

# FELLOWSHIP OF CATHOLIC SCHOLARS QUARTERLY

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## APPLY FOR MEMBERSHIP

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# Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

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

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

## THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

by William L. Saunders, Esq.  
Senior Vice President and Senior Counsel  
Americans United for Life

Friends:

It is with a deep sense of humility that I write to you as the new president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. I succeed, of course, the great Father Joe Koterski, who has served the Fellowship so well as president for two terms. I will certainly lean upon Father Joe for his support and wisdom as president, and I have warned him of this!

As president, I follow many outstanding Catholics, including William E. May who died in December and about whom I present my reminiscences in this volume of the Quarterly. He was a dear friend and a ferocious defender of orthodoxy, and he will be missed. May God rest his soul.

And I also want to note the passing of the formidable and wonderful, Helen Hull Hitchcock, who served on the board of the Fellowship. She was a tireless worker for the Faith, and was the wife of our past president, Jim Hitchcock. The Fellowship will miss her. May God rest her soul.

I attended my first Fellowship Convention in the mid-1990s, before I actually became a Catholic! I was “on my way” into the Catholic Church but not yet in full communion. Nevertheless, my dear friend—and, eventually, my sponsor/godfather—Robert George thought I should not miss the opportunity to meet the great Catholic leaders and scholars who comprise the Fellowship. One of the first people I met was the gentle and good Father Ronald Lawler, our first president, with whom George and I met to discuss a project concerning *Ex corde ecclesiae*. In a bit of fitting personal symmetry, *Ex corde ecclesiae* is one of the topics of our next convention in Minneapolis/St. Paul in the fall.

Regarding the convention, let me draw your attention to an important change: the convention will NOT be held at the end of September as is our normal practice. Instead, it will be held October 23-26, 2015. This change was made because the Holy Father’s visit to the United States in September will conflict with the normal dates on which the Fellowship convention is held. Be assured, however, that this is intended to be a one-time change of dates. Thus, in 2016, we will meet during the last full weekend of September, as we have always done in the past. But, for

the 2015 convention, please mark your calendars for October 23-26 in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

As Catholics, we understand and recognize that every human being is made in the image and likeness of God, and has great, inherent dignity as a result. Thus, we all oppose the unjust taking of human life. Consequently, in the third week of January, we renewed our witness against the terrible abortion contradiction in America: wildly permissive abortion laws—with so few restrictions as to put the USA in the company of only China, North Korea, and Canada—exist in the same nation that proudly (and rightly) proclaims, and stands upon, the principle of “equal justice for all.”

I am privileged to live and work in Washington, DC. My office is only a few blocks from the Mall. And every year I see—eye to eye, face to face, and person to person—the great outpouring of love—and demand for justice—that is the March for Life.

As Catholics, we should be proud of the March. It is not a partisan or a “denominational” affair; it is open to, and welcomes, all who seek to end the unconstitutional Supreme Court jurisprudence that has established our unbounded abortion “right.” Still, most participants, judging by their banners, are Catholics. And they are overwhelmingly young. They aren’t angry either; rather, they are joyful.

Their impact is incalculable. What effect does it have on those who are on the fence on the issue? What do they think of the legions of happy, young pro-lifers marching up Constitution Avenue, with their life-affirming signs? Where are the legions of “angry, old, resentful” people that the national newspapers tell us comprise the marchers? Who can tell how many people have changed their minds by seeing the reality of the March? Personally, I know people whose hearts and minds have been turned by seeing these crowds.

Of course, if you don’t live in Washington, DC, or didn’t come to the March, you can be excused for not knowing this. After all, the press hardly mentions the March or the marchers. Usually when they do, they note that there were protestors on “both sides” and say, or imply, pro-life numbers are modest. Don’t believe it! Two years ago—on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*—the press noted 20,000 marchers. In fact, the numbers were *at least 20 times* that many, as I can attest: pro-life leaders from Europe, credited with putting

500,000 marchers on the street for their own march, attended with me and said our march was “much bigger” than theirs. Most people I know—veteran marchers—believe this year’s March was even bigger than the one two years ago.

One is tempted to say the week of the March affirms one’s faith in democracy. “Tempted” both because our faith is in God, not politics, and because the March alone cannot change anything (even if there were enough congressmen and senators to do something). Currently, the Supreme Court has put a clamp on democracy through its convoluted, unpersuasive abortion rulings. It has disenfranchised the American citizen. So the struggle must be in the courts as well as on the streets.

And I wish you could have been with me on those streets—to march up Capitol Hill; to look back and see a seemingly endless line of marchers; to stand over to the side at the intersection of Constitution Avenue and First Street—for hours—as wave after wave of marchers passed; to go to the doors of the Supreme Court and then into the doors of the Congressional offices to demand change of our unjust laws; to be buoyed up by the marchers’ witness to a culture of Life. The Splendor of Truth on the march!

In fact, many of you, no doubt, were with me. No doubt, many of you march. And if you cannot, those you have inspired by your own life of faithful scholarship surely came. Many were probably your own students, or young people whom you knew from your parishes. Faithful witness bears fruit, to paraphrase Tertullian.

To me, that is what the Fellowship is all about: it is about faithful witness to truth. And we provide that witness in fellowship with one another, with mutual respect and support. I am so honored to be the president of the Fellowship—because it has meant so much to me and because I know how much it means to others; because it plays an indispensable role in building a culture of life and a truly humane and just community in the United States; because it seeks only to serve Christ and his Church. From Bill May and Ronald Lawler to Joe Koterski and Helen Hull Hitchcock, it has been a faithful, scholarly community. May it be ever thus.

I look forward to seeing you in Minneapolis/St. Paul. ✠

## A Tribute to Bill May: A Man of the Fellowship

by William L. Saunders, Esq.

**Y**ou—we—all knew Bill May. If you ever came to a Fellowship convention, you saw him, heard him offer vigorous opinions (and challenges to unlucky speakers), enjoyed his company, were bewildered by his bottomless learning, and were charmed by his eccentricity. Bill loved the Fellowship, he served it as president and as board member, and he attended every convention and every board meeting—even after he was no longer able to drive himself—until his health absolutely prohibited it.

Of course, you never saw Bill by his lonesome; rather, it was always Bill and his wife, Pat. They were an inseparable combination, at board meetings, at conventions, everywhere.

If you were privileged, as I was, to attend his funeral mass, and to hear the testimony offered by four of his children afterward, you heard about a man who was also a great father, who was always ready to help his children in innumerable ways.

In fact, has there ever been a man who was more ready to help others than Bill May? He helped legions

of students, who went on to service in Church agencies, in the academy, in the home. He helped legions by his outpouring of scholarship. He helped many bishops to see and to intellectually defend the truth. He helped me to think through the analysis of difficult moral issues whenever I asked him (or whenever he suggested I might want to ask him!).

I had deep admiration for Bill May, particularly for his courage to admit when he was wrong, something scholars are often reluctant to do. And when he saw the truth—as he did with *Humanae vitae*—he was a ferocious defender of it, but also one whose ferocity convinced hearts and minds and won converts.

To me, Bill May in many ways epitomizes what the Fellowship stands for—he was a man of faith and of scholarship, thinking freely and widely but ready to submit his intellect to the teaching authority of the Magisterium; and he was a man of family, as sketched above, of true and deep human love. In short, he was a Catholic scholar, committed to his family and to his faith and to the truth. It is sad to think we will not see him at the next convention, but it is heartening to know he will be working hard in Heaven to make it a success. ✠

## ARTICLES

### Washington Insider: Supreme Court Decisions

by William L. Saunders

**P**erhaps the two biggest developments from late June through September concerned decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court.

On June 26, the Court issued its opinion in *McCullen v. Coakley*.<sup>1</sup> The case concerned whether a law passed by the state of Massachusetts violated the Constitution of the United States. The law made it a crime knowingly to stand on a “public way or sidewalk” within thirty-five feet of an entrance to a “reproductive health care facility,” defined as “a place, other than... a hospital, where abortions are... performed.”<sup>2</sup> The law permitted employees of abortion clinics to be in this space and did not restrict their speech.<sup>3</sup>

Although the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that the law *did* violate the Constitution, their unanimous vote masks essential disagreements that rob the decision of much of its pro-life force. The ruling was 9 to 0, but it reads more like the 5 to 4 splits we are used to getting from the Court on disputed social issues. Chief Justice John Roberts, who is often among the four conservatives in such cases, wrote for the majority. (Usually it is Justice Kennedy who provides the fifth, or “swing,” vote.) Roberts was joined by the four liberals, Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Stephen Breyer. Thus, only five of the nine justices entirely supported the opinion written by Roberts.

Justices Antonin Scalia, Anthony Kennedy, Clarence

Thomas, and Samuel Alito “concur[red]” in what was a dissent in all but name. They officially “concur[red] in the judgment” that the law was unconstitutional (thereby making it a 9 to 0 vote), but they saw the factual situation much differently and would have applied a different legal test. In other words, they supported the holding of the case (that the Massachusetts law was invalid) but disagreed thoroughly with its reasoning. It is this difference in reasoning that will bedevil future situations and lead to additional litigation.

For the four justices who concurred, the facts that the law (a) was aimed at abortion clinics rather than at all health clinics and (b) permitted abortion clinic workers to be in, and to speak freely in, the thirty-five-foot zone (c) while excluding pro-life persons provided convincing evidence that the law was not “content neutral.”<sup>4</sup> If a law is not content neutral, it can only be upheld if it satisfies the “strict-scrutiny” standard. The strict-scrutiny standard is the same standard applied in the HHS mandate cases. It is the toughest standard for the government to satisfy: government must show that it has a compelling interest and is using the least restrictive means. Since the government did not show that it had a compelling reason to restrict pro-life speech or that the restrictions were the least restrictive, it did not satisfy the test and the statute was invalid.

The majority of five, finding that the statute *was* content neutral, did not employ the strict-scrutiny test and instead used the lesser (that is, easier for the government to satisfy) test—to wit, “time, place, and manner” restrictions may be imposed on speech if they (a) are narrowly tailored to (b) serve a significant government interest and (c) leave open ample alternative channels for communication. The majority-five found that the Massachusetts law was not “narrowly tailored”—the government could have accomplished its purposes in other ways, such as having police disperse crowds if they gather, without prohibiting pro-life speech with thirty-five feet of abortion clinic entrances—and hence it failed to satisfy the test. However, its analysis demonstrates, as I will show, why the majority should have used the strict-scrutiny test in the first place.

First, the majority-five said the statute *was* content neutral (and thus the strict-scrutiny test, which is almost always fatal to a statute, did not need to be employed to judge it). Its evidence for content neutrality was that the concerns raised by Massachusetts—public safety, patient access to health care, and unobstructed use of sidewalks—were not implicated at other kinds of health care facilities. But in saying this, the Court made clear

that the law was aimed at *abortion clinics*, not at health care clinics generally; thus, it was not content neutral (it is aimed only at abortion). Hence, the strict-scrutiny standard should have been used to decide whether the law, though not content neutral, is still valid (i.e., if the government could show a “compelling purpose” and the means it used are “least restrictive”).

Second, having said the statute was content neutral, the Court found that it failed, nonetheless, under the time-place-manner test because it was not “narrowly tailored.” The Court’s evidence for this was that women who approached abortion clinics could hear only pro-abortion speech. But this again points up the contradiction in the majority-five analysis. If such women will be able to hear only pro-abortion speech, is that not proof that the statute is excluding another kind of speech (pro-life) and hence is not content neutral?<sup>5</sup>

A nonlawyer may well ask, What difference does it make which test is employed, whether it is the concurring-four’s strict scrutiny or the majority-fives’ time-place-manner narrow tailoring? After all, the Massachusetts statute failed under both tests! That is true, but the reason it matters is for future cases, which will have different facts. Will those facts be judged under the exacting strict-scrutiny test or under the lenient time-place-manner test? If they are judged under the more lenient test, the government will be able to justify greater restrictions on pro-life speech. If laws dealing with abortion are content neutral, such laws have a much greater chance of being upheld by courts.

As both the majority-five and concurring-four agree, speech, particularly on public sidewalks, is customarily judged under the exacting strict-scrutiny test (and limits on such speech are rarely upheld). An exception was carved out by a prior Supreme Court decision, *Hill v. Colorado*.<sup>6</sup> *Hill v. Colorado* upheld an eight-foot bubble zone around those approaching an abortion clinic; in other words, pro-life speakers could not approach closer than eight feet unless the person consented. The decision has been heavily criticized, since at least part of the point of the First Amendment is to provide the opportunity to persuade, to engage those who disagree as well as those within earshot. (So long as the potential listener is free to walk away, he has no right to prevent the other from speaking.) Despite what the majority said in *Hill*, eight feet is not normal conversational distance, and one would have to be the proverbial Plastic Man to offer—and deliver—a pamphlet from that distance. (Pamphleting on public streets has long been protected by the strict-scrutiny standard.)

Hence, perhaps the most important question raised in *McCullen v. Coakley* was whether *Hill v. Colorado* would be overruled. Sadly, it was not. However, Scalia, a dissenter in *Hill* (along with Kennedy and Thomas), suggested that the majority—five, in saying that a law would not be content neutral if it were concerned with protecting unwilling listeners, may have effectively overruled *Hill*, since *Hill* is premised on the protection of the unwilling listener! That would be ironic, indeed, particularly since it is the strongest proponents of abortion-rights who voted with Chief Justice Roberts in *McCullen*. However, the fact that two of those votes came from justices (Ginsburg and Breyer) who were on the Court when *Hill* was decided—and who voted with the majority to grant a Constitutional imprimatur to the eight-foot bubble zone—makes it unlikely that Scalia is right<sup>7</sup> (though that question will certainly be raised in subsequent litigation).

The other case was, of course, the one involving Hobby Lobby.<sup>8</sup> But here too the Supreme Court rendered a decision, coming at the very end of its annual term and four days after its decision in *McCullen*, that while providing a pro-life victory may, on closer examination, offer less than appeared at first blush.

As readers know, the case involved the mandate from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) that insurance plans include coverage of certain services—contraception, including some abortifacients, and sterilization—that some employers objected to including for religious or moral reasons. These objectors included many nonprofit religious organizations, and after much political turmoil, HHS offered them an “accommodation,” under which, speaking broadly, the burden of providing the objectionable services was supposedly shifted from the employers to the insurance companies.<sup>9</sup>

This accommodation was not offered to businesses or “for-profit” organizations. Hence, the owners of for-profit businesses (such as Hobby Lobby and Conestoga Wood) who had moral or religious objections to providing insurance for the objectionable services brought suit, claiming their rights were violated under, *inter alia*, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).<sup>10</sup> RFRA requires the government to provide a compelling reason for a substantial infringement of “a person’s” religious liberty. It also requires the government to prove that it is using the least restrictive means in doing so. This, again, is the strict-scrutiny test.

In a 5-to-4 opinion, the Supreme Court upheld the claims of the closely held family business corporations.<sup>11</sup>

(The question whether publicly held corporations, i.e., those whose shares are publicly traded, had similar rights was not before the Court, which refused to address that issue.<sup>12</sup>) Since RFRA does not define “person,” the Court had, as a preliminary matter, to determine whether these businesses were entitled to sue under RFRA, and the Court had little difficulty in concluding that they were. The Court noted that RFRA was intended to provide broad protection for religious liberty, without any indication that it does not extend to closely held corporations. Further, the ordinary rule of construction of a statute is that “person” includes corporations (artificial persons).<sup>13</sup> In addition, HHS had conceded during the case that *nonprofit* corporations were “persons” under RFRA.

The Court found that the burden on the businesses was “significant,” as required by RFRA to trigger the strict-scrutiny test. (The fines would have amounted to millions of dollars.) Assuming, for the sake of argument, that the government had a compelling interest for the mandate, the Court found that the government failed to satisfy the second part of the strict-scrutiny test, that is, that the means used were the least restrictive, a requirement that the Court termed “exceptionally demanding.”<sup>14</sup> What alternatives existed for the government that were less restrictive? The Court supplied two: the government itself could assume the cost of providing the contraceptives, or it could extend the accommodation to for-profit corporations.<sup>15</sup>

The Court’s second example raises an important question, one at the heart of the litigation of the second group of cases challenging the HHS mandate, cases brought by *religious nonprofits*. These cases are based on the claim that the accommodation provided by HHS is *not sufficient* to satisfy the demands of RFRA. Plaintiffs assert that their religious beliefs prevent them from cooperating in evil, which they claim they would be doing if they provided notice to their insurer as required by the terms of the accommodation (“self-certification,” which includes a statement that the insurer is thus obligated to provide coverage for the objectionable services). How does the outcome in *Hobby Lobby* affect their prospects of success?

It is hard to be certain, because the precise issue was not before the Court.<sup>16</sup> However, though the majority spoke favorably of the accommodation as a “less restrictive means,” it offered no opinion whether provision by HHS of an accommodation “complies with RFRA for purposes of all religious claims.”<sup>17</sup> On this point, it cited its own treatment of the *Little Sisters of the*

Poor case.<sup>18</sup> In that case the Court, in an interim ruling while appeal was pending, said religious nonprofits could “comply” with the accommodation by providing written notification to HHS rather than (as the accommodation required) providing the self-certification to the insurer. Therefore, it appears the majority in *Hobby Lobby* was indicating that the accommodation as it then existed might *not* provide a “less restrictive means” that would satisfy RFRA in the religious nonprofit cases.<sup>19</sup> In other words, while the existence of the accommodation was sufficient to show that there were less restrictive means HHS could have used vis-à-vis for-profit corporations, the terms of the existing accommodation itself might still be subject to a successful RFRA challenge.<sup>20</sup>

Nevertheless, a concurrence by Justice Anthony Kennedy suggests there are enough votes on the Court (i.e., his and presumably those of the four dissenters in *Hobby Lobby*) to hold, when the Court considers the matter on the merits, that the accommodation satisfies RFRA vis-à-vis religious nonprofits (and, for that matter, vis-à-vis for-profits as well).<sup>21</sup> In his concurrence, Kennedy seems almost giddy about the accommodation, calling it “existing, recognized, [and] workable.” He says, “The means to reconcile [the religious freedom of employers and the ‘compelling’ interests of others, including employees,] is at hand in the existing accommodation that the Government has designed, identified, and used for circumstances closely parallel to those presented here.”<sup>22</sup> Since it seems clear that Kennedy believes the accommodation, designed for *nonprofits*, protects the religious freedom of the plaintiff *for-profits*, it would be surprising if he failed to conclude that it protected the religious liberty of the nonprofits for whom it was designed!<sup>23</sup>

## GAO Report

On September 17, the Government Accounting Office (GAO) released a report on failure to follow the law in the coverage of abortion under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.<sup>24</sup> The law requires that if plans on state exchanges offer abortion, the insurer must obtain a separate payment from the insured to cover abortions. This prevents federal funds, which can otherwise be used for the payment of insurance premiums, from being used to pay for abortions. However, the GAO report revealed that no such separate payments are being collected by insurance companies, despite assurances by the Obama administration that the requirements of the

law would be enforced. Further, the Obama administration has failed in its legal obligation to ensure that states put in place plans for the “segregation of funds.” ❧

## ENDNOTES

- 1 This column is part of a series written for *The National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly*. It originally appeared in the Winter 2014 issue of the *NCBQ*. 573 US \_\_ (2014).
- 2 Mass. Gen. Laws, ch. 266, §§120E1/2(a), (b) (2012).
- 3 *Ibid.*, (b)(2). Obviously such employees have to cross the space to enter the clinic for work. However, the issue, as we shall see, was whether it was legally significant that their speech while within the thirty-five-foot radius was not limited.
- 4 Justice Alito filed a separate concurring opinion and did not join Scalia’s opinion on behalf of Scalia, Kennedy, and Thomas. Alito focused on the fact the statute was not “viewpoint” neutral. But in many ways, the two standards are identical, and I will so treat them in the body of this article.
- 5 This kind of targeting would traditionally be called viewpoint discrimination. This is what Justice Alito focused on in his concurrence, showing how discriminatory on this basis the statute was. However, as noted above, since a violation of either content or viewpoint neutrality subjects a statute to strict-scrutiny analysis, I am treating the two as synonymous in this article. Criticisms from either angle—content or viewpoint—demonstrate that the statute should be examined under strict scrutiny.
- 6 530 US 703 (2000).
- 7 It should be noted that in *Hill*, the Court deferred to the legislature’s judgment regarding narrow tailoring. However, in *McCullen*, the majority-five “put teeth” into the narrow-tailoring requirement. If the Court adheres to a tough narrow-tailoring requirement in subsequent cases, the likely result will be the invalidation of many restrictions on pro-life speech. For instance, the majority-five held that Massachusetts did not satisfy the requirement because it could not show that it had tried to enforce less restrictive measures before enacting the thirty-five-foot speech-free zone. Thus, the statute burdened “substantially more speech than necessary” and was not narrowly tailored.
- 8 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 573 US \_\_ (2014). The Hobby Lobby case was consolidated with another case involving another family business, *Conestoga Wood*, which raises the same issues. Hobby Lobby was vindicated in one federal circuit (the Tenth), while *Conestoga Wood* was denied in another (the Third). This “circuit split” provided the opportunity for the Supreme Court to review the decisions and clarify the law for all circuits. Notice that since June 2014, Sylvia Burwell, rather than Kathleen Sebelius, is the secretary of HHS, and cases proceeding after that date are titled in her name.
- 9 Churches and religious orders were “exempted” completely from the HHS mandate.
- 10 42 USC §§2000bb et seq.
- 11 Justice Ginsburg wrote a blistering and intemperate dissent in which Sotomayor, Kagan, and Breyer joined. She called the decision—carefully limited by the majority to the facts before it—“a decision of startling breadth.” She labeled it “extreme,” and began her analysis by citing the contested and contentious assertion of the three-justice plurality in *Planned Parenthood v. Casey* (505 US 8343) that women cannot participate as full citizens unless they have access to abortion. HHS subsequently asked for comments from the public on how to define “closely held corporation,” as a for-profit entity that is to be protected under the amended HHS mandate rules. See Department of Health and Human Services et al., “Coverage of Certain Preventive Services under the Affordable Care Act,” 79 Fed. Reg. 51118 (Aug. 27, 2014), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-27/pdf/2014-20254.pdf>.
- 12 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 29.
- 13 Dictionary Act, 1 USC §1.

- 14 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 40.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 40–45. Notice that if one less restrictive means is for the government to supply the objectionable services, and if religious objections continue to various iterations of the accommodation, it may be that the Supreme Court will conclude that the *only* way to satisfy RFRA is for the government to provide the services.
- 16 As the Court said in n. 40 of the decision, “The principal dissent faults us for being ‘noncommittal’ in refusing to decide a case that is not before us here. . . . The less restrictive approach we describe accommodates the religious beliefs asserted in these cases, and that is the only question we are permitted to address.” *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 44.
- 17 *Ibid.*
- 18 *Ibid.*, 44 n. 39, which in turn cites its own prior n. 9. The cited case is *Little Sisters of the Poor v. Sebelius*, 571 US \_\_ (2014).
- 19 However, it is fair to wonder whether this amounts to a conclusion by the majority that an accommodation modified along these lines (i.e., one permitting the provision of notice to HHS rather than notice of self-certification to the insurer) would be sufficient to satisfy RFRA (i.e., that no further modification of the accommodation would be required).
- 20 In permitting the Little Sisters to report to HHS rather than provide the self-certification to the insurer, the Court appeared to indicate that the then-existing accommodation was deficient in failing to provide this option. HHS took the hint when it issued a revised version of the accommodation subsequent to the decision in this case, permitting religious nonprofits to provide notice solely to HHS if they wished. Department of Health and Human Services et al., “Coverage of Certain Preventive Services under the Affordable Care Act,” 79 Fed. Reg. 51092 (Aug. 27, 2014), <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2014-08-27/pdf/2014-20252.pdf>. Of course, whether the new alternative satisfies RFRA is highly speculative. The Supreme Court has not rendered a final judgment on the sufficiency of the existing accommodation under RFRA. It might turn out that the new alternative from HHS is inadequate.
- 21 It must also be noted that despite saying that it was not deciding the issue for nonprofits, the majority made a statement that appears to indicate that if the existing accommodation had been offered to the plaintiff *for-profits*, they would have held that it satisfied RFRA: “At a minimum . . . [an approach of this type, that is, the accommodation] does not impinge on the plaintiffs’ religious belief that providing insurance coverage for the contraceptives at issue here violates their religion, and it serves HHS’s stated interests equally well.” *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores*, 44. So, although the Court said it was not deciding the issue regarding nonprofits, if the accommodation sufficiently protected the religious liberty interests of the plaintiffs, it is hard to see any ground on which the Court could find it did not satisfy the very same interests of nonprofit plaintiffs. Probably the reason the majority made this confusing statement is that the majority spoke over-broadly on this issue (the sufficiency of the mandate), which was not before it for decision and which had not been briefed by the parties and argued before the Court (and which was, consequently, not decided in this case).
- 22 *Burwell v. Hobby Lobby Stores* (Kennedy, J, concurring, 4).
- 23 Justice Kennedy continues to surprise, however, and it may be that he would vote to strike down the accommodation (either as it existed at the time of the case or in the recently announced amended form by HHS). Indeed, that is one way to understand his vote (he joined the majority) in a subsequent case, *Wheaton College v. Burwell*, 573 US \_\_ (2014). It concerned the college’s application for an injunction, which was granted after having been submitted to the full Court for consideration, though the majority cautioned “this order should not be construed as an expression of the Court’s views on the merits,” since it was an interim order in an ongoing litigation. Nonetheless, three justices—Sotomayor, Ginsburg, and Kagan—dissented. They had no patience with Wheaton’s claims, which they characterized as “objecting to the use of one stamp rather than two.” They said that Wheaton could not claim to be complicit, since it was the enactment of federal law, not the completion of the form by Wheaton as required by the accommodation, that triggered contraceptive coverage. Furthermore, even if Wheaton were right about being complicit, the accommodation, they said, would still be justified as it was the least restrictive means. The dissenters pointed to the language I discussed in n. 19 as proof that this was actually the position of the majority in *Hobby Lobby*, and they accused the majority here (which is actually not identical to the majority in *Hobby Lobby*, because Breyer joined the majority here and Scalia concurred only in the result) of backing away from that holding, as Justice Ginsburg had predicted in her dissent in *Hobby Lobby*.
- 24 U.S. Government Accountability Office, “Health Insurance Exchanges: Coverage of Non-excepted Abortion Services by Qualified Health Plans,” GAO-14-742R, September 15, 2014, <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-14-742R>.

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# Telling Truth by Stories: C.S. Lewis on Love as Passion and as Virtue

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Finding an adequate vocabulary for making the necessary distinctions in matters of the human emotions is never an easy task. While making the case for his project about word-meanings in the introduction to his *Studies in Words*, Lewis at one point comments:

Language is an instrument for communication. The language which can with the greatest ease make the finest and most numerous distinctions of meaning is the best. It is better to have *like* and *love* than to have *aimer* for both.<sup>1</sup>

Truly so. And yet this distinction between *liking* and *loving* is not nearly enough for something as complex as love. It is for this reason that in *The Four Loves* Lewis distinguishes, among other things, between need-love and gift-love and between affection, friendship, eros, and charity. If only the clarity that Lewis achieves in his philosophical musings were anywhere nearly so easy in life! In actual living our task is often to sort through what gets tangled and twisted, for our motives are often complex. As one of my favorite teachers in theology used to say, “I’ve never met a motive that wasn’t mixed.”

There is more than one way in which to make valid distinctions in the area of our loves. The route preferred in *The Four Loves* is the very traditional and sound approach by way of noting the objects of our loves. In this way one can see important differences between objects that please us and persons that it pleases us to be with, between what arouses us sexually and what stirs us to love with a love that is in a creaturely way akin to the love of God, between things that are good only or largely because of their uses and things that are good in themselves, to be enjoyed, esteemed, revered, and honored.

But there are also other sound approaches to the topic. In the course of my studies on Thomas Aquinas, I have again and again been struck by an approach that may be helpful to use here, an approach that puts our focus on the relation of the passions, feelings, and emotions to virtue and vice. It is not that we can ever forego the route to distinction-making by way of the

object. Like Lewis, Aquinas clings tightly to this method in all that he writes. For instance, he urges that we can distinguish among the species of moral acts by considering the object for which an act is done.<sup>2</sup> But in the section of the *Summa* where he is discussing the moral virtues, Thomas takes up the general definition of moral virtue that Aristotle offers, a definition that includes a special place for the passions.

A moral virtue, Aristotle tells us, is a disposition to choose the mean between the extremes of excess and deficiency, as someone of right reason would do, in matters of action and emotion or passion. Courage, for instance, is a habit of finding and choosing the mean between too much and too little bravado; alternatively, it may be described as the mean between too much and too little fear when confronting danger. Temperance is a matter of choosing the mean between indulgence and insensitivity with regard to pursuing our desires. Quite different from Stoic approaches, which see the passions and emotions as intrinsically dangerous and which try to wean us away from them by cool, rational judgment, Aquinas’s Aristotelian approach to virtue reserves a central place for the passions and the emotions even while urging rational self-mastery. In this account reason needs to control the passions, but by a mastery that Aquinas describes on the model of political rather than servile rule—it is a matter of bringing our feelings and desires into cooperation with reason, not a matter of reason’s domination, repression, or enslavement of them. Where Aquinas differs from Aristotle in these matters consists in the identification of the various vices not only by pointing to excess and deficiency but also by noting various ways of perverting the relevant passion or emotion from the path that would lead to its excellence in virtue. Love as a passion of the soul is not yet virtuous or vicious, but it is at the root of the virtues as the inner force that needs to be directed to the right object, in the right way, to the proper degree.

One way, then, in which to put the point is that we need to make a distinction between love as a passion and love as virtue, and to see the ways in which human maturation in virtue should take place. These manifestations of love, affection, and attraction are deeply

connected, and yet it is easy to mistake them, especially because of the intensity possible in our feelings and because of the looseness of living language. To rehearse Lewis's earlier point from his *Studies in Words*, we need to find appropriate words by which to make the distinctions, rather than to confuse the matter by collapsing related notions into just one word, or collapsing related movements of our spirit into just one thing. I think that this point is particularly relevant to understanding Lewis, who seems often to have meditated on the differences between the love that is aroused in us or elicited from us and the love that is a choice, and especially the love that is well chosen, including the settled states of virtuous character in which we choose to seek what is for another's good, to honor what is intrinsically honorable, and to do what is according to God's will.

Truths such as these can be explained well in a treatise, but often they are better and more memorably told within a story. In the introduction to his *Four Loves* Lewis confesses that his initial gambit, the articulation of the beautifully clean distinction that he intended to use between Gift-love and Need-love, was true but simply not adequate to what the subject demanded. There Lewis admits that his initial inclination was simply to praise the gift-love as like Godlike love and to disparage the second as a deplorable craving to be loved. Interestingly, his confession of the inadequacy of this approach is replete with a reference to George MacDonald, his own master in storytelling:

But I would not now say (with my master, MacDonald) that if we mean only this craving we are mistaking for love something that is not love at all. I cannot now deny the name *love* to Need-love. Every time I have tried to think the thing out along those lines I have ended in puzzles and contradictions. The reality is more complicated than I supposed.<sup>3</sup>

Let me try to enter upon this project by considering Lewis's novel *Till We Have Faces*. It is, I think, an unusual book within Lewis's canon—his last novel, an effort to explain the craft of storytelling by retelling the myth of Cupid and Psyche that he had found in Apuleius's *Metamorphoses*.<sup>4</sup> We do well to recall how much Lewis learned from Tolkien about the ways in which what is true in ancient myths can be seen as an anticipation of certain of the truths disclosed more fully in revelation, and for this reason truths that can be rightly honored and integrated in the work of Christians. Mindful, then, of Lewis's views on myth,<sup>5</sup> readers of *Till We Have Faces* do well to ask themselves such

questions as what its title means and just what a face is anyway. Perhaps a reflection on love as passion and love as virtue in this story will be of help.

It may help to rehearse the general outlines of the story. Lewis sets it in the form of a book-length complaint of a bitter old woman, Orual, the eldest daughter of Trom, king of Glome. She thinks that the gods have been unjust to her and have sadistically caused her much pain, not only for giving her the ugly face she has born since childhood (one of the meanings suggested by the book's title) but also for stealing from her the lovely Psyche, her youngest sister, as a victim at a ritual sacrifice. Her attempt at a rescue not only fails to recover her sister or even to shake Psyche's stupefying confidence at having found some unimaginable sort of happiness in a divine husband whose face she may not look upon (a second part of the meaning of the book's title), but also apparently causes Psyche to betray her husband and to lose her new bliss. Although Orual eventually becomes a successful queen and brings great prosperity to her land, she long suffers from a guilty conscience over the irremediable consequences of her actions and long bears a grudge against the gods, against whom she has written a book-length indictment. After a suicide attempt proves unsuccessful, she comes to have various dreams and visions that gradually reveal things that she has long misunderstood about herself, her love for Psyche, and the gods. At the book's end, Armon the priest explains that she was found dead at her writing desk, her head slumped over an incomplete sentence that at least suggests understanding, and perhaps even a reconciliation.

Tempted as we might be to ponder the significance of this work for Lewis's autobiography, I will attempt instead simply to consider it for certain lights that it sheds on love as passion and as virtue. There have been any number of fine studies that have done marvels in helping us better to understand the story.<sup>6</sup> I would like to undertake these reflections largely by retelling the story, with some emphasis on the parts of it that deal with love as a passion and love as a virtue, limiting myself to some comments in passing, and then finishing with some references to another book by Lewis that seems highly illuminating here.<sup>7</sup>

The early parts of the tale have an innocent charm that lures us into the story even while introducing aspects of love as a passion that arises spontaneously within a person and that needs to be formed and disciplined.

After the death of their mother, Orual and sister Redival live in fear of what a stepmother may bring

into their lives when their father remarries. King Trom has the children raised by the generally well-meaning but none too well-ordered nurse Batta and schooled by “the Fox,” a Greek slave their father had purchased for the sake of educating the male heir he hoped to sire. Orual is considered too ugly to be marriageable, but she takes well to her tutor, whom she calls “Grandfather.” What he teaches is clearly some version of Stoic philosophy, and I think that we are to get the impression that he is the voice of reason for Orual. But whether his voice is that of “right reason” needs further discernment, especially in light of the tendencies of Stoicism to dismiss passion as contrary to reason and dangerous.

My suggestion is that there is something very wise about his education of her reason when it comes to statecraft, but something desiccated about his education of her reason with regard to love and personal virtue. His counsel will eventually lead Orual as queen to make her country just and prosperous, but his skepticism about religion and the gods is a false note and the strong development of her reason in one direction does not check something deeply disordered in the order of her loves. There is no lack of fondness between tutor and pupil, but the spirit of critical reasoning that he imparts to her helps to make her unable to see spiritual realities (such as the beautiful palace) that her sister Psyche can see on the mountain.

The story thus starts with the insecurity of two sisters stemming from their family disruption and from the ambitions of a father whose lack of sufficient self-knowledge leads him to overestimate his ability to improve his situation by a dynastic marriage. The nurse proves no substitute for a mother’s love. Despite the avuncular affection that grows in Orual’s relation to the Fox, his philosophical rationalism injects into her an inclination to skepticism, especially in regard to the religion native to Glome—devotion to the goddess Ungit, who seems to be somehow identified with Aphrodite. Her idol is a stone figure with virtually no recognizable facial features (and thus a third aspect of the meaning of the book’s title).

The young woman whom King Trom marries dies in childbirth before the first year of their marriage is over. Contrary to his hopes, the child she bore is another girl, Istra—in Greek, Psyche—a beautiful child whom Orual comes to love deeply. In her self-understanding Orual sees her love for Psyche as pure devotion—a sisterly kindness to a child who has (like herself) lost her mother. It is not at all surprising to

find a little girl ready to play a motherly role, for her sister’s situation elicits from her a powerful response. If we were thinking of Lewis’s categories from *The Four Loves*, we might well speak of Gift-love being abundantly elicited by Need-love.

But not all is well in Glome. Redival proves promiscuous, and her father castrates a guard Tarin for dallying with her. When the family fortunes begin to fall under the pressure of bad harvests, drought, rebellion, and plague, the superstitious populace gets the impression that the beautiful and shielded Istra (Psyche) has healing powers and honors her as a goddess. But when the plague persists, the crowd turns on Istra as “accursed.” Using tales about Istra told him by the jealous Redival, the priest of Ungit confronts the king and demands a sacrifice to “the Shadowbrute,” the god of the Grey Mountain and the son of Ungit, as a ritual offering to purify the land. Fearful at first that his own life is being demanded, the cowardly king at first puts up a strong front but all too quickly yields his daughter Istra when the priest explains that the lots have revealed that it is she whom the gods require. Like Clytemnestra when Agamemnon sacrifices Iphigeneia, Orual is enraged at her father’s betrayal of her beloved sister.

Redival sheds crocodile tears, but Orual tries (for the first time) to rescue her sister. Bardia, the captain of the guard, easily disarms her but then allows her to console her sister in the tower. Istra (Psyche) is curiously ready for her fate and ironically tries to comfort Orual. Orual tries to use the Stoicism she has learned from their teacher to understand what the gods might want in the victim that is being demanded, but Psyche wonders if being led to the sacrifice might actually fulfill the dream she has cherished since childhood of having a palace of her own upon Grey Mountain. Later, Orual’s protests that the impending sacrifice gets her such a beating that she cannot even move, let alone attend the ritual.

Even in recounting these early details of the story, we cannot help but see that Lewis is allowing us to watch how the natural and even admirably maternal love of one sister for another leads her to undertake something quite beyond her strength. What complicates the situation is the force of reason that has been developed in her through a Stoic education and the force of paternal control represented by her father’s violence. Her father’s swift punishment of Redival’s suitor is genuinely protective, but it is not joined with anything of personal fatherly love to make his daughter somehow more virtuous. The lessons that Orual has received

from the Fox give her a way to voice her anger at her father's cowardice and at the horrible injustice looming, but they fail to temper Orual's love for her sister when it starts growing into a disordered obsession.

When Orual awakens from her beating some days later, the deed has been done. The drought and plague have lifted, and the populace attributes this relief to the nobility of Trom's sacrifice of his daughter. As the voice of Greek philosophy, with its penchant for finding natural causes rather than anthropomorphic recourse to divine interventions, the Fox tries to give an explanation for the relief of the country's troubles as having to come about by pure chance through natural causes at a lucky time rather than through any action of the gods.

Gradually recovering her strength, Orual plans a secret trip to the place of her sister's sacrifice, if only to bury her remains. The ever loyal Bardia insists on accompanying her, but he is clearly uncomfortable with interfering with what the gods may have demanded. They find no sign of the victim, except for one ruby. Suddenly, across a stream, Orual spots Psyche still alive, and radiant with health despite her tattered clothing. By her account, the authorities had drugged her, so that she experienced the sacrificial ritual more as an observer than a victim. When finally left alone to her fate, she passed in and out of consciousness, but was suddenly freed from her chains by a god and led to a beautiful palace where he wed her and where she now claims to live. Orual can see nothing of the palatial surroundings that Psyche describes and cannot decide whether her sister is mad or whether there really are divine things here that remain invisible to her. Psyche adamantly refuses to come with her.

Unable to find sleep that night in the campsite that Bardia has prepared, Orual returns to the stream and for a moment sees the grand palace. When it disappears, her uncertainty about its reality returns. She does not know whether to trust her senses or the critical reason that the Fox has cultivated in her that sees religion and ritual as mere superstition. Seeking his counsel, she tells Bardia of everything that has happened, except the vision of the palace. He refuses to give any opinion; it is his practice of keeping the gods at a safe distance. They return to Glome. She also recounts her experiences (again, except for her momentary vision of the palace) to the Fox, whose skepticism seems a bit less absolute in the face of the present danger to their commonly beloved Psyche. When the king is momentarily distracted by the strange appearance of lions on the frontiers of the land and thus the opportunity for a hunt, Orual and

the Fox have a brief window of opportunity for action.

This time Bardia cannot accompany Orual because he is assigned to protect the palace during the king's absence. He assigns the tight-lipped Gram instead. Arriving at dusk, Orual finds Psyche in the same spot and tries to convince her that she is deceived, that it is some monster and not a god who comes to her at night, and that she ought to return, but Psyche absolutely refuses even to consider this. She insists that she must be guided by her new husband, who comes to her at night but has forbidden her to look at his face. Playing on Psyche's love for her, Orual plunges a dagger into her arm and threatens to harm herself further, in order to force her sister to promise that she will kindle a light and look at this new husband of hers. Torn in her affections and virtually blackmailed, Psyche agrees, despite the prospect of ruining her new happiness by this betrayal.

While keeping vigil across the stream, Orual is afflicted by self-recrimination: perhaps she was wrong, maybe it is some god and she should release Psyche from her promise. There is a first glimmer of light when Psyche lights her lamp and then covers it to await her husband. The second appearance of the light is followed by a stern voice, and then bitter weeping, and then flashes that light up the whole valley while a violent storm rocks the mountain. At this point nothing could have prevented Orual from crossing the now raging stream, except the sight of what she had long feared—Psyche's divine spouse, his face with an unimaginable beauty. He sternly denies her the right to approach and passionlessly informs her that her sister must hereafter wander as an unprotected exile. He also prophesies: "You also shall be Psyche."<sup>8</sup> The morning light discloses that the once beautiful valley has been utterly ravaged, and the stream is an uncrossable torrent. The weeping Orual hears is weeping not for herself but for the lover Psyche had betrayed. Convinced now that the gods exist, that they hate her, and that they have stolen her beloved sister, Orual journeys back to the palace with Gram. Orual struggles with how much to reveal to the Fox and conceals the wound she had inflicted on herself, lest he condemn her for trying to force Psyche's hand. But from what she does confess to him, he suspects that she has kept something secret.

Reflecting on her use of a veil during this trip to disguise her identity, she decides hereafter never to be seen unveiled—a kind of accommodation to her "ugliness," which is now longer just a matter of physical appearance but of moral shame at what she has done

(yet another sense for the book's title). When her father finally returns, she finds the courage from having now seen the god to refuse her father's order to remove her veil, and thereafter she never backs down in his presence. As time passes, she acts like a mother who has lost a child—she cleans and locks Psyche's room, in hope of her return, but refuses ever to discuss the matter. And when her wound has healed, she undertakes fencing lessons with Bardia, hoping to build up her strength and to “drive all the woman” out of herself. The emotions that have guided her choices about love and action are thus in severe disarray and a hardness is setting in.

In midwinter the king becomes incapacitated when he breaks his thigh in a fall on the ice. Bardia and the Fox hail her as queen. That the old order is passing, and a new one emerging becomes even more clear when the assistant priest of Ungit comes to attend the king as a surgeon, for the chief priest is near death. Orual drives a shrewd bargain with the new priest that earns her the praise of her tutors and begins a new relation between altar and throne—as her reign later unfolds, there will no longer be competing centers of power, sacral and secular, but a rationalized cooperation—the new priest will eventually be tamed enough by her philosophy to place a Greek-style statue of Aphrodite next to the shapeless, faceless stone of Ungit, and the new queen will render her country peaceful, just, and prosperous in ways that her father never managed, by rejecting his arbitrary use of violence and even devising a way for slaves to work their way to freedom within a reasonable period of time.

When the priest and courtiers leave her to attend to the dying king, she searches the grounds for her sister but discovers a man instead. He asks to be taken to the king as a suppliant, for he is Trunia, king of Phars. By a stroke of ill luck he has recently been routed in a battle with his cowardly brother Argan and cut off from his army. The new queen refuses to receive him as a suppliant, given all the obligations that this status would entail, but takes him “prisoner,” in the hope that he will be easier to protect the less he is recognized. When Bardia and the Fox inform her that Argan has crossed the border in search of Trunia, she surprises them with news that she already holds him as her “prisoner.” In council they calculate that Glome's security could be better secured in the future if they can befriend Trunia now. Playing on Argan's fear of being thought a coward, Orual decides offer him a challenge he will not be able to refuse—single combat—and secretly plans to use the fighting skills that Bardia has helped her to hone by

fighting the duel herself. If she can prevail, she reasons, it will be just the sort of thing to win to her side the people of Glome, who know about her only that she is the king's hidden daughter. In her public persona in council she is confident, but when she retires for the night, doubts assail her: Will she lose courage? Is Argan simply the executioner whom the gods have sent to slay her? When she visits her father that night, it becomes clear that even if he lives, his mind is gone.

In the morning, the flighty Redival, to Orual's disgust, immediately starts fawning upon her. An arrogant herald announces Argan's acceptance of the challenge and gets a saucy reply from the queen. Taking Orual aside, Bardia instructs her on the difficulties of actually killing anything for the first time and has her practice by killing a pig that is to be slaughtered that morning. Back in chambers, she impulsively declares the Fox a free man without considering that he might then leave her service. After enduring a day of self-pitying recriminations about not being loved by anyone, she finds her release only when the Fox assures her that he chooses to remain. The day before the battle passes slowly. While visiting with Trunia, she watches her crafty sister Redival play the wine-bearer to get a look at the prisoner-prince, who becomes enchanted with her beauty and asks Orual for Redival's hand in marriage. The old king dies as Bardia and Orual are busy arranging some suitable armor for her coming duel.

While adding her signature veil to her armor as a final preparation, Orual asks herself whether the prophecy that “you shall also be Psyche” might mean that, like her sister, she too will become an offering on behalf of her people. When finally the battle is engaged, Orual takes advantage of a mistake by Argan and gives him a mortal wound. Afterward, during a peace-making banquet for the men of Phars and the men of Glome, the queen deflects the thankful prince's requests to see the face of his savior. A new world seems about to open for her, but the infatuating bubble is rudely pricked when her loyal Bardia is summoned home to the side of his wife as she gives birth. His parting words (“day's work done”) are more painful to her than any sword blow, and we can see that she had allowed herself to love him and to think herself loved by him. Disgusted with the men's way of eating and drinking at the feast, she retires alone to her lonely bed, drunken from the wine.

After conducting the ritual burning of the old king's body on the pyre and seeing to the fortunes of her land by betrothing Redival to Trunia, the new queen

of Glome locks up the old Orual deep within herself. In the ensuing years she fights three wars and conducts much diplomacy, always relying on the courage of Bardia and the reasoning of the Fox. Her veil serves her well, for her people come to discover a beauty in her voice and begin to make up various stories about just what the veil hides. She becomes mysterious and awful to them. No news of Psyche ever comes, yet no part of the palace ever gives her complete respite: the sounds of clinking chains make her think in her old persona as Orual that she hears her sister Psyche weeping.

Among the crucial episodes in the final portion of book one is a meeting with Bardia's wife Ansit. The woman is plain but clearly jealous of the adventures on the battlefield and the daily affairs of state that the queen has shared with her husband. Chastened by the discovery that she has claimed too much of the attention, Queen Orual still pities herself: for all the improvements that she has brought to the kingdom on every front, she finds it unfair that every night mean retiring alone with herself, "that is, with a nothingness."

When at last her old tutor and councilor the Fox dies, the queen feels that she can no longer bear to see the same scenes and decides to make a pilgrimage to other lands. Clear-sighted about matters of state, she is still blind to part of the truth about herself that the meeting with Ansit began to elicit. After arranging for Daaran, the second son of Trunia and Redival, to be her eventual successor, she leaves upon her holiday with a party of young people. At one point, while walking alone, the queen finds a charming temple dedicated to a goddess call Istra (Psyche's given name). The attending priest tells her the story of a woman who became a goddess.

Orual recognizes it as a tale about the sufferings that Psyche had to endure, but she thinks that the story goes badly wrong when it comes to her own part, for instead of acknowledging what she in her self-pity thought to be most important—the injustice of the gods in stealing her beloved sister—the story has it that the woman's two sisters were jealous of Psyche and decided to destroy her. It is at this moment that Queen Orual decides to write the book that is the framework story in Lewis's novel, an indictment against the lies of the gods by which she intends to set the matter straight. The world must know that the gods had given her nothing in the world to love but Psyche and then had taken Psyche away. Although the queen hides her adventure from the traveling party so as not to spoil their joy, she realizes by the next morning that she is with

book as a woman is with child. Motherhood is normally a part of a woman's education in love and virtue, but we see here a disordered kind of motherhood.

From the very start Book Two manifests a kind of divine therapy at work—in the very act of writing the book, the woman who is writing it is being changed.<sup>9</sup> To advert briefly to the title of this paper, it is a case of telling truth by story—for even in the course of telling the story from one's own viewpoint and perhaps for one's own advantage, one can come better to understand what the truth is.<sup>9</sup> By the book's end there will be a reconciliation and a healing that Orual presumably never imagined possible for herself—the engendering of a virtue in her loves that comes about in part by seeing that she had mistaken her earlier modes of love for virtue when they were only passions, and in some respects deeply disordered passions at that. So long as she remain convinced that it was she who was wronged, she could justify pitying herself as the unfortunate victim of the jealous gods.

Correcting her errors will require many steps: being brought to see how her obsession with Psyche meant the neglect of her sister Redival; coming to understand how the equally motherless Redival felt abandoned and attempted to compensate in ways that distorted her life and character and order of loves; seeing the pattern of her concerns for Psyche more as self-serving and manipulative rather than selfless and sacrificial; seeing her own efforts to manipulate Psyche's choices for what they were and eventually coming to pray that her sister not yield to them. All these steps contribute to her healing—a kind of sanctification or divinization, if you will, for the eventual transformation of Orual by the book's end seems to me to be a process of coming to see the beauty of holiness when the order of her loves is set aright. She cannot do this on her own. But by the graces—sometimes the awful graces—that she receives and must come to accept, she will be transformed.

At the beginning of the second book Queen Orual receives a foreign ambassador who turns out to be Tarin, the man whom her father had made a eunuch in reprisal for his flirtation with Redival. By an incidental remark in his conversation the queen learns just how lonely Redival was as the neglected middle child after Orual had turned her attention away from her so entirely to concentrate on the new baby (Istra/Psyche)—and thereby damaged her sister in a way that Orual had never considered before.

The next blow to fall comes with news of Bardia's illness—with Arnom's insistence that he be allowed

to rest at home for a while, untroubled by the cares of state—and with Bardia's death. The queen calls upon his widow after observing three days of mourning. Accustomed to his wise counsel and his tireless service, she was clearly oblivious to how much that service has cost him. His widow Ansit, however, tells her plainly that it was overwork that killed Lord Bardia, and she confronts the queen as a rival out of her righteous jealousy: "I had what you left of him." On the defensive, and not ready to admit to herself that she did not just rely on Bardia but really loved him, the queen shows Ansit her own disfigured face in the hope of showing her that she could never be a rival. Their hatred breaks down, at least for a moment. Lady Bardia realizes a truth that Orual seems not yet to have grasped for herself, that they did both love the same man. But then she challenges the queen for trying also to steal her son, who has been given an increasing engagement in the queen's business. Ansit is direct: "Queen Orual, I begin to think you know nothing of love. . ." Afterward, the queen comes to see the truth of what Ansit has said and starts to grasp how manipulative she was in keeping Bardia close to her. Some peace comes when she relinquishes Lady Bardia's son to his mother, but only at the cost of feeling unloved—she wonders what more the gods may have in mind to purify within her. The only consolation left to her is to persist in the thought that she had at least loved Psyche truly, even if she had devoured Bardia, and came so near to stealing Ansit's son. On this alone, she argues within herself, she is in the right and the gods in the wrong.

The third component of her purification comes during the religious rituals for the New Year. She and Arnom the priest must sit for a prolonged time in the house of Ungit. The queen meditates on the faceless stone that is Ungit's statue. When the queen asks Arnom who Ungit is, he replies in a philosophical allegory worthy of the Fox that Ungit signifies the earth, the womb, and the mother of all living things. The god of the mountains, he says, is the air and the sky, and the stories that say that make him Ungit's husband mean that the sky makes the earth fruitful by its showers. But, Orual wonders, if the myths about the gods just tell things about the natural world like this, why hide them in such strange stories? When Arnom ventures that it may be necessary to hide these truths from the vulgar, she pushes yet further: What is so notable a secret about rain making the land fruitful that it needs to be hidden? Their elite conversation is interrupted by the arrival of a peasant woman who is not dressed

for the New Year's ceremonies and intent only on offering a pigeon for some personal crisis. She prays not before the beautiful statue of Aphrodite that Arnom had set up but only to the faceless stone, and then rises comforted. Unable to restrain herself from questioning the woman, the queen learns that she only prays to the ugly stone Ungit, and not the beautiful statue, for Ungit understands her speech; the beautiful statue is only for Greek-speaking nobles.

When the ceremonies are completed and the queen is taking her afternoon nap, she has a strange dream in which her father returns and summons her to come to the pillar room, but without her veil. She fears that when she gets to the pillar room he will try to make her see herself in the prized mirror he kept there and will then discover that she has given it away. Instead, he commands her to join him in digging in the center of the floor until they uncover a hole like a well into which he commands her to throw herself. There they find another pillar room, but a simpler one. Again he commands her to dig until they find yet another room below, and again he commands that they jump in. This time they alight unhurt in a room of living rock—far below the level to which foxes can dig—presumably deep below her philosophically trained consciousness and thus come to a level where the gods can address her without interference.

The walls start to close in and she fears that she will soon be entombed like her father. But suddenly the mirror is there, and he makes her see that her own face is—to her utter surprise—the face of Ungit. She wakes inescapably convinced that she is Ungit, and that the faceless statue has all along been a representation of her own image. She tries to kill herself with her trusty old sword but is no longer strong enough to do so, and so she thinks of drowning herself instead. Since the veil that she has worn so long is now her public face and virtually no one knows her real countenance, she lets her unveiled face serve as her disguise so that she can walk through the town unrecognized. The promise of the title of the book thus begins to take shape. Walking along the river, she looks for a deep enough place to drown herself, but just as she is about to throw herself in, the voice of some divinity calls out from the other side to stop her. Despite her pleas, it will say no more.

For days thereafter she ponders the mystery of what it is for her to be Ungit. She wonders if the Socratic maxim that true wisdom consists in the practice of dying might be more true than the Stoic rationalism of the Fox. Perhaps the point of being called Ungit is

simply to let her know that she is as ugly in soul as in body. She wonders whether the gods would be willing somehow to help her to change her ways. When her efforts at a moral solution (a Stoic self-improvement program?) prove unworkable, she decides that this is not what the gods want.

One afternoon she finds herself in the middle of a vision, walking straight toward a group of rams on the opposite side of a river—they are the beautiful rams of the gods. If only she could get some of their golden fleece, she would have the beauty that would make the gods love her. In terms of Lewis's analysis in *The Four Loves*, she seems still to be making the assumption that she will only be loved if she is sufficiently lovable. But once she is across the river, the rams charge and all but kill her. But there is another woman in the same field who picks at her leisure the golden wool that the rams left among the thorns when they charged her.

While reading over her burgeoning book of indictments against the gods, she finds herself in yet another vision. She is walking over the burning sands of a desert, carrying an empty bowl, looking for the spring whose waters of death she is to bring back to Ungit. Is this perhaps a sense that grave sin is truly mortal? Eventually the desert ends before a huge mountain, covered with serpents and scorpions, and she learns that deep within the mountain is the well for which she has been searching. Yet there is no way she can reach it.

A great eagle lands near her, asking who she is. The bowl in her hands has become a book—the book of her complaint against the gods. The eagle announces this news to the mountain and then summons her into court for her case against the gods to be heard. She is carried deep within the mountain to a huge cave and made to stand upon a platform of rock surrounded by the countless ghosts of the dead. A judge veiled from head to foot has the queen first unveiled and then stripped naked. She is left with only her book in her hand. But suddenly her book becomes a scroll that she had not written. She is made to read it aloud, and she finds that it contains the story as she ought to tell it in truth, the true story about what really happened at the sacrifice of Psyche and about the possessiveness of her loves that brought about so much ruin. To hear herself now making her complaint against the gods in the words of the scroll is unexpectedly to receive her complaint as its own answer. When the judge finally stops her from reading the scroll the dozenth time, a great silence descends and with it a clarity: “Are you answered?” the judge asks. “Yes,” she says.<sup>1</sup>

It also becomes clear to her why the gods had not communicated clearly before: “Till that word can be dug out of us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can they meet us face to face till we have faces?”<sup>2</sup> The ghost of the Fox arises to defend her, as if it were she who was on trial. He pleads with the court that it was he who had let her rest content with her sharply limited knowledge of herself and her situation, especially by letting her think that his sophisticated rationalization that “Ungit is a false image” had resolved the question. It was his formation of her reason that had prevented her from seeing how true an image the statue of Ungit was of the demon within her. The judge reminds the court that Orual needs no defending here: the woman is a plaintiff, not a prisoner. If the gods whom she falsely accused want to accuse her in turn, they will do so before some higher court. Free to go, she casts herself from the platform into the ghosts. The Fox catches her and comforts her, but then brings her for her own trial before the gods.

He leads her to a chamber that is open on one side, with various stories painted on the walls—first, the story of the beautiful Psyche tying her ankles together on the bank of a river, as if about to take her life. The queen calls out for her to desist, and she does. In the next scene Orual sees Psyche in rags, sorting out seeds into their proper heaps, but with ants to help her, so that she accomplishes what she could never have done on her own. In the third there is Psyche gathering the rams' golden fleece from the bushes, and in the fourth she sees herself together with Psyche, walking over the burning sands: Psyche carries an empty bowl while she herself carries her poisonous book. The eagle comes and brings Psyche a bowl full of the water of death that must be brought to Ungit, to cause her to die and to give her a beautiful face.

The Fox asks the queen whether she has understood that love can require one person to bear the burdens for another and that we must not interfere. She looks more intently at the wall that shows Psyche walking downward alone into the land of the dead to get beauty in a casket from the queen of the dead and bring it back for Ungit to make her beautiful. She must speak to no one. They watch her pass through Glome, whose citizens call out her to her to become their goddess and ruler, but Psyche pays no attention. An image of the Fox comes to Psyche, trying to reason away from her mission, but again Psyche pays no attention. A third figure, Orual herself, with her arm bleeding and her piteous words, begs her, but again Psyche passes on.



She has seen her sister, but in true devotion she remains fixed upon her mission.

The queen understands now what all those who thought that they loved Psyche were really doing to her, and how dangerous their claims on her were. The Fox assures her that Psyche suffered much for her but that in some ways she has also been asked to suffer for Psyche. Suddenly they hear the crowd of ghosts acclaiming the return of the goddess Psyche with the casket of beauty from the land of the dead. Kissing her feet, Orual confesses to her. Psyche raises her up and reminds her of her prediction that they would someday meet her in the palace. In the midst of their joy comes the mysterious verdict in her trial in a phrase that she had heard before and never understood: that she too is Psyche.

She awakens from her vision four days later, able to think a little and to pray. Her soul has been healed and her love chastened:

I have got the truth out of Arnorn; he thinks I am very near my death now. It's strange he should weep, and my women too. What have I ever done to please them? I ought to have had Daaran here and learned to love him and taught him, if I could, to love them. I ended my first book with the words *no answer*. I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words; to be led out to battle against other words. Long did I hate you, long did I fear you. I might—<sup>3</sup>

Lewis's book ends with a note of explanation by Arnorn for the long scroll that he has found. Eager to fulfill the queen's wishes, he hopes that it will someday be taken to Greece—perhaps to educate philosophical reason about her hard-won conviction that God gives no other answer simply because God is the answer. Reason should have guided her differently in the education of her passions and her loves into virtue and beauty.

If we readers can step back from the account of the story for a bit and our efforts at analysis, we can find in another book by the same author a comment on what this mysterious book may be about. In particular, consider the following passage from Lewis's sermon "The Weight of Glory":

We are to shine as the sun, we are to be given the Morning Star. I think I begin to see what it means. In one way, of course, God has given us the Morning Star already: you can go and enjoy the gift on many

fine mornings if you get up early enough. What more, you may ask, do we want? Ah, but we want so much more—something the books on aesthetics take little notice of. But the poets and the mythologies know all about it. We do not want merely to *see* beauty. . . . We want something else which can hardly be put into words—to be united with the beauty we see, to pass into it, to receive it into ourselves, to bathe in it, to become part of it. That is why we have people air and earth and water with gods and goddesses and nymphs and elves—that, though we cannot, yet these projections can enjoy in themselves that beauty, grace, and power of which Nature is the image. That is why the poets tell us such lovely falsehoods. They talk as if the west wind could really sweep into a human soul; but it can't. . . . If we take the imagery of Scripture seriously, if we believe that God will one day *give* us the Morning Star and cause us to *put on* the splendour of the sun, then we may surmise that both the ancient myths and the modern poetry, so false as history, may be very near the truth of prophecy.<sup>4</sup>

This first passage strikes me as illuminating what Lewis the author was doing in recasting an ancient myth in *Till We Have Faces*. It is not about what we can do for ourselves, but what God needs to do for us and in us, and what we need to desire and to accept. It is also about the way in which stories can tell us the truth about these things, even if their way of telling that truth will necessarily be veiled in certain ways.

A second passage from the same sermon does much to illuminate, I think, the meaning of the experiences of Orual. It does so in a way that can illuminate our own lives and loves as well. The passage comes from the conclusion of Lewis's sermon and concerns the transformation into God's glory that ought to be our end and that ought to direct the formation in a proper order of loves in this world. If I offered it in my own voice, it might seem like moralizing, but it comes from the author himself and thus has the authority of his voice:

A cleft has opened in the pitiless walls of the world, and we are invited to follow our great Captain inside. The following Him is, of course, the essential point. That being so, it may be asked what practical use there is in the speculations which I have been indulging. I can think of at least one such use. It may be possible for each to think too much of his own potential glory hereafter; it is hardly possible for him to think too often or too deeply about that of his neighbour. The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbour's glory should be laid on my back, a load so heavy that only

humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken. It is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship, or else a horror and a corruption such as you now meet, if at all, only in a nightmare. All day long we are, in some degree, helping each other to one or other of these destinations. It is in the light of these overwhelming possibilities, it is with the awe and the circumspection proper to them, that we should conduct all our dealings with one another, all friendships, all loves, all play, all politics. There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. . . . This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind . . . which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously. . . . And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner. . . . Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ *vere latitat*—the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.<sup>5</sup> ✠

## ENDNOTES

- 1 *Studies in Words*, (Cambridge UK: Cambridge University Press, 2013 [1960]), Canto Classics, 2nd edition, p.6. There is a similar comment on the first page of the second chapter of *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960), 25.
- 2 On this topic, see Joseph Pilsner, *The Specification of Human Actions in St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- 3 Lewis, *The Four Loves*, 12.
- 4 Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, Latin text with English translation by John Arthur Hanson, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989).
- 5 For some of Lewis's views on myth, see the opening chapters of *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (1942; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1961), and chapter five of his *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965).
- 6 See, for instance, Doris T. Myers, "Browsing the Glome Library," *Seven: An Anglo-American Literary Review* 19 (2002): 63–76; also, *Bareface: A Guide to C. S. Lewis's Last Novel* (Columbia, Mo.: University of Missouri Press, 2004); and Peter Schakel, *Reason and Imagination in C. S. Lewis: A Study of Till We Have Faces* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 1984).
- 7 Let me thank the many people with whom I have discussed this topic in the course of my composition of this paper, and in particular Sr. Josemaria, S.V., who directed my attention to Lewis's essay "The Weight of Glory," Sr. John Mary, S.V., and Fr. David Nicgorski, O.M.V.
- 8 Lewis, *Till We Have Faces*, 174.
- 9 As noted before, I will not attempt a biographical reading of the text, but I cannot here help but wonder whether this detail might not shed light on Lewis's own self-understanding.
- 10 In *The Call of Stories: Teaching and the Moral Imagination* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1989) Robert Coles gives an account of his discovery of this role for storytelling in his practice as a psychologist. For another wonderful use of the device of coming to the truth by telling one's own story, see François Mauriac, *Vipers' Tangle*, trans. Warren B. Wells (Garden City, N.Y.: Image, 1957).
- 11 *Till We have Faces*, 293.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 294.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 308.
- 14 C.S. Lewis, "The Weight of Glory," in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, revised and expanded edition, ed. Walter Hooper (1949; New York: Collier, 1980), 3–19, here at 16–17.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 18–19.



# Modernity

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Among contemporary cultural historians, political theorists Brad S. Gregory, Pierre Manent, and Rémi Brague each in his own way has addressed the transformation of what was formally known as “Christendom” into its modern present. No one needs to be told that the repudiation of an inherited culture has left individuals as well as societies without a moral compass. The evidence is too great. Some saw it coming a generation or more ago. We could cite the English historians Hilaire Belloc and Christopher Dawson and their French contemporary Paul Valéry, as well as their American contemporary George Santayana.

The 2013 reprinting in a critical edition of Santayana’s *Reason in Society* leads one to recall his often quoted judgment: “The shell of Christendom is broken. The unconquerable mind of the East, the pagan past, the industrial socialist future confront it with equal authority. Our whole life and mind is saturated with a slow upward filtration of a new spirit—that of an emancipated, atheistic, international democracy.”<sup>1</sup>

Writing approximately a hundred years ago, Santayana draws a distinction often missed between “social democracy as an ideal” and “democracy as a form of government in which power lies more or less directly in the people.” Social democracy, he claims, “is a general ethical ideal, looking to human equality and brotherhood, and in its radical form is inconsistent with such institutions as family, heredity and property.”<sup>2</sup> Democratic government, by contrast, Santayana maintains, is merely a means to an end, an expedient for better and smoother government in certain states at certain times. “A government,” he holds, is not made representative by the mechanical expedient of electing its members by universal suffrage. It becomes representative only by embodying in its policies whether by instinct or intelligence, the people’s conscious and unconscious interests.”<sup>3</sup> No friend of social democracy, Santayana finds its spirit deadening, given its attempt to unite whole nations and even all of mankind into a society of equals, admitting of no local or racial privileges by which a sense of fellowship may be stimulated. The spirit of social democracy is deadening, for it is to ambition, to the love

of wealth and honor, and to the love of liberty, which entails opportunity and adventure, that we owe whatever benefits we have derived from Greece and Rome, and from Italy and England. “Civilization” he believes, “has hitherto consisted in the diffusion and dilution of habits arising in privileged centers.”<sup>4</sup> It has not sprung from the people. “To abolish a natural aristocracy would be to cut off the sources from which all culture has hitherto flowed... The one way of defending the democratic ideal is to deny that civilization is a good.”

Samuel P. Huntington, in his treatise on modernity and the transformation of life in America, is of the opinion that it was sometime between 1920 and 1970 that the United States lost its Anglo-Protestant soul which theretofore had provided a commonly accepted moral and cultural framework, an “American Creed,” as it were.<sup>5</sup>

Brad S. Gregory looks to the sixteenth century, convinced that “modernity” dates to the Protestant Reformation itself.<sup>6</sup> In Gregory’s judgment the Reformation succeeded in the sense that it provided an alternative way of grounding Christian answers to Life Questions and thus provided a basis for living a Christian life, ideologically and socially separate from the Roman Catholic Church. “On the eve of the Reformation Latin Christianity had achieved a comprehensive, sacramental world view based on truth claims about God’s action in history, centered on the Incarnation, life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Intellectual life was vibrant, if sometimes contentious, variously institutionalized not only in universities but also in monasteries, at princely courts, and among participants in the religious Republic of Letters.”<sup>7</sup> The unintended problem created by the Reformation became the problem of how to know what true Christianity is, given the open-ended range of rival truth claims that followed diverse exegetical interpretations of sacred scripture. Reason alone in modern philosophy, Gregory holds, like scripture alone, has proven incapable of discerning or devising consensual persuasive answers to life’s large questions. There is no shared, substantive common good, nor are there any prospects for devising one. A centrally important paradoxical characteristic of modern liberalism, Gregory finds, is that it does not prescribe what citizens should believe, how they should live, or what they should care about.

Pierre Manent would not disagree. In his discussion of modernity he too looks to its origins. “We have been modern now for several centuries. We are modern, and we want to be modern.”<sup>8</sup> In what century did modernity really begin—the sixteenth, seventeenth, or was it the eighteenth century? Origins are bound to be obscure, but whatever the case, in Manent’s judgment, modernity is a project, formulated and implemented first in Europe, but nevertheless intended from the beginning for all of humanity, a movement that is destined never to arrive at a term.

Developing a theme from an earlier work, *The City of Man* (1995), Manent probes deeply into Western history: “If we want to understand the modern project, we must begin with the city, for it is in the city that people deliberate and form projects for action. It is in the city that people discover that they can govern themselves and learn to do so. They discover and learn politics. . . . The city is the shaping of human life that makes the common thing and the execution of the common thing in a plurality of cities hostile to each other and divided within.”<sup>9</sup> The political form that succeeded the city was the empire. With the coming of Christianity, we can add a third form, one created by the Church that is at once a city and an empire. Europeans soon found themselves confronted by competing authorities. “They were assailed by prestigious and contradictory words—the words of the Bible, the words of the Greek philosophers, the words of the Roman orators and historians—and they did not know which to retain.”<sup>10</sup> With Luther’s revolt, the authority of the Word of God itself became divided between that of the scriptures and the Tradition of the Church. Ironically, the scriptures themselves were accessible only through the mediation of the Church and in the first instance in the language of the Church, Latin. By all accounts, Luther’s Reformation created a spiritual upheaval, but it was also and inseparably a political revolution, indeed, a national insurrection. Different European nations selected the Christian confession under which they chose to live and imposed it. Thus, says Manent, the confessional nation became one of history’s political forms.

Europe produced modernity, and for a long period of time Europe was its master and owner. Today, Manent observes, Bacon and Descartes reign in Shanghai and Banglador at least as much as in Paris and London. Within Europe, in spite of the multiple treaties that created the European Union, civic cooperation is feeble and the religious word almost inaudible. “Europe finds itself militarily, politically and spiritually disarmed in a world that it has armed with the instruments of modern civili-

zation. It soon will be wholly incapable of defending itself. By renouncing the political form that was its own, Europe has deprived itself of the association in which European life had found its richest meaning.”<sup>1</sup> Manent’s emphasis on the city follows his recognition that a degree of cultural unity is required as the foundation of a body politic. One cannot be a citizen of the world, he insists, nor even of Europe. An identifiable common good can only be the fruit of a coherent, sustainable tradition within a homogeneous population. Lost is the experience of living in what was formerly called “Chistendom.”<sup>2</sup>

In *Metamorphoses of the City*, at the end of a discussion entitled, “Empire, Church and Nation,” Manent identifies Jewish law, Greek philosophy, Christianity, and democracy as the four great spiritual determinations of Western humanity. They form not only a chronological succession but also mark the major stages on the gradient of increasing universality. “Is it possible,” Manent asks, “to imagine a new stage, the result of a mediation of Christianity and the modern conception of humanity?” By way of an answer, he finds building blocks in a certain solidarity between Jewish law and Christianity, and between Christianity and the gods of the Greek philosophers, insofar as those Greek accounts provide a rational conception of divinity. But the “Religion of Humanity” understood from the modern perspective has left behind Jewish, Christian, and even Greek philosophical notions of the divine. “Modernity by embracing Humanity,” writes Manent, “has expelled the highest idea to embrace the largest idea which is the idea of humanity itself.”<sup>3</sup>

Like Brad Gregory, Manent finds it unfortunate that the Reformation, in rejecting the mediation of the Church as a separate and visible institution, weakened Christianity to the detriment of its social influence. In the aftermath of the Reformation, “the believer,” writes Manent “instead of being saved by partaking in the sacraments of the Church, instead of being part of the Church, is instructed by Luther that he is saved by faith in the Word of God alone.”<sup>4</sup> What happens, Manent then asks, when the Church is set aside? He answers: “The spiritual ministry is appropriated by every Christian in what is called the universal priesthood.”<sup>5</sup> Lost is the mediation of the Church between man and God. Relieved of the burden of the ecclesiastical order, the Christian community inevitably falls under the state, as it soon did in Luther’s Germany.<sup>6</sup> “However unsatisfactory or disappointing the mediating institution may be—Yahweh is forever reprimanding or chastising his people—it is the bridge over the abyss that separates the Immense from the lowly. What Christianity brings is mediation, not distance.”<sup>7</sup>

Rémi Brague, in the company of Paul Valéry, insists on the recognition of another dimension of Europe that is not given due weight or is overlooked, namely, the contribution of Rome, not only for its sense of law but as transmitter of the Hebrew and Greek contribution to European culture. Brague, in his insightful work published in an English translation as *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization*,<sup>8</sup> argues that Europeans have failed to recognize, value, and defend what is a unique culture with consequences for the rest of the world.

Brague begins his treatise in an attempt to define what we are talking about when we speak of “Europe.” It is a geographical entity to be sure, but in a certain sense, “Europe” precedes Europe as a continent. As to its distinguishing features or character, Europe is the whole set of historically identifiable facts that have taken place within the geographical space we call Europe. Thus Husserl can speak of “European sciences” and Heidegger of “Occidental, metaphysics.”<sup>9</sup> Obviously mere residence on the Continent does not make one a European. We see this in the fact that many immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa refuse to assimilate and choose instead to retain their own culture and even live under their own law. Brague is drawn to the conclusion: “A European is one who is conscious of belonging to a whole. One is not a European without wanting to be one. . . . The frontiers of Europe are solely cultural.”<sup>10</sup>

Continuing his analysis, Brague argues, “A culture is defined in relation to the people and to the phenomena it considers as its other.” Europe, to the extent that it is Occidental, is the other of the Orient. As Christendom, Europe is the other of the Muslim world. To the extent that it is Latin Christendom, Europe is the other of the Byzantine world. “Byzantium,” says Brague, “never thought of itself as European. It always thought of itself as Roman.”<sup>11</sup> The cultural realities that one designates in this way do not limit themselves to the European space, neither in their origin nor in their ultimate expansion.<sup>2</sup> To the question, “Who are we as Europeans: Greeks or Romans, or Jews, or Christians, or in a sense a little of each?”, Brague is convinced that Europe is essentially Roman. The Roman character of Europe is found in its sense of order, in the patriarchal family, in its sense of fatherland. “To be Roman is to perceive oneself as Greek in relation to what is barbarous, but also barbarous in relation to what is Greek. It is to know that what one transmits does not come from oneself.”<sup>3</sup> Roman culture is essentially a passage, a way, an aqueduct. The relation of Europe—as Christendom—to the Old Testament is in a sense a “Roman” relation. “The Christians

themselves are essentially ‘Romans’ insofar as it is from Rome that they have their ‘Greeks’ to which they are tied by an invisible hand.” In the light of this somewhat fanciful analysis, Brague can say, “Christianity is to the Old Covenant what the Romans are to the Greeks.”<sup>4</sup>

Christianity did in fact play a major role in the early stages of the formation of the European Community following World War II due to the influence of Konrad Adenauer, Robert Schumann, and Alcide de Gasperi. That influence has waned as time has gone by, and today the European Union is little more than a set of trade agreements. As to the future of Europe, Brague is convinced that the cultural task awaiting Europe consists in becoming Roman again. Europe must also become conscious of its intrinsic and even global value, that is, of its exceptional nature, of its “eccentric” character, as it faces both internal and external barbarism.<sup>5</sup> It must again become convinced of its worthiness in relation to which it is only the messenger and servant. “It must regain or become once again the place where one recognizes an intimate relationship of man with God, a covenant that descends to the most carnal dimensions of humanity, that must be the object of unflinching respect.”<sup>6</sup> Amplifying that judgment, he writes, “For Europe to remain itself, it is not necessary that everyone who inhabits it recognize explicitly that they are Christians.”<sup>7</sup> Aware of demographic projections for the future of the continent, Brague hopes that, in spite of the cultural problem created by its immigration policy, Europe will remain a place that recognizes the separation of the temporal and the spiritual, where each recognizes the legitimacy of the other in its proper domain.<sup>8</sup>

Pierre Manent and Rémi Brague are not alone in taking a dim view of Europe’s future. Charles Murray, in promoting his book *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences: 800 b.c.-1950*, summed up his conclusion for a promotional blurb when he asserted, “Europe’s run is over.”<sup>9</sup> Pierre Manent, although pessimistic, stops short of Murray’s conclusion. Rémi Brague calls for a “Counter Enlightenment.”

A cultural historian viewing Europe in the light of its modern history may find it hard to believe that the philosophical skepticism introduced in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries has so undermined its self-confidence that it is not able to defend its intellectual heritage. Christianity may be on the defensive in some self-blinded intellectual circles, but the empiricism of Hume and the fideism of Kant are easily challenged, and may one day give way to a realism in the mold of a contemporary Aristotle or Aquinas. Yet, Jürgen

Moltmann stands to remind us that traditions once challenged are all but lost.

Historians tell us that discussions of hope usually emerge at a time of crisis. We found this to be true in the mid-decades of the twentieth century, when in the context of a Europe ravaged by two world wars, influential scholars such as Joseph Pieper, Ernest Bloch, and Jurgen Moltmann each in his own way explored the grounds for hope. Moltmann was especially conscious of the role that tradition plays in preserving equilibrium within a people, grounding hope and mitigating fear. “Traditions,” he writes, “are alive and binding, current and familiar, as long as they are taken as a matter of course and as such link fathers to sons in the course of generations and provide continuity in time. When this unquestioned familiarity and trustworthiness becomes problematical, an essential element in tradition is already lost. Where reflection sets in and subjects the tradition to critical questioning, with the result that accepting or rejecting of them becomes a conscious act, the traditions lose their propitious force.” Not a happy thought, to be sure, but not for the first time in European history.<sup>o</sup>

Theognis of Magara, a sixth century B.C. philosopher and poet, reflecting on the social deterioration of his day, lamented the lack of piety in the people. In a poetic work cited through the ages, notably by Plato, Xenophon, Aristotle, and Clement of Alexandria, and known to us as “Hope,” Theognis claims that all the gods have left the earth and returned to Olympus. Faith and Temperance and the Graces have abandoned earth. Humans having lost a sense of piety no longer venerate those immortal gods. As a consequence, oaths are no longer reliable. The only divinity still remaining on earth is Hope. If this divinity were to leave, he warns, civilization would surely collapse. The parallels to our present are obvious. Indeed, with Theognis we can ask, what if a community, a society, a people were to lose hope?<sup>1</sup>

Just as hope can play an important function in the life of an individual, it may stimulate a society as a whole. We have the example of Winston Churchill and Charles de Gaulle in the darkest hours of World War II, and the remarkable example of John Paul II who through his leadership of the Solidarity movement inspired hope not only in his own people but also for others in the Soviet bloc at the time. Today we witness in the leadership of Vladimir Putin the hope that Russia can be restored to its former greatness as it recovers the Orthodox religion of its Byzantine past, a faith which unified the nation prior to the Revolution.

“The cultural task awaiting Europe,” to use a phrase of Rémi Brague, challenging though it may be, may in time find its voice in another Churchill or John Paul II. At the present, with no remedy in sight, all we can do is hope. ❧

## ENDNOTES

- 1 George Santayana, “Winds of Doctrine” in the *Works of George Santayana* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1932), 3.
- 2 George Santayana, *Reason in Society*, critical edition, ed. M. Wokeck and M. A. Coleman (Cambridge: Mass.: The MIT Press, 2013), 74.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 77.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 79.
- 5 Cf. “Religion and Christianity,” chap. 5 in *Who are We? Challenges to America’s National Identity* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2004), 81–106.
- 6 Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2012).
- 7 *Ibid.*, 189.
- 8 Pierre Manent, *Metamorphoses of the City: On the Western Dynamic* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).
- 9 *Ibid.*, 5.
- 10 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 23.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 304.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 311.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 319.
- 16 At the end of the eighteenth century religious establishments existed throughout European countries and in several American states.
- 17 Manent, *Metamorphoses*, 319.
- 18 Rémi Brague, *Eccentric Culture: A Theory of Western Civilization*, translated from the French *Europe, la voie romaine* by Samuel Lester (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine’s Press, 2012).
- 19 *Ibid.*, 20.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 6.
- 21 Manent, *Metamorphoses*, 17.
- 22 Brague, *Eccentric*, 21–22.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 40.
- 24 *Ibid.*, 54.
- 25 John Courtney Murray, decades ago, defined the barbarian when he characterized the barbarian as a threat to the life of reason embedded in law and custom. The perennial work of the barbarian, he held, “is to undermine rational standards of judgment, to corrupt inherited wisdom by which people have always lived, and to do this not by spreading new beliefs but by creating a climate of doubt and bewilderment in which clarity about the larger aims of life are dimmed and the self-confidence of the people destroyed.” John Courtney Murray, *We Hold These Truths* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1960), 13.
- 26 Brague, *Eccentric*, 189.
- 27 *Ibid.*
- 28 *Ibid.*
- 29 Charles Murray, *Human Accomplishment: The Pursuit of Excellence in the Arts and Sciences: 800 B.C.-1950* (New York: Harper, 2003).
- 30 Jurgen Moltmann, *Theology of Hope*, trans. James W. Leitch (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), 291.
- 31 As cited by Gerard Verbeke, *Moral Education in Aristotle* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1990), 32.

# Chesterton Among the Theologians

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by David Paul Deavel

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Have you ever brought up Chesterton only to be asked to describe him? I don't mean his physical appearance, either. It's not easy beyond simply saying he was a writer. I often will bring up the Father Brown mysteries because those are the ones people are most likely to have heard of. But to describe what kind of writer he was is more difficult. We know that he was a journalist, illustrator, poet, novelist, critic, political campaigner and thinker, and indeed, many assert, even a philosopher. In his very interesting book *G. K. Chesterton: Thinking Backward, Looking Forward*, the distinguished British philosopher Stephen R. L. Clark observed that Chesterton was a nonacademic philosopher who could also make philosophical arguments in an academic fashion. The Jesuit scholar Quentin Lauer called Chesterton a "philosopher without portfolio." Could we also describe him as a theologian?

Chesterton was not in the academic sense a theologian. He never taught theology nor did he have any academic degree. In an essay titled "Chesterton the Theologian," the Canadian Jesuit Bernard Lonergan observed that he was "tempted to twist my terms of reference and switch to the more obvious and abundant themes of Chesterton as Metaphysician or Chesterton as Apologist." Like Blessed Newman, Chesterton always denied that he was a theologian. While he had, says Lonergan, "the profoundest respect for the technicalities in which centuries of reflection on the faith had deposited and crystallized and tabulated their findings," Chesterton "never himself became adept in these technicalities." As Chesterton himself once observed, "supernatural truths are connected to the mystery of grace and are a matter for theologians; admittedly a rather delicate and difficult matter even for them." Theologians were them. Lonergan quotes a Father Joseph Keating, who reviewed *Orthodoxy* in the British Jesuit journal *The Month*. Keating finished his article by remarking, "Had we the power we should banish him to Monte Cassino for a year there to work through the Summa of St. Thomas with Dante as his only relaxation. On his return, we fancy, he should

astonish the world." As it turns out, Chesterton had put on his reading list some years back Thomas's Summa; he would later write a very fine introduction to Thomas, saluted by Thomistic scholars like Jacques Maritain, Etienne Gilson, and Josef Pieper. Even without all the technical theological distinctions he did tend to astonish the world.

We might even say that it is because he left behind the theological distinctions that he was so astonishing. Lonergan observed that had Chesterton been born in the eleventh century rather than the twentieth, he might have been ranked with St. Anselm, for, says Lonergan, "Then being a theologian was a matter of a cast of mind that seizes the fitness and coherence of the faith, that penetrates to its inner order and harmony and unity. Such penetration was the soul of Chesterton." Indeed this is very close to what Chesterton said himself of theology in *The New Jerusalem*: "Theology is only thought applied to religion." For Lonergan, what made Chesterton's thought penetrating and profound was that his questions "go to the root of things" and "the answers he demands must be right on the nail." Alas, Lonergan, a thinker whose works are extremely long and complex, wrote only a few pages on Chesterton, so he doesn't go into many examples. He does suggest, however, that Chesterton's "deepest theological intuition" is one that gets expressed in the marvelous and mysterious *Man Who Was Thursday*. In that work, Chesterton "lures the unsuspecting reader face to face with God and the problem of evil."

The late Stratford Caldecott, in an essay titled "Was G. K. Chesterton a Theologian?", does not mention Lonergan's essay, but it is clear that he would agree that a theologian is one who ultimately causes others to come face to face with God. He contends, with the support of the Swiss theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar, that a true theologian is "one who perceives and helps to reveal the glory of God in Christ." What makes Chesterton's thought on religion so arresting is that it "cannot be boring." Caldecott quotes Chesterton's essay called "Reading the Riddle," in which Chesterton talks about the furor over a theological book called *The Great Riddle Solved*. The book immediately sold at a furious pace because of the misconception that it was a mystery story; it then fizzled. Chesterton is moved to ask, "Why is a work of modern theology less startling, less arresting to the soul,

than a work of silly police fiction?” Why also, Chesterton asks, does old theology startle and arrest more than contemporary theology? If theology is the “most important human business,” then there is something wrong when it lacks excitement.

The curmudgeon might ask, however, why does Christian theology have to be exciting? The answer is, of course, that theology is ultimately about the gospel—it is not just good, it is good news! There is something in Christianity, says Caldecott, “that can never age, that can never become old; something that is always brand new.” Christianity, Chesterton was never tired of asserting, is less the “faith of our fathers” than it is “the faith of our children.” “The Faith,” said Chesterton in *The Everlasting Man*, “is always converting the age, not as an old religion, but as a new religion.” What Chesterton’s writing did so well was to startle readers into seeing Christian faith from a different angle so that they could see what was news in it and what was good in it. That is why paradox is so essential to Chesterton’s method. Paradox is not simply contradiction, but the lining up of two truths that look contradictory. When Chesterton displays a paradox it is not merely for the sake of the fun of it—though that’s there, too—it is in order that one ask the deepest sorts of questions about reality. How do these truths fit together? What is the big picture? Why do these truths seem to be contradictory? And when you’ve asked those questions, Chesterton helps you to find the answer in Christ and his Church which, he says, is the only thing in the world bigger than paganism. The goal is conversion. Theology itself has an apologetic edge. In fact, says Caldecott, there is no bright line between apologetics and theology.

Some thinkers do not like this blurring of lines. Peter Collins, a philosopher, wrote a very long review article of *G. K. Chesterton: Theologian*, a book written by the Dominican theologian Aidan Nichols. While not denying outright that Chesterton could be a theologian, he repeatedly adverts to distinguishing among philosophy, apologetics, and theology proper. He judges that Chesterton’s language is often that of the philosopher and the apologist. While Collins has a point about how Chesterton is more often acting the philosopher than the theologian, it is not clear that the distinction between apologetics and theology is one that we need to maintain. Lonergan himself, though he wrote only briefly on Chesterton as a theologian, wrote at length about the different branches of theological work, one of which he labeled “communicative.”

As it so happens, Lonergan and Caldecott are not

alone in thinking that there are no bright lines between theology and apologetics. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, the authoritative doctrinal office of the Catholic Church, released a document in 1990 titled *Donum veritatis*, in English “The Gift of The Truth: On the Ecclesial Vocation of the Theologian.” In that document, signed by the prefect of the Congregation, Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI, we read that the role of the theologian is to seek to understand the faith in an ever deeper way. What does this do? “It thereby aids the People of God in fulfilling the Apostle’s command (I Pet. 3:15) to give an accounting for their hope to those who ask it” (6). Even the technical theology is designed to help people understand the faith and communicate it convincingly. “Theology,” the document tells us, “therefore offers its contribution so that the faith might be communicated.” And indeed, it should be written so that it might communicate itself to others who do not have it. “Appealing to the understanding of those who do not yet know Christ, it helps them seek and find faith” (7). The document also states that the “theologian’s task” is to “draw from the surrounding culture those elements which will allow him better to illumine one or other aspect of the mysteries of faith. This is certainly an arduous task that has its risks, but is legitimate in itself and should be encouraged” (10).

While Collins might object that much of what Chesterton is doing in books like *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man* is technically philosophy of religion, it is not clear that it cannot be considered theology under the definition of the CDF. Just because Chesterton often calls his work philosophy does not mean that it is not really a legitimate theological task. I know from having taught *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man* to undergraduates that students can see that Chesterton’s philosophical work, particularly in the latter book, is based on his theological understanding of creation, original sin, and the doctrine of Christ. While Collins would say Chesterton was doing strictly philosophy of religion, my students would say he was “cheating” in his own claims to be doing philosophy. I think we can say he’s simply doing theology in a relaxed way. If, as he said, *Orthodoxy* was a kind of “slovenly autobiography,” then we can also call it a “slovenly theology,” albeit one that is “legitimate in itself and should be encouraged,” to echo the CDF. Stratford Caldecott says straight out that that theology should be done along the model of Chesterton’s two masterpieces.

We have probably talked long enough about whether Chesterton is a theologian or not. For those who have



not followed the discussion thus far, let me apologize and simply give you one more argument, albeit of the weakest form—that from authority. In this particular case, I am arguing from the weakest form of the weakest form—namely, the argument from the authority of the internet. If you look at the article on G. K. Chesterton on Wikipedia, you will find that Chesterton is listed as a “lay theologian.” If you click on “lay theologian,” you will find out that it is “a theologian who has not received formal theological training.” Chesterton is listed along with Isaac Newton, C. S. Lewis, Dorothy Sayers, Jacques Ellul, Frank Sheed, and several others. As St. Augustine did not quite say, *wikipedia locuta, causa finita est*.

Let us then pass on to what is so interesting about Chesterton’s thinking about religion. I think there we should say some things about Chesterton’s theology of theology, but also some more specific ones about his other themes.

The first aspect of Chesterton’s theological thought was that it is dogmatic. I realize that dogma has often been given a bad name. When I first started graduate studies in theology at Fordham University, the philosophy and theology departments were housed on the same floor of the same building. One would climb the steps of Collins Hall, enter a large entryway, then step through a set of double doors. A sign affixed to the wall had arrows pointing left to the theology offices (a perhaps accurate direction for the department as a whole) and to the right for the philosophy offices. By the arrow pointing to philosophy were the words, “Unanswerable Questions.” By the arrow to theology was written “Unquestionable Answers.” While Chesterton would have enjoyed the joke, I don’t think he would agree at all that this is what philosophy and theology do. Chesterton understood that all philosophy must be based on certain first principles to which we do not argue, but which we take as givens. So philosophy is just as implicated in dogmatic answers as theology is. It is true, however, that philosophy does raise up certain questions that are unanswerable by itself. One of the main themes of both *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man* is that reason alone does not answer fully to the human question. In both works, Chesterton presents the Christian revelation as the key that unlocks our understanding of human existence. It is a key because it fits exactly the oddness of life. In *The Everlasting Man* it is presented as filling in the shadowy truths of pagan mythology and answering the unanswerable questions brought up by the narrow rationalism of the philosophers.

In both books as well as in all his other works,

Chesterton makes the point that Christian (and indeed Catholic Christian) dogma does not limit thought but it frees it. Theology does not provide unquestionable answers, but answers that lead to more questions. The Christian Creed, says Chesterton, is like sex: it breeds thoughts. Only Christian orthodoxy, says Chesterton, is the “guardian of morality or order, but is also the only logical guardian of liberty, innovation and advance.”

If we wish to pull down the prosperous oppressor we cannot do it with the new doctrine of human perfectibility; we can do it with the old doctrine of Original Sin. If we want to uproot inherent cruelties or lift up lost populations we cannot do it with the scientific theory that matter precedes mind; we can do it with the supernatural theory that mind precedes matter. If we wish specially to awaken people to social vigilance and tireless pursuit of practise, we cannot help it much by insisting on the Immanent God and the Inner Light: for these are at best reasons for contentment; we can help it much by insisting on the transcendent God and the flying and escaping gleam; for that means divine discontent. If we wish particularly to assert the idea of a generous balance against that of a dreadful autocracy we shall instinctively be Trinitarian rather than Unitarian. If we desire European civilization to be a raid and a rescue, we shall insist rather that souls are in real peril than that their peril is ultimately unreal. And if we wish to exalt the outcast and the crucified, we shall rather wish to think that a veritable God was crucified, rather than a mere sage or hero. Above all, if we wish to protect the poor we shall be in favour of fixed rules and clear dogmas. The RULES of a club are occasionally in favour of the poor member. The drift of a club is always in favour of the rich one. (*Orthodoxy*)

Dogma is, of course, a subject that presupposes authority. Who, after all, can declare the dogmatic boundary? Who gets to set the rules? Better, who identifies the rules? As Ratzinger-Benedict noted, putting the two together, “We must factor Church and dogma into the theological equation as a generative power rather than as a shackle” (*The Nature and Mission of Theology*, 64). Part of the reason that dogma is more generative, and generative of a thousand different ways of thinking at that, is that it is more democratic than inner lights and vague doctrines. The reason for that is that it is a public declaration of the truth accessible to both high and low, rich and poor, simple and learned. Cardinal Ratzinger-Pope Benedict commented on this aspect of theology in a way that is very Chestertonian:

One could say—somewhat carelessly—that the

Creator has, as it were proceeded in a thoroughly democratic fashion. Though not all men can be professional theologians, access to the great fundamental cognitions is open to everyone. In this sense, the Magisterium has something like a democratic character when it defends the common faith, which recognizes no distinction of rank between the learned and the simple" (*Nature and Mission of Theology*, 63).

And it is only with this authoritative, dogmatic understanding of Christianity that one can get any sort of real discussion, any real "diversity" or "pluralism." As Adam Schwartz puts it in the context of Chesterton's acceptance of the Roman Catholic Church's teaching authority, "Chesterton believed that accepting authoritative direction in the absolutes of doctrine and ethics provided the framework and freedom necessary to make debates on probables possible and profitable" (*The Third Spring*, 84). He quotes Chesterton's famous line from *A Miscellany of Men*, that "men should agree on a principle, that they may differ on everything else."

Chesterton does not just have a theology of theology, however. Chesterton's thinking on all manner of subjects had a theological tint to it. He thought that Catholic Christian faith would inevitably change one's thought on all subjects. Fr. Aidan Nichols, whose book I mentioned as the occasion for questioning Chesterton's status as a theologian (which is rather thin, admittedly), identifies in the book three main areas of Chesterton's theological inquiry which I want to explore briefly: Chesterton's anthropology or doctrine of man, Chesterton's doctrine of Christ, and finally his theological ethics. Finally, I'd like to briefly discuss one area identified by Fr. Ian Ker as Chesterton's indelible contribution to theology—namely, his theology of humor.

**Anthropology.** Fr. Ian Ker thinks that Chesterton's most Catholic works are those covering Charles Dickens—and this, too, is where Fr. Nichols starts. Chesterton asked the question of whether Dickens was guilty of "vulgar optimism." He answered that Dickens's power was based on his preaching of—what else?—a paradox.

If we are to save the oppressed, we must have two apparently antagonistic emotions in us at the same time. We must think the oppressed man intensely miserable, and at the same time intensely attractive and important. We must insist with violence on his degradation; we must insist with the same violence upon his dignity. For if we relax by one inch the one assertion, men will say he does not need saving. And we relax by one inch the other assertion, men will say he is not worth sav-

ing. The optimists will say that reform is needless. The pessimists will say that reform is hopeless. We must apply both simultaneously to the same oppressed man; we must say that he is a worm and a god; and must thus lay ourselves open to the accusation (or the compliment) of transcendentalism (*Charles Dickens*, 270).

What Chesterton is getting at here in different, non-technical theological terms, are the two doctrines of human creation in the image and likeness of God, as well as the degradation of the state of man under original sin. While Chesterton is famous for saying that original sin is the only doctrine that one can prove empirically, it is clear that this divine dignity of man is a revelation, not the result of an empirical study. It is on the basis of this biblical and theological doctrine, which the Enlightenment philosophers took up without bothering to justify on their own terms, that the broadly democratic and human rights movements of the last few centuries have been based. "All men are created equal" is a doctrine that is not really discovered by reason alone, but through thinking under the influence of Genesis and the gospels. It is by dropping the notion of original sin that such democracies become tyrannies, and by dropping divine dignity that such tyrannies can dehumanize others.

This paradox of human origins as divine and fallen is based, we might say, on his notion of creation as separation, a very Jewish idea we might note. God creates us as separate from himself, giving us our dignity but also allowing us to have true freedom of will that allows us both to fall and to rise again in Christ. We are further separated from the other parts of Creation in this regard. The dropping of divine dignity by modern tyrants democratic and otherwise, Chesterton believed, was aided and abetted by the doctrine of materialistic evolution which did not include any sense of separation. If humans are simply part of a flux of biological forms, it is easy to identify humans whose physical form is less developed, aged, or deformed as not owed the protection offered by "human rights" advocates. This is why Chesterton spends so much time on the difference between men and other animals in *The Everlasting Man*—if we are simply another species of biological life, then it is clear that the vast majority of people will not raise the dignity of animals to human level, but lower human dignity to that of the beasts.

**Christology.** In *The Everlasting Man*, Chesterton's history of the world is fixed around three hinge points where natural explanations don't really seem to suffice. The first is when something came from nothing—creation itself, the second when creation is completed as man emerges

from the beasts, the third is the Incarnation when God became man. Creation, we might note, is separation, and the Incarnation is the paradoxical union of omnipotence and limited, weak creatureliness. God creates us outside of himself in order to join us to himself in a new way. Fr. Nichols notes that Chesterton's Christology is a full-throated Chalcedonian orthodoxy. The Council of Chalcedon, you will remember, is the Ecumenical Council in 451 where it was affirmed that Christ's divinity and humanity were intimately linked, but the divine nature did not simply absorb the human: "We teach . . . one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, known in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation." Nichols observes that Chesterton, while upholding the dogma, had the unfortunate practical judgment that the Byzantines, though affirming this orthodox understanding of Christ's two natures, were not really all that emphatic about it. Thus his claim in *Christendom in Dublin* that there is something, if not heretical, at least a bit off about iconography—it is really the plastic arts, statuary that is really and fully christologically correct. I think Chesterton simply wrong here, but this is one of those areas on which he and I agree on the dogmatic principle, but disagree on the application of it.

When it comes to the atonement, Chesterton's way of speaking is to emphasize the paradoxical nature of the cross, describing it as "the spectacle of a God dying." It is in a mystery story, however, that Nichols detects one of the most profound descriptions of what the atonement is. In *Four Faultless Felons*, the character Alan Nadoway observes that the "whole universe was wrong" and that "respectability" would never right it. What could? "It was religion, sacrificial suffering. Somebody must be terribly good, to balance what was so bad. Somebody must be *needlessly* good, to weigh down the scales of that judgment." Chesterton underscores here that suffering was needed for our salvation, but that it is not only suffering, but also "needless good." Good that is freely done, that flows out of love. The kind of love that could only really and fully flow from a God who is love. A God who is also man.

When that needless good came, things were changed. And it is the second half of *The Everlasting Man* that makes this so clear. We've mentioned that Christ's advent brought to fruition the dreams of myth-makers and the schemes of philosophers. What this does is unite the human being, bringing together head, heart, dreams, and thoughts—making the human broken into pieces by sin one again. It is only after the Incarnation that humanity really kicks into gear, we might say, both with its possibilities for good and evil.

**Ethics.** Those possibilities of human good and evil bring us to Nichols' third area—ethics. Chesterton is a good enough Thomist to respect the nature of human beings, but after Christ has come to reveal to us our true nature and the true possibilities for us, we need to think a little differently about what is demanded of us. First, it is true that we should be able to get a workable natural law understanding of what we are and how we should act, but original sin, which darkens the intellect by disordering our passions, often prevents us from seeing what we are and what we should be. But second, and more importantly, Christ has revealed to us that we have a more than natural end—a supernatural end. Unfortunately, if people operate explicitly or even implicitly without the idea of God, they will generally be unable to rise up to the highest levels of morality. Chesterton often points out that simply attempting to get at the natural while ignoring the supernatural often gets us what is instead unnatural. And even if individuals are capable of rising up to these heights, the problem is that they will not be able to communicate them to their children. Those democratic and human rights ideals, as we noted earlier, were based on a doctrine of divine image-bearing and original sin. The details of what human rights and sane human life are, Chesterton says, are largely dependent practically speaking on an understanding that is gained not simply through philosophy, but lived faith. "Here humanism cannot substitute for super-Humanism. The modern world, with its modern movements, is living on Catholic capital. It is using, and using up, the truths that remain to it out of the old treasury of Christendom, including of course many truths known to pagan antiquity but crystallized in Christendom" (*The Thing*). A broad rediscovery of reason's demands in the ethical realm demands a broad rediscovery of at least the rudiments of faith in God.

What the faith does is to make the virtues balanced by putting them into an order. It is only when there is a proper ordering of the virtues that the ones that seem impossible to harmonize can find a place. It is not that Christianity will guarantee a utopia of virtues, but that its order allows all the virtues to coexist. In an age that prides itself on putting away the big picture in order to make room for small virtues, Chesterton insisted that only the big picture of Catholic Christianity would provide room for the virtues to run wild without destroying us. For it was not vices but virtues unhinged, said Chesterton, that is our real problem. Ethics needs a philosophical basis theoretically speaking; to get the ethics we really want, that philosophy must have recourse to the bigger picture of

reason found in the pattern of Christian dogma.

Which brings us to *humor*. That pattern of Christian belief includes, as we have talked about the dual nature of man as worm-like and yet worthy of all honor for the divine image he keeps. This combination is what makes us the ridiculous creatures we are. Humor is ultimately about this ridiculousness in human beings, an acknowledgment of our dual nature. But it is not simply laughing at people in derision. For Chesterton, humor had this theological purpose—that it reminded us in bold colors what it is we are created to be—glorious, what we are now—ludicrous, and what we are called to be again in Christ—even more glorious. Jokes about ourselves, says Chesterton, are the best kind of apologetic there is. The reason it is a superior apologetic is clearly to do with humility—about not letting ourselves forget where we are now. It is also, however, about hope—not letting us forget what glory we are called to. Everyone knows Chesterton’s line about why angels can fly (they take themselves lightly), but for Chesterton we might add, this notion of humor was connected even more to the King of Angels. He took himself lightly enough to come down to earth and be raised up on a cross. Humor is part of Chesterton’s Christology. *Orthodoxy* ends marvelously with the notion that the hiddenness of God in Christ is perhaps best thought of as something that we don’t often associate with God.

I say it with reverence; there was in that shattering personality a thread that must be called shyness. There was something that He hid from all men when He went up a mountain to pray. There was something that He covered constantly by abrupt silence or impetuous isolation.

There was some one thing that was too great for God to show us when He walked upon our earth; and I have sometimes fancied that it was His mirth.

God, the one who is humblest of all, is the only one to see the joke in the end. For Chesterton, all of theology, dogma, the authority, the patterns, the paradoxes, the separations, and the reunions all come together in a joy that he identifies as mirth. Even if he didn’t get the technical vocabulary and distinctions down, this large and mysterious idea of God’s mirth alone would put Chesterton among the theologians. And if it doesn’t, I think we can safely say that it puts him in company with the saints. For the saints, who have a little more expertise in this area even than Wikipedia, a saint is a friend of God. Chesterton, for any failures of misunderstanding, shared in the joy and the joke of his Friend. ✠

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## The Virtue of Religion

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Concern for the poor is not an identifying mark of religion, media accounts notwithstanding. Within the West, secular agencies and anti-Christian governments alike profess to be concerned for the poor, often for suspect motivations. Religion is concerned primarily with worship and with the things that pertain to worship. Concern for the poor did not build the great cathedrals and monastic edifices of Europe, but love of God did, as communities placed their wealth and art in the service of homage. Given that religion is often equated with August Comte’s godless “religion of humanity,” a few observations may be in order.

Religion is God-directed insofar as it is the payment of an acknowledged debt, and as such it is a species of justice. St. Thomas in discussing religion treats it as a moral virtue, and in so doing he is following the lead of Cicero, Seneca, and Macrobius, upon whom he draws. The formal acknowledgment of any indebtedness, says Thomas, whether it be to parents, nation, or God, is an act of piety.

Thomas’s most extended treatment of worship is found in the *Summa Theologiae* wherein he examines the moral and ceremonial precepts of the old law (I-II, q. 100 ff.). In other passages, he discusses religion from an etymological point of view. In both the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa Contra Gentiles* he looks to the origin of the term itself. St. Augustine, he says, found the origin of the word *religio* in the verb *re eligere*

(to re-elect), Cicero in the verb *relegit* (to ponder over, to read again), and Lactantius in the verb *religare* (to bind back) (II-II, q. 81, a. 1). Thomas discusses all three views without dismissing any, although in a number of passages he seems to favor the last, which more directly connotes the bond which he takes to be the heart of religion. That binding of man to God, says Thomas, flows from several sources. Because God is a being of infinite excellence and worth, man owes him reverence; because God is his creator and the source of all that he possesses, man owes him service; and because God is man's last end, man owes him love. In still other passages Thomas distinguishes among the common usages of the word "religion," noting that the term may designate a moral virtue, a social institution, or a state of life.

In the *de Veritate*, Thomas addresses the presuppositions of religion by offering an analysis of the act of faith on which it is based. Belief, he holds, is a rational act residing in the judgment act of the intellect, not in simple apprehension. We believe or disbelieve true or false statements. What is known and accepted on faith is rational insofar as it complements or perfects what is known through experience and reason. Thus it may be said that between a natural world view and that provided by faith there is a continuum. Belief is definitely not the satisfaction of a psychological need, nor does it involve a dramatic shift in perspective, as if a darkened intellect suddenly comes to light. A natural knowledge of nature and human nature opens the way for the truths of revelation which reinforce and supplement reason. Thus it was understood by the Fathers of the Church.

Justin Martyr, a Greek who flourished in the mid-decades of the second century after Christ, brought to his analysis and defense of the faith a knowledge of Plato, Aristotle, Pythagoras, and the Stoics. Philosophy, he taught, leads to Christianity as its fulfillment. Pagan philosophy, he maintained, is not to be feared for it is consistent with biblical teaching. Marius Victorinus, Boethius, and Augustine in the third and fourth centuries followed in his footsteps. Clement of Alexandria was similarly convinced that a knowledge of Greek philosophy was essential for an understanding and defense of the faith. Jewish law and Greek philosophy, he held, are the two rivers from whose confluence Christianity sprung forth. Clearly the faith as taught by these Fathers was more than a preaching of the gospels. Their teaching was equally grounded in the Acts of

the Apostles, in the Epistles, and in the natural intelligence by which one seeks to understand the teachings of Christ and their implications. The New Testament presents not only the life of Jesus but the response and reaction of those who experienced his life.

There are consequences to the acceptance of the gospels wherein Christ reveals the nature of the Godhead itself and presents himself as "The Way, Truth and Light." The definition, conservation, and development of those truths become an important function of the religious body itself. There naturally arises an order of teachers who by virtue of their wisdom and uprightness become educators, even when their primary function may be the direction of worship.

Equally important as the development of doctrine is the development of appropriate ritual. Doctrine will develop through dialectic. The fortunes of doctrine, the province of theologians, will rise and fall with the state of learning of the time. Theologians develop languages and methodologies that can be plural in number while remaining faithful to the deposit of faith. A theology, or the language of theologians, like any learned discourse, may be subject to semantic and logical analysis in the interest of clarity and precision. The perfection of liturgical language is similarly an ongoing enterprise. Rituals may vary within both the Roman and Byzantine rites. Often it is the creative artist who best or dramatically exemplifies what is meant by the creed. Poets are capable of expressing truths that even theologians have difficulty articulating. Ancient Hebrews, wary of the pictorial metaphor, may have forbidden the representation of Yahweh in graven images, but they were inevitably defeated by human nature and the nature of human language. No legislation could prevent the making of verbal pictures, for in the words of T.S. Eliot, "I have got to use words when I talk to you."

From a sociological point of view, a fact that cannot be ignored is that religious practice presupposes virtue in the individual as well as morality in the people who worship as a community. A communal expression of faith through worship cannot take place without a common and, one might say, a commonsense acknowledgment of an obligation to honor God. From biblical times the Church has recognized that duty, not only by constructing suitable places of worship but in following the mandate of Christ to care for the sick, homeless, orphaned, and widowed. ✠

Charles E. Rice. *Contraception and Persecution*. South Bend, IN: St. Augustine's Press, 2014.

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

Charles Rice begins his book by quoting Cardinal Francis George of Chicago, who has envisioned a future persecution of the Catholic Church in America which may become so intense that it could very well culminate in episcopal martyrdoms. What is to be made of speculation of this sort? Is it reasonable to expect that the Church in this country could be subject to real persecution? Professor Rice believes that this is more than a reasonable expectation, for, as a matter of fact, the persecution has already begun. The title of his book, *Contraception and Persecution*, is especially arresting. What is the connection between the two? It might be summarily explained in the following terms. Once the conceptive mind-set has completely captivated a given society, as has certainly happened here in the United States, we then have a situation which opens the way for radical disorientation with respect to the natural law. By succumbing to the contraceptive mindset, a society effectively turns its back on the natural law, for nothing could be more directly contrary to that law than the systematic separation of the human generative act from generation.

But the rejection of the natural law eventually devolves into active, belligerent opposition to that law, and all it entails. This is especially the case with the elites of a society, those in education, in the media, in politics. These elites foment and then become the leading managers of an all-out war against the natural law. The enemy against whom the war is waged would of course be those who adhere to and are willing to defend the natural law, and very prominent among the ranks of the enemy would be the Catholic Church, for she vigorously defends the natural law, and has constantly taught that contraception is an evil precisely because it is a clear violation of the natural law. The Catholic Church therefore becomes a prime

target of those conducting the war, especially those in politics. Because of the special power they are able to wield, politicians—and to them we can add members of the judiciary—can launch attacks against the Catholic Church, direct and indirect, and these attacks can reasonably be described as a form of persecution. The specific target is the Catholic Church, then, on account of what the persecutors regard as her benighted reluctance to abandon her passé, moralistic obsessions and get with the modern world, but their ultimate target, even though they themselves may not always be fully conscious of the fact, is the natural law. What they really want to see come about is a society in which every last vestige of natural law thinking has been aseptically scrubbed from human consciousness. And this is because the natural law stands obstinately in the way of their accomplishing their grand Promethean purpose, their desire to put man in the place of God.

*Contraception and Persecution* is divided into four parts, entitled respectively: “Persecution Under Way”; “Underlying Causes of Persecution”; “An Unacknowledged Cause: Contraception”; “The Response.” The first part of the book focuses on a specific instance of persecution in the form of the HHS Mandate, issued in January of 2012, which ordered that health insurance, of the kind which would be carried by a number of Catholic institutions, would be required, in its coverage, to take care of expenses relating to contraception in various forms, including abortifacients, as well as sterilization and “patient education,” which would most certainly involve active advocacy of abortion on the part of the “educators.” Various Catholic agencies, as well as a number of non-Catholic agencies, filed lawsuits against the government, claiming that the mandate violates the Constitution and federal laws. But even if these lawsuits should succeed, Professor Rice argues, and the mandate be struck down, “that result will not stop the accelerating persecution” (6), and that is because the hostility of the Obama administration is not the sole explanation for the peculiar state of affairs in which the

Church now finds itself. It is certainly heartening to see that the bishops have been energized by this crisis and are showing some determined opposition to a badgering government, and that they now seem to be more fully aware of the dangers of a secularism which is growing increasingly more militant. But was not their inaction in the past a significant contributing factor to the present situation, paving the way for explicit persecution? “American Catholics and the bishops of the American Church,” Professor Rice asserts, “have invited persecution by their acceptance of and, in the case of the bishops, their failure to teach about, the corrosive contraceptive mentality” (6).

In the HHS Mandate we are presented with a very clear example of an unjust law. How is the conscientious citizen to respond to such a law? In addressing that question, Professor Rice cites an important distinction regarding unjust laws which provides practical guidance for how we are to react to them. The distinction relates to the quality of the injustice which characterizes a particular law. To put the matter more precisely: a law may be unjust for two reasons: first, because it is contrary to the human good; second, because it is contrary to the divine good. Though a law which is contrary to the human good is a bad law, one can imagine circumstances where it would be permissible to obey such a law; for example, when overtly disobeying it would be disruptive of the general civil order, a civil order which, let us say, is in the main just. However, when it comes to laws which are unjust because they are opposed to the divine good, such laws may never be obeyed. Now, because what we have in the case of the Health Care Mandate is a law which is opposed to the divine good, and therefore unjust in the more serious sense, it cannot for that reason command our obedience.

Professor Rice sees the HHS Mandate as only a preliminary event. The main event “is the bout to determine whether the United States will conform its laws and culture to the homosexual lifestyle in all its aspects” (14). A prominent feature of this main event

is the concerted effort on the part of the homosexual movement, aided and abetted by many allies among the intellectual elite, to contribute to the complete destruction of what remains of the country's moral coherence by the madcap promotion of so-called same-sex marriage, an effort toward which the Supreme Court has shown itself to be, at the expense of sound judicial reasoning, not to say plain common sense, a very accommodating accomplice. Professor Rice, himself a constitutional scholar, identifies the Court's decision in a key case relating to this issue as simply "lawless, a judicial coup" (25). It would be difficult to image anything more directly and egregiously against the natural law than habitually conducting oneself according to the homosexual "lifestyle," and yet the complacent condoning of such behavior on the part of so many in today's society is not at all inexplicable, once the connection is made between homosexual behavior and the contraceptive mindset. If the intrinsic and foundational "meaning" of human sexuality, its natural finality, is not seen to be procreation, then it becomes principally, if not exclusively, a vehicle for pleasure, a vehicle in which one can take whatever wanton road one's current hedonistic proclivities might suggest.

In the second part of his book Professor Rice examines the underlying causes for the situation in which we now find ourselves, and he rightly cites the relativism, moral and otherwise, which is so dominant a feature of contemporary Western culture, a phenomenon which Pope Benedict XVI had spoken and written about often and eloquently. That "relativistic secularism is the *de facto* official religion of the United States" (35), as Professor Rice contends, is a proposition difficult to contest, and one can easily nod assent to a forthright claim made earlier in the book, that "American culture has lost not only its faith but its mind" (13). An important contributing factor to the general moral confusion we now experience is the more particularized confusion over the nature and purpose of conscience. The function of conscience, unlike what many people believe today, is not to legislate; it does

not establish the moral laws, which have objective status, but, if it is well formed (that is, in general terms, if it is in tune with the natural law), conscience makes correct judgments in accordance with those laws. Individuals are more likely to have well-formed consciences if they live in a country whose culture is significantly shaped and influenced by Christian principles, which, by and large, was the case in this country from its inception up to around mid-twentieth century. This is something which was regularly acknowledged and supported by the nation's judiciary, including the Supreme Court, as demonstrated by the manner in which they consistently interpreted the First Amendment. They saw that the amendment, while clearly prohibited an established or official state religion, was not at all advocating an indifferent attitude toward religion. The public square was not being declared off limits to religious expression. Reflecting the attitude expressed by George Washington in his *Farewell Address*, in which he averred that it was precarious to suppose "that National morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle" (46), the Supreme Court for years openly recognized the United States as a Christian nation.

But this attitude was to shift dramatically in the latter part of the twentieth century, when the Court began to espouse the notion of religious neutrality, construing it in so eccentric a way that allowed the Court to put atheism on the same level as theism. If one is to accept the Washingtonian position that morality has its supporting and nurturing basis in religion, then what we have in the judiciary's effectively silencing the public voice of religion is the demolition of any stable moral foundation for law, with the inevitable result that what is frankly immoral legislation then becomes possible, and eventually even commonplace. The U.S. Constitution, for years a reliable touchstone for those seeking to preserve the bond between law and morality, has now become for many jurists an arcane source of ethereal emanations and haunting penumbras, which conveniently reveal to the divining judges any number of wayward interpretations, many of which bear the deep imprint of moral

relativism. And all of this sets the stage for persecution. "American culture has so far abandoned any adherence to the Constitution as a charter of limited government," Professor Rice observes, "that there is scant likelihood of appeals to the Constitution putting the brakes on the growing persecution of religion" (63-64).

The central theme of this book has to do with the singular importance of contraception, recognized as the principal underlying source of the moral chaos which is characteristic of contemporary culture. It can be cause for genuine astonishment when we pause and remind ourselves of the fact that contraception, which, it is safe to say, is something which the overwhelming majority of Christians now regard as quite unproblematic and of no great consequence, was, less than one hundred years ago, regarded by all Christians as a grave moral evil. And of course this attitude was by no means limited to Christians; because it has its foundation in the consciousness of the natural law, the universal moral law, it was adopted by all human beings who thought and acted in accordance with their rational nature. We have come a very long way in a relatively short time, while proceeding steadily in the wrong direction. It is now generally accepted, except by the most deeply entrenched dissident diehards, that Pope Paul VI had it exactly right in *Humane Vitae*, certainly the most portentous papal document of recent times. What we are living through in the second decade of the twenty-first century is something which Pope Paul effectively prophesied in the sixth decade of the twentieth century. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 opened the Pandora's box marked "Contraception," and immediately legions of the patron demons of a sex severed from procreation were let loose upon an all too welcoming world. Professor Rice puts it directly and correctly in stating that "the homosexualization of our culture and law is the most ominous result of the acceptance of contraception" (80).

One would hope that many members of the hierarchy will make a point of reading this important book, because one of its main arguments is that "we are in this fix because of the abdication

by most bishops of their responsibility to teach and lead over the past few decades” (89). Too many bishops have tended to be one-sided, and wrong-sided, in their political inclinations, showing themselves to be overly chummy with a Democratic Party whose current platform, to put it mildly, is not exactly consonant with Catholic doctrine. In fact, in many respects it is altogether antithetical to a Christian worldview. Professor Rice quotes Professor Paul Rahe of Hillsdale College, who wrote: “At every turn in American politics since [the 1930s] you will find the hierarchy assisting the Democratic Party and promoting the growth of the administrative entitlement state” (92). Professor Rahe calls attention to “the bishops’ persistent support for the political agenda of the Ruling Class combined with the receipt by agencies of the bishops of large government subsidies” (92). As an example of that point he notes that in 2011 a full 64 percent of the funds used by Catholic Charities came from the federal government. Given the veritable legislative monstrosity which Obamacare has shown itself to be, it is not a little unsettling to learn that “without the active support of the bishops and their bureaucracy, Obamacare would not have been enacted” (92). Professor Rice then quotes a statement put out by the USCCB’s Committee on Pro-Life Activities, which declared that “with the passage of [Obamacare] our country took an important step toward ensuring access to health coverage for all Americans” (93). To which Professor Rice aptly responds: “Such a benign description of Obamacare, even in 2011, is beyond delusional” (93).

Taking it all in all, the situation, as it now stands, is not particularly pretty. What to do? The title of the one chapter that composes Part IV of *Contraception and Persecution* provides us with a triad the solidity and reliability of which are incontestable: “Truth, Trust and Prayer.” To pursue the truth relentlessly, to defend it indefatigably; to pray without ceasing; to trust unreservedly in him in whose providential care everything without exception is encompassed—these are the things, the only

things in the end, which will prevent a culture which is now teetering on the edge from toppling into the abyss.

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Robert R. Reilly. *Making Gay Okay: How Rationalizing Homosexual Behavior Is Changing Everything*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014.

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When we consciously and willingly give ourselves over to serious perversity on a sustained basis, so that it becomes a way of life for us, we end up, inevitably, playing a continuous and dangerous game with reality. Our whole way of thinking goes askew. Thought ceases to be faithfully reflective of the way things are; we begin to employ large quantities of our mental energies in the intensely earnest but completely futile effort to shape and order things so that they represent, not how in fact they are, but how we want them to be. We construct a new and totally imaginary world in which we suppose that we will be able to take up a permanent and peaceful residence. But imaginary worlds, no matter how carefully constructed, are just that, and our attempting to live in them sets up a continuing and ineradicable conflict between the world of our own making and the real world. The only way we can at least tone down the irritating effects of that conflict is to become full time practitioners of rationalization. Rationalization is the employment of thought in the service of unreality. Now, to adopt the “lifestyle” of homosexuality is to commit oneself to morally aberrant behavior of an especially radical kind, because it represents a stance which is antithetical to reality in a very direct and very basic way, and such a commitment therefore requires unremitting rationalization. All vice, all sin, is, as we say, *contra naturam*, “against nature,” and this is so because, first and foremost, it runs counter to who we are as rational creatures. The essential character of sin, Thomas Aquinas was wont to repeat, is its irrationality.

But irrationality takes many forms, and there is another basic way in which our immoral behavior can be said to be against nature, besides the fact that it contradicts our rational nature. We can, in our various vices, move from simply contradicting our rational selves, opposing the way *we* are, and engage in behavior that is in opposition to the way *things* are. Not content with disordering ourselves, we begin to behave in ways that are discordant with the constituted order of the world, with things as given. Having declared war against the subjective order, we then turn our belligerent attention to the objective order; having reshaped ourselves for the worse, we next endeavor to reshape the world for the worse. Such is the typical progression of rationalization.

But the restless rationalizing soul is not content even with that much, which is evidenced by what is taking place today in American society. Concerted efforts are being made by homosexuals and their allies to gain comprehensive endorsement of the unreal world to which they are committed. There is a certain psychological imperative behind these efforts. It is a profoundly wearing task to persevere in the advocacy of a “lifestyle” which flies in the face of reality, and that is because even the most impassioned advocate knows, in his deepest though often carefully secreted self, that all his efforts are in vain, that kicking against the goad only serves to cripple, that in the end reality always comes out the winner. These pestering realizations, which can be sedated but never completely subdued, continue to hover about and haunt the soul, and make for a deep-set sense of isolation, of foreignness. One’s imaginary world becomes an increasingly confining place in which to try to live. In response to all this, those who campaign against reality, and for unreality, attempt to overcome their sense of isolation and foreignness by embarking upon energetic efforts to persuade the world at large, the real world, that their unreal world is actually an integral part of the real world, and therefore should not only be accepted as such, but also given warm and deferential approval by all. They want



the abnormal to be seen and blessed as normal, the illegitimate as legitimate, the indecent as decent. The only misery that loves company is the misery that does not recognize itself as misery.

In *Making Gay Okay* Robert R. Reilly has provided us with a thoroughly informed, tightly-reasoned, and refreshingly straightforward account of what can be described, in the words of Professor Charles Rice, as the homosexualization of American culture, the effort to persuade, if not coerce, the general public into believing that the unreal is real, that the “non-okay” is really “okay,” and therefore to be benignly and complacently accepted as such by one and all. The book is divided into two main parts, the first of which is essentially philosophical in tone and development, in which Reilly argues compellingly in defense of reality, that is, the natural order of things, and against the peculiar kind of unreality and disorder represented by homosexuality. The second part of the book records the significant successes that have already been gained by those bent on homosexualizing American culture. The peculiar strength of this book is the even-keeled rational approach it takes toward its subject. “I make no case from religion or revelation in this book,” Reilly writes, “only from reason as it discloses to us the Nature of things” (xiii). He lays down the basic principles that establish the context within which the whole argument of the book will be developed: “There are two fundamental views of reality. One is that things have a Nature that is teleologically ordered to ends that inhere in their essence and make them what they are. In other words, things have inbuilt purposes. The other is that things do not have a Nature with ends: things are nothing in themselves, but are only what we make them to be according to our wills and desires” (xi-xii).

The culture war now raging all about us is a to-the-death struggle between two camps that harbor totally opposite views of reality. One camp is made of those who are guided by the conviction that there is an objective order of things, manifested in a very obvious way by the physical laws of

nature, and also, though less obviously, by the universal moral law, the natural law. In the second camp we find those who want effectively to remake reality according to their own benighted specifications. The members of this camp are warring, at the deepest level, against the very concept of nature, the idea that there is in fact an objective order of things, and it would seem that in their more optimistic musings they would want to see deleted from human consciousness any awareness of the most elementary of facts—the fact of Nature, the Great Given, that which embraces and identifies all of creation. The anti-Nature warriors cannot very well succeed in persuading people that the physical laws are not objectively real, but they are earnest in their attempts to convince them that there is no accompanying moral order which is objectively real, that, in other words, there is no natural law.

One of the key battles of the culture war now being fought relates to so-called same-sex marriage. The very term represents a direct assault on the integrity of language and the stability of meaning, an Orwellian redefining of terms to suit purely ideological purposes. But of course a great deal more is at issue, as Reilly clearly sees: “This is what the same-sex marriage debate is all about—the Nature of reality itself” (xii). What more bold way to attempt to legitimize the illegitimate than peremptorily to claim a comfortable compatibility between the most ancient and natural of human institutions and a relationship which is glaringly unnatural. Reilly, as have others, recognizes the close connection between contraception and sodomitical “marriage.” The latter is a “false reality,” but it is the capstone of the foundational false reality which is contraception. “The progression from the one to the other was logically inescapable” (xi).

If Pope Paul VI did not see the egregious moral aberration which is same-sex marriage as one of the outcomes of separating human sexuality from human generation—even the loopy decade of the 1960s would have found it difficult to imagine so preposterous an

outcome—it was nonetheless, as Reilly notes, “logically inescapable.” What then will happen if, as a nation, we legitimize same-sex marriage, a prospect which, at the moment, seems all too likely? “We will be living a lie” (xi). Once a people grows accustomed to opting for unreality over reality they become increasingly incapable of distinguishing the one from the other, and therefore easily make accommodations with unreality.

In the book’s first chapter, “The Culture War,” Reilly shows the operative power of rationalization as homosexuals seek to rework morality so as to make it neatly fit their self-serving purposes. “If you are going to center your public life on the private act of sodomy,” Reilly notes, “you had better transform sodomy into a highly moral act” (9). And indeed that is the just the purpose of the elaborate program now underway. There is a pressing urgency to universalize the aberrant, to engage in efforts to bring about a complete transformation of all moral values. In chapters 2 and 3 of the book, Reilly spells out two antagonistic philosophic positions, the natural law position, represented chiefly by Aristotle, and the anti-natural law position, which has Rousseau as its principal proponent. Aristotle, like Socrates and Plato before him—in those three we have the greatest of the ancient Greek philosophers, if not of all time—condemned homosexuality unequivocally, precisely for the fact of its being contrary to nature. It is unnatural because it frustrates the finality toward which human sexuality is naturally ordered. In chapter 3 Reilly develops the idea that Rousseau’s thought was an inversion of Aristotle’s. Rousseau lacked a teleological view of reality, the idea that there are natural ends, objective, built-in purposes to things. Finality, for him, was something not so much found in nature as imposed upon it by man. For all his rosy romanticizing of nature, he did not really understand it. His nature, such as it was, amounted to a grand projection of the highly subjective propensities of the autonomous individual. The Rousseauian way of looking at things continues to be a significant influence in contemporary culture, and it has its dedicated devotees in education, in politics, and in the media.

Among the more serious ramifications of the concerted effort to redefine reality is a severely distorted understanding of the nature of justice. According to the classical way of regarding the virtue, justice is simply the rendering to things what is due to them, giving them what they deserve in terms of what they are. But before that can be rightly done, as Reilly points out, “one must first know what things are” (45). One must know natures, in other words; lacking that knowledge, what passes for justice becomes a not very funny comedy of errors. Thus we witness the spectacle, in our culture, of the promiscuous manufacture of specious rights, among which, and now being actively promoted, is the supposed right of female to marry female, of male to marry male. Our courts have recently become the clearing houses for a number of reckless decisions, resulting, in certain cases, where law can be said to have become lawless. If politicians and judges sometimes show themselves eager to assure the public that homosexuality and other aberrant behaviors are perfectly healthy, biology, for its part, conveys a different message. An old adage has it that God always forgives, man sometimes, nature never. To deliberately thwart the natural ends of human sexuality, making it no more than a sport for self-gratification, has its consequences, and often, as recent history teaches us, they can be deadly.

In chapter 6 Reilly gives close analytical examination to a number of court cases that have a direct bearing on one aspect or another of human sexuality. What we learn is that the judgments which came out of those cases have been, as Reilly puts it, exercises in the invention of morality, or we have instances of something even worse, as described in the title to one of the sections of this chapter—“Legislating Immorality from the Bench of the Supreme Court” (67). For several decades now we have been made the audience to judicial proclamations which, however orotund the manner in which presented, are hampered by severely limping logic, and sometimes descend into frank irrationality.

The second part of *Making Gay Okay* is entitled “Marching through

the Institutions,” and its six chapters record how the campaign to normalize homosexuality has gained significant successes, as specifically shown by the adverse effects it has had on the following: the scientific community, parenting, education, the Boy Scouts, the military, and U.S. foreign policy. Perhaps the most prominent example of science succumbing to homosexual ideology was the removal, in 1973, from the authoritative *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* of the American Psychiatric Association, of homosexuality as a designated mental illness. By a wave of the scientific wand sickness is transformed into health, what was on Monday something to be treated becomes on Tuesday something to be touted. An especially dangerous result of this move is what Reilly calls the enforcement of dysfunction. “First comes the denial of reality,” he writes, “and then comes the enforcement of the denial to the point at which those who wish to return to reality, and quite possible save their lives, will be prevented from doing so” (140). Once sickness is declared to be health, then those who are in fact sick and want to be restored to health have now no remedy available to them, at least not from the side of the medical profession.

If marriage is redefined so as to make it a species of unreality, then any sane understanding of parenting almost automatically gives way to unreality as well. We live in a world where elementary school children have their incipient reading skills honed by bending their innocent heads over books that tell them about Molly’s two mommies, or Pedro’s two papas. The adoption of children by same-sex couples is playing reckless, even cruel, games with the lives of those children, for Nature tells us that, besides the loving and continuing care of a father and a mother, growing children very much need a stable household environment, but the indecorous fact of the matter is that “infidelity and brief duration are the norms with same-sex relationships” (147). In chapter 9, “Sodomy and Education,” Reilly specifies the sordid details relating to the way in which the minds of children are being polluted with the poisonous propaganda which has the

practical result of orienting them in such a way that they become ready candidates, as they advance in age, for ensnarement in that peculiar form of slavery which parades under the banner of “sexual liberation.” And in some school districts it can all begin in kindergarten. The public school system in this country is pretty thoroughly infested with what is tantamount to an especially pernicious form of diseducation. But Catholic schools are not immune to the infestation. Too many of the overseers of Catholic education have simply lost their proper focus, and apparently regard as their principal purpose the keeping up with a world whose decadence, wittingly or not, they seem to be curiously blind to. The enemy has been welcomed into the classroom. As for Catholic colleges and universities in particular, the situation there can sometimes be quite bad. Case in point: In 2011 it was discovered that of 244 third level Catholic institutions, 107 of them, or 43 percent, “recognize student clubs that favor the homosexual agenda” (157).

And then there is the sad case of the Boy Scouts. For a time they withstood the onslaught, valiantly sticking to the edifying moral principles on which they were founded, but eventually, in 2013, they gave up the struggle, making compromises of the kind that can only lead, ultimately, to their complete collapse. He who makes a deal with the devil clinches his undoing. In “Sodomy in the Military,” chapter 11, we learn how the corruption has now become “regulation” in the armed services. Those who would naively suppose that the legitimizing grossly immoral behavior is somehow going to have nothing but innocuous consequences would have been given pause by an *NBC News* report of May 16, 2013: “The Pentagon estimates that last year 13,900 of the 1.2 million men on active duty endured sexual assault . . . or 38 men per day versus 33 women per day” (192).

U.S. foreign policy would seem to have enthusiastically incorporated the homosexual agenda into its already too often errant ways of doing business with the non-American world. After giving several specific examples of how this is

so, each vying with the others for the prize for being the most outlandish, Reilly sums up the situation in these blunt terms: “The goal of American diplomacy is not the spreading of democracy, but rather the universalization of the rationalization of sodomy. This is now one of the depraved purposes of U.S. foreign policy” (205).

In concluding “this sad story and its lessons” (207), Reilly proposes that, “the Problem with our civilization is that the moral convictions underlying public order have been undermined to the point of near collapse” (209). The situation is bleak, but not hopeless, however, and that is because those who choose to war with reality have pitted themselves against an unconquerable adversary. To commit oneself to such a conflict is to be caught up in a fatal illusion. Reilly quotes the Italian professor of jurisprudence, Francisco D’Agostino, who argues that it is but an “illusion that a more pervasive legalization of their existence can give homosexuals that interior balance whose lack they clearly suffer” (211). As was the case with abortion, the legalization of homosexuality leaves altogether untouched its intrinsically and irremediably disordered nature. We can call evil good, we can scream its purported goodness from the rooftops until we are blue in the face and breathless, but for all that it remains what it is, unperturbedly and implacably evil. But, as Reilly reminds us, “evil is particularly contagious when it is institutionalized” (212). And the systematic institutionalization of evil is precisely what has been happening in Western culture for at least a half century now, and at a seemingly accelerating rate. Things give every indication of falling apart; the center, what remains of it, shows worrying indications that it cannot hold. We are clearly at a critical point in the history of Western civilization, and, on a more local level, American culture can be said to have arrived at a significant moment of truth.

*Making Gay Okay* is a very valuable book for the comprehensive and fully informative picture it gives us of a particularly parlous aspect of our

generally parlous times. It presents in clear, straightforward, steadily rational, and sturdily argumentative terms the pertinent specifics of the turbulent, topsy-turvy situation in which we find ourselves. We are faced with a problem of major proportions, a problem which, if not properly addressed—it is not at all an exaggeration to put it in these terms—could spell the end of our civilization as we know it. How to approach and deal with the problem? In terms of its broad contours we have the way clearly pointed out to us by the tone and the substance of Robert Reilly’s book. The only sure antidote to rampant irrationality is the sustained, uncompromising, and persevering dedication to reason. The only counter to unreality is reality.

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JoAnne Cammarata Sylva. *How Italy and Her People Shaped Cardinal Newman (Italian Influences on an English Mind)*. Pine Beach, NJ: Newman House Press, 2010. 190 pp. \$9.00.

Reviewed by Clara Sarrocco.

On Sunday, September 19, 2010 Benedict XVI visited Birmingham, England. In his homily for the occasion he said: “This is an auspicious day for Great Britain, for the Midlands, for Birmingham. It is the day that sees Cardinal John Henry Newman formally raised to the altars and declared Blessed.”

This event was the culmination of what occurred one year earlier. On November 4, 2009 Pope Benedict issued an apostolic constitution, *Anglicanorum Coetibus*, which provided for personