philip J. Van der Eijk, a professor of Greek at the University of Newcastle on Tyne, has published extensively on ancient philosophy, medicine, science, and related subjects. He is the co-author of *Ancient Histories of Medicine: Essays in Medical Doxography and Historiography in Classical Antiquity*.

The present work is divided into three parts. Part I deals with the Hippocratic Corpus and Diocles of Carystus. Part II focuses on Aristotle and his school; Part III on Galen's dietetics and pharmacological works, and on early medical writers such as Diocles, Soranus, and Caelius.

Van der Eijk speaks of the "Greek Miracle," a civilization that arose in Greece and nearby islands, 2400 years ago, that continues to influence Western understanding of science and medicine. As a matter of fact, Greek medicine with Hippocrates and Roman medicine with Galen dominated Western medicine up to the 19th century. Recent studies suggest that early philosophers had more interaction with physicians than is commonly acknowledged. Empedocles, Democritus, Parmenides, Pythagoras, Strato, Theophrastus, Sextus Empiricus, Plato, and Aristotle are commonly studied as philosophers, but these philosophers also wrote about anatomy, physiology, embryology, reproduction, youth, old age, and the effects of drugs and drink on the lives of people. Empedocles engaged in actual therapeutic practice; Democritus did anatomical research.

What has come to be known as the Hippocratic Corpus consists of 60 treatises. Written in the Ionic dialect, there is no evidence that any of them was written by Hippocrates. Recent scholarship suggests that these treatises originated in the medical school of the island of Cos where Hippocrates was born. The Hippocratic Oath is really a complication of Hippocratic writings. Praxagoras of Cos is known for his discovery of the difference between veins and arteries. The author of the Hippocratic treatise on epilepsy criticized magic or superstitious description of this disease and dismissed any magical treatment of epilepsy. Diocles of Carystus, who some claim was a student of Aristotle, was known as "the younger Hippocrates." He produced an interesting treatise on dietetics, and in one passage he argues that it was not necessary to understand the cause to perform treatment.

In the treatise on "Epidemics" attributed to Hippocrates, we find a version of the famous oath, "The doctor should declare what has happened before, understand what is present, and foretell what will happen in the future. This is what he should practice. As to diseases, he should strive to achieve two things: to help or do no harm. The medical art consists of three components: the disease, the patient, and the doctor. The doctor is the servant of his art. The patient should combat the disease with the cooperation of the doctor."

The Hippocratic Oath suggests that the medical profession was making an effort to set high moral standards, i.e., no female should be given an abortive drug; no administration

of a lethal poison even when asked by the patient to do so; no abuse of a patient by a doctor. This coincided with significant advances in medical knowledge that set the tone for centuries to come. By the 4th century B.C. pharmacology, surgery, and dietetics were distinct areas of study. Dietetics were viewed by most for the preservation of health, not for treatment. Van der Eijk devotes a considerable portion of his book to the biological works of Aristotle. He provides an extended treatment of Aristotle on the nature of the psychic processes. Acknowledging that bodily conditions affect intellectual activity, Aristotle was nevertheless convinced that thinking involves a nonphysical aspect. The author assumes that his readers have a medico-physiological background as he relates Aristotle's discussion of intelligence to his study of animals. The dependence of intellect on a healthy body is taken for granted. To the intriguing question, "Where does one think?" Aristotle, by Van der Eijk's account, is not sure and seems to emphasize the role of the heart. Separate chapters are devoted to Aristotle on Eutuchia and on sterility.

Five centuries later Galen (129-c.199) discusses whether the maintenance of a healthy body belonged to dietetics or gymnastics. Galen was certainly the most distinguished of the Greek physicians. Called to the Court of Marcus Aurelius in Rome, he became personal physician to Aurelius's son, Commodus. Like Aristotle, Galen's work illustrates the reciprocal influence of philosophy and medicine on each other. Galen had studied at the medical school attached to the shrine at Asclepius in Pergamum and there became acquainted with the teaching of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, and the Stoics. Among other accomplishments, he is credited as the founder of experimental physiology. In discussing the methodology to be employed in dietetics and pharmacology, Galen stipulated that both reason (theory) and experience are indispensable tools for acquiring knowledge and understanding. Empirical evidence, standing alone, can easily be misinterpreted. With respect to the prescription of foodstuffs and medicines, one must be prepared to "qualify experience." Sometimes a substance has to be tried repeatedly to be considered an effective agent. Then, too, a single herb may at times be a foodstuff, a drug, or even a poison, depending on dosage and circumstance. Any medical claim, idea, or notion may stand in need of qualification by experience. Surprisingly, to this reviewer, a physician, Galen offers a very modern concept of absorption between the stomach and the body and of absorption through the skin. Although pharmacology and dietetics were important to the ancients, over the centuries this aspect of medicine became less important and almost disappeared. Until about fifty years ago, a dietician was always hospital based and was usually a college graduate with training in food chemistry. Concern until then was limited to diseases that necessitated strict diets, such as a low-salt diet for heart patients, low-carbohydrate diet for diabetics, and low protein for individuals with chronic kidney diseases.

Upon finishing this book, one is drawn to the conclusion that although the ancients made some serious mistakes in diagnosis and treatment when compared with modern medical practice, those physicians and philosophers have much to tell us about human nature, methods of enquiry, and even medical practice.

Thomas Aquinas: Disputed Questions on the Virtues. Ed. E. M. Atkins and Thomas Williams, trans. E. M. Atkins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. pp. xl + 301. Cloth, $75.

Reviewed by D. Q. McInerny, Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary, Denton, Nebraska.

It is always a good thing to have new translations of the works of St. Thomas Aquinas, and, given the confusions and uncertainties that beset so much contemporary ethical thought, that is especially the case when the work in question is the Common Doctor's *Disputed Questions on the Virtues.* This translation comes to us as a title in the Cambridge Texts in the History of Philosophy, a series under the editorial direction of Karl Ameriks of the University of Notre Dame and Desmond Clarke of University College Cork.

The book is the result of the combined efforts of Margaret Atkins of the University of Leeds, the translator, and Thomas Williams of the University of Iowa, who wrote an Introduction to the text. In that Introduction Professor Williams provides the reader with a helpful overview of St. Thomas's ethical thought, giving special emphasis to his theory on the virtues. Particularly appropriate was his calling attention to the integral nature of St. Thomas's ethical thought. He cogently develops the point that one cannot come to a proper understanding of St. Thomas's theory on the virtues without taking into account his theory on natural law, for the first is encompassed within the second and is developed from it.

Professor Atkins' translation of this Thomistic text is in the main quite impressive. It reads very well.

However, it is not without certain problems, relating particularly to how certain key terms were rendered into English. A principal case in point is the decision to translate the Latin *habitus* as "disposition," so that throughout the text virtue is being identified as a disposition. This was, I believe, an unfortunate choice, and that for three reasons.

First, in all of the English translations of St. Thomas's works with which I am familiar, the Latin *habitus* is consistently translated as "habit." There has thus been established something like a translating tradition with respect to how this very important term should be rendered into English, and it would seem that, unless a translator has some overriding reasons for departing from that tradition, it is better to honor it and to work within it. This is especially the case when one considers the status of the scholars who have given us English translations of St. Thomas's works over the years. On just that point it would be germane to cite Professor Ralph McInerny's recent translation (St. Augustine's Press, 1999) of the same work translated by Professor Atkins, where *habitus* is uniformly rendered as "habit."

Second, "habit" in contemporary English usage connotes just the kind of fixity, of resistance to uprooting, that the notion of virtue intends to convey, whereas "disposition" suggests something less permanent, a detectable bent perhaps, a leaning, but something that cannot be fully depended upon as a reliable source of desirable action. The OED describes a "disposition" as an "inclination," "the condition of being (well or ill) disposed *towards,"* a "mood," a "humour." A virtue must be made of sterner stuff than this.

Third, and most importantly, to translate *habitus* as "disposition" *non est secundum mentem Sancti Thomae*, which is to say, it simply doesn't square with the Angelic Doctor's thought, nor with Aristotle's, on which of course St. Thomas heavily relies. Significantly, by way of preface to his introducing the subject of virtue in the First Part of the Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*, St. Thomas devotes no fewer than six questions, containing a total of twenty-four articles, to the subject of habit, his obvious intention being to present virtue as a type of habit. Within his ample exploration of the nature of habit, he takes great pains to distinguish habit from disposition. To be sure, it is not flatly wrong to call virtue a disposition, and leave it at that, any more than it would be flatly wrong to call man an animal, and leave it at that. It is not a matter of being wrong, but simply incomplete. We want to know more about man than that he is an animal, so we identify him specifically as a rational animal. Comparably, in order to give the most precise kind of identification to a virtue we call it a fixed disposition, or habit, for habit relates to disposition as species relates to genus. St. Thomas suggests that we look upon a habit as a disposition that has been brought to full maturity, when he tells us that a disposition becomes a habit just as a boy becomes a man. It is a fetching comparison, but not perfect, for whereas a boy's maturation into a man does not depend upon the deliberate repetition of specific acts on the part of the boy (i.e., barring obstacles, he is going to grow into a man willy nilly), that is precisely what the formation of a habit depends upon. Again, St. Thomas is quite deliberate in distinguishing between disposition and habit, and then in opting for the latter as the most precise way of identifying a virtue. "From this it is clear," he writes, "that the word *habit* implies a certain lastingness; while the word *disposition* does not. (*S. T.,* I-II, q. 49, a. 2, ad 3. The two key Latin terms in the text are *habitus* and *dispositio*.) It is just the "lastingness" of habit, in contrast to disposition, that makes it the proper way to designate a virtue.

In her Glossary note on *habitus* and *dispositio*, Professor Atkins acknowledges the long-standing distinction between the two terms, rightly noting *habitus* to be "more stable and harder to dislodge than a *dispositio.…" (280)* All the more reason, then, to translate *habitus* as "habit." According to time-honored practice, virtue and habit have been defined, with marvelous succinctness, as, respectively, a "good habit," and a "fixed disposition." So, a virtue is a favorable disposition firmly in place. Disposition, as understood by both St. Thomas and Aristotle, should be thought of as something along the lines of an innate tendency. A person might be born with, for example, a penchant for generosity, but if that penchant is never built upon by deliberate, repeated acts reflective of it, it will never become a virtue. To act out of a natural positive proclivity is not to act virtuously. Natural dispositions (i.e, tendencies, inclinations, propensities, proclivities), good or bad, are, left to themselves, whimsical sources of human action. One possessed of them may or may not act in accordance with them in any given instance. It is just the inconstancy of dispositions that set them apart from habits. To have made permanent–and therefore predictable–a positive natural inclination (say, toward generosity) is to be in possession of that good habit we call virtue. "Thus habit differs from disposition in this," Aristotle writes in the *Categories*, "that while the latter is ephemeral, the former is per-

manent and difficult to alter." And the peculiar virtue of virtue consists precisely in the fact that it is permanent and difficult to alter. A virtue is part of who we are for as long as we continue to nurture it with acts that pertain to its proper nature. Later, when Aristotle tells us that "habits are at the same time dispositions, but dispositions are not necessarily habits," he is drawing attention to the distinction between genus and species. (9a, 5-10)

St. Thomas's *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* is divided into five sections, devoted respectively to the virtues in general, charity, fraternal correction, hope, and the cardinal virtues.

The first two sections, on the virtues in general and on charity, are the largest, each containing thirteen articles, whereas the sections on hope and the cardinal virtues are composed of four articles each, and the section on fraternal correction has but two. This work, taken as a whole, is immensely rich, and though one would want to consult other Thomistic sources in order to gain the fullest understanding of his theory on virtue–most notably the entire Second Part of *Summa Theologiae*–all of the essentials can be found right here.

One of St. Thomas's elementary observations on the subject of virtue is that although we human beings are not naturally virtuous–if we were, he quips, there would be no evil in the world–we are naturally ordered to virtue. We were created for the sake of the good, and that means, ultimately, for the sake of the ultimate good–God Himself. To say that we all have a natural capacity for virtue is simply to say that we have within us what it takes to exercise our reason in such a way so as to achieve the good. To become virtuous is to do nothing else but to fulfill our rational nature, to bring it to proper fruition.

There is a fundamental distinction to be made between acquired virtues, those that can be gained through our own efforts, and infused virtues, those that come to us only through divine intervention. The premier infused virtues are the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity; they are given to us as totally gratuitous gifts of God. There is nothing we can do directly to possess them, though we can, through our own actions, properly dispose ourselves for their reception. There are two sets of acquired virtues, the intellectual virtues–understanding, science, and wisdom–and the moral virtues, which are summed up in the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. All the acquired virtues can take on the character of infused virtues, which happens when the results of our own efforts are crowned by divine grace. When an otherwise acquired virtue becomes also an infused virtue, we are enabled, through it, to act in ways that exceed our natural powers. Prudence, or practical wisdom, is the most important of the moral virtues, in that it governs all of our actions. But charity must be recognized as the chief of all the virtues, in the sense that it is only through it that we are able to attain our final end. It is, St. Thomas says, the moving cause of all the other virtues, and it is the highest of virtues because its end is the highest.

Ite ad Thomam, "Go to Thomas," Pope Leo XIII urged us, and that salutary recommendation can be applied specifically to the deep, wide-ranging, and constantly provocative work which is *Disputed Questions on the Virtues.* Reading about St. Thomas is no substitute for reading St. Thomas. In this work we are repeatedly presented with that eminently Thomistic position which has it that being virtuous is essentially a matter of being rational, of abiding by "right reason" (*recta ratio*). But what is "right reason"? It is simply human reason as measured, as guided and illumined by, divine wisdom. In this work we read, in the treatment of the virtue of charity, that "all human beings are to be loved equally in the sense that the *good* that we ought to want for them is equal, i.e., eternal life." (164) Cambridge University is to be congratulated for bringing out this fine book. And Professors Atkins and Williams are to have our gratitude for being the proximate efficient causes behind it.

Sex and the Marriage Covenant: A Basis for Morality, John F. Kippley, Second Edition. San Francisco: Ignatius, 2005. Xvi plus 411 pages.

Reviewed by Thomas Scheck, Assistant Professor, Ave Maria University

John Kippley has been courageously defending traditional Christian sexual ethics in a Roman Catholic context since 1963. In this second edition of his book, Kippley argues that since self-giving is the essence of marital love, contraception contradicts the very essence of the marriage covenant. What too many people are unaware of is the reality set forth in the opening statement of the book: "Up until 1930, Christian churches had been unanimous in teaching that it was immoral to use unnatural methods of birth control" (vii). The Church of England was the first to break with traditional teaching, and was followed by all Protestant denominations. The Catholic Church has never caved in to this departure from traditional sexual morality. After the Anglican innovation, Pope

Pius XI reaffirmed the previously universal teaching against contraception in his encyclical *Casti Connubii* (1930). Paul VI did the same in *Humanae Vitae* (1968), and John Paul II in his persistent teaching. These popes were simply affirming what all Christian churches had previously believed and defended up to 1930: namely, that it goes against natural law to use contraceptive drugs, procedures and behaviors.

The present book is divided into five parts. In *Part One: The Covenant Proposal*, the author discusses the theological meaning of covenant and its implications for human sexuality. Here Kippley articulates and explains his thesis, that God intends sexual intercourse to be at least implicitly a renewal of the marriage covenant. From this it follows that the marriage covenant provides the criterion to evaluate the morality of every sexual act. Kippley's theological contribution here is creative, but not innovative; he is thought provoking, but not abrupt. However, in my view, Kippley seriously understates his own qualifications and stature as a Catholic theologian. No one who reads Kippley's critique of the weak and intellectually bankrupt arguments used by dissenting theologians to defend contraception will gain any respect for their learning, in spite of their doctoral degrees. It is simply impossible for a reader of this book to conclude that Kippley is less academically qualified than revisionist scholars, still living in 1968, who want us to believe that the Popes of the Catholic Church have been theological dilettantes. *Part Two: Conscience* deals with fundamental aspects of forming a correct conscience and the question of infallibility. *Part Three: Pastoral Considerations* covers Natural Family Planning, practical pastoral policies, hard cases, and sterilization. *Part Four: The Context of the Controversy* discusses the history of birth control controversies in the 20th century and a critique of the arguments for contraception. Finally, *Part Five: The Historical-Traditional Teaching* lays out the biblical foundations and ecclesiastical documentation for Catholic sexual ethics. In brief, there is very little in this book that is not intensely relevant to anyone interested in marriage, sexuality and family issues.

My favorite anecdote in the book occurred in Kippley's discussion of Genesis 38.10 and the account of Onan. The scriptural text says that Onan practiced withdrawal, spilling his seed on the ground, in order to prevent pregnancy from occurring. The Bible then states: "What he did was evil in the sight of the Lord, and [the Lord] slew him" (Gn 38.10). Until very recently in the history of biblical exegesis, an anti-contraceptive interpretation of this passage was universal. Both Catholic exegetes as well as the Protestant reformers, Luther and Calvin made this very clear. Luther went so far as to say that Onanism (contraceptive behavior) was "worse than Sodomy." But in recent times, a "Levirate-only" interpretation of this passage has emerged, i.e. the view that Onan's only sin was his failure to comply with his duty to raise up offspring for his deceased brother. Kippley endeavored to determine when the change in interpretation occurred. He reports that he consulted by phone a modern Scripture scholar and asked him when the anti-contraceptive interpretation was dropped from the discussion of Onan. The nameless scholar did not answer the question, but simply pontificated: "We just don't *do* it that way anymore." Kippley comments: "It would be hard to imagine a reply that gave more evidence that the Levirate-only interpretation is without merit, an interpretation of expediency" (p. 331).

To conclude this brief review, I will say that this book is exceptionally clearly written and easy to read. It is filled with information and documentation. This book should be required reading for Catholic (and Protestant) couples preparing for marriage. Indeed, I wish I had read this book fifteen years ago in my own pre-marital preparation.
The back cover of Kippley's book carries an endorsement by William E. May, one of the Catholic Church's leading moral theologians, who calls it a "must read for anyone concerned with marriage, sexuality and the family." It is also worth noting that Scott Hahn reports that his reading of the first edition of this book played a big role in his conversion to the Catholic position on the issue of contraception. That in itself is a significant legacy for Kippley's book and a strong recommendation.

28th Annual Convention

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars September 22–24, 2006

Hilton Airport Hotel
Kansas City, Missouri

***Sacrosanctum Concilium* and the Reform of the Liturgy**
is the title of the 2006 Fellowship of Catholic Scholars convention, to be held at the Hilton Kansas City Airport Hotel, September 22-24. All sessions will focus on the liturgy: sacred music, art and architecture, liturgical texts and translation, and the theology and mission of Catholic liturgy.

See **www.catholicscholars** for more details, or call Jack and Marlene Rook at Ave Maria University 239-280-1670

The conference will open with a Mass at noon on Friday, September 22, celebrated by Bishop Robert Finn of Kansas City-St. Joseph and close at noon on Saturday.

An address prepared for the FCS Convention by Archbishop Malcolm Ranjith, Secretary of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments will begin the program Friday afternoon. Archbishop Ranjith, a native of Sri Lanka, was appointed Secretary of the CDW early this year.

The keynote address Friday evening will be presented by Dr. James Hitchcock, of St. Louis University, and author of *Recovery of the Sacred*.

Other speakers through the weekend include Father Samuel Weber, OSB, Susan Treacy, and Father Chrysoganus Waddell, OCSO (on music); Denis McNamara and Duncan Stroik (on art/architecture); Father Paul Mankowski, Kenneth Whitehead, Monsignor James Moroney and Helen Hull Hitchcock (on liturgical texts and translation); and Eduardo Echevarria, Msgr. Stuart Swetland and Russell Shaw (on liturgical theology and mission).

The FCS Cardinal Wright Award will be presented to Patrick Lee, of Franciscan University of Steubenville, at the convention banquet on Saturday evening, September 23.

All convention events will be held at the hotel:
Hilton Kansas City Airport
8801 NW 112th Street
Kansas City, Missouri, 64153
A free shuttle is provided by the hotel for transportation from the airport.

Books Received

A People and a Nation: A History of the United States, Brief Seventh Edition, Norton, Katzman, Blight, Chudacoff, Logevall, Bailey, Paterson, Tuttle, Houghton Mifflin Co.: Boston, NY (2007), Paper, 635 pp.

The Unchanging Heart of the Priesthood, Fr. Thomas Acklin, O.S.B., Emmaus Road Publishing: Steubenville, OH, (2006), Paper, 228pp.

Envoy of the Apostles: On the Acts of the Apostles 16-28, Stephen Pimentel, Emmaus Road Publishing: Steubenville, OH, (2005), Paper, 85pp.

The Great Life: Essays on Doctrine and Holiness, ed. Michael Aquilina and Kenneth Ogorek, Emmaus Road Publishing: Steubenville, OH, (2006), Paper, 248pp.

Good Hearts: Catholic Sisters in Chicago's Past, Suellen Hoy, University of Illinois Press: Champaign, IL (2006), Paper, 242 pp.

Catholic Makers of America: Biographical Sketches of Catholic Statesmen and Political Thinkers in America's First Century, 1776-1876, ed. Stephen M. Krason, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group: Lanham, MD, (2006, Paper. 260 pp.

The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools, Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, Solidarity Association: Atlanta, GA, (2006) 79pp. Booklet

The Book of Saints and Heroes, Andrew Lang and Lenora Lang, Sophia Institute Press: Manchester, NH, (2006), Cloth, 319 pp.

The Dream Maker: the True Story of One Man Who Defied War, Prostitution, and Poverty to Set the Children Free, Monica Hannan, Liguori Publications: Liguori, MO, (2006), Paper, 280pp.

The Women in Dante's Divine Comedy and Spenser's Faerie Queene, Ann Paolucci, Griffon House Publications: Dover, DE, (2005), Paper, 195 pp.

Christ, the Life of the Soul: Blessed Columba Marmion, Trans. Alan Bancroft, Zaccheus Press: Bethesda, MD, (2005), Paper, 531pp.

Habits of Compassion: Irish Catholic Nuns and the Origins of New York's Welfare System, 1830-1920, Maureen Fitzgerald, University of Illinois Press: Champaign, IL (2006), Paper, 298 pp.

Real Prayer is Answered: The Proven Correct Way to Ask and Believe, John N. Heil, John Heil and E.T. Nedder Publishing:, Barnhart, MO, (2005), Paper, 346 pp.

In the Name of the Boss Upstairs: The Father Ray Brennan Story, Jerry Hopkins, Thomas J. Vincent Foundation: Honolulu, Hawaii, (2004), Cloth, pp. 301.

Sonnets: 150 Contemporary Sonnets, Ed. William Baer, University of Evansville Press: Evansville, IN, (2005), Cloth, 176 pp.

www.catholicscholars.org

THE ONE AND THE MANY

In speaking of the absent-minded professor, Chesterton said that it is not the absence of thought but its application to a narrow range with forgetfulness of all else that is the mark of the professor in this pejorative sense. When we are absorbed in our defining tasks, the wider world seems absent, much as when, good drive or bad, we set off from the first tee into the self-contained world of the golf course. But study like golf is an episode in one's life rather than its totality. We motor back and forth to campus, all day long we are distracted by endless irrelevancies, and even scholars watch the evening news. It is in that last role that we can sometimes think of what we do as a culpable self-indulgence.

In an essay called "Learning in War Time," C. S. Lewis addressed the suggestion that the pursuit of knowledge ought to take a back seat until peace is reestablished. When civilization is under siege, everyone should do his part. There is something to that. Socrates, after all, was a war veteran. (So was Lewis.) But Lewis shrewdly observed that we are always on the precipice, death is certain in peace as well as war, the pursuit of knowledge never takes place in optimum conditions.

True, but insufficient, since it may seem to concede that there is something self-indulgent in the pursuit of truth. Some have even thought the pursuit of virtue egoistic. In good times and bad, our great temptation is to regard the truth as ours, something we possess, rather than, as St. Augustine pointed out, the most obvious instance of a common good. Who owns 2 + 2 = 4? It is well to remind ourselves that the pursuit of truth, contemplation, relates us to what is shareable by all and thus links us with everyone. Hermits, alone with God, may be the most sociable people of all. ✠

Ralph McInerny

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly
Box 495
Notre Dame, IN 46556

Nonprofit Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Notre Dame, Indiana
Permit No. 10

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly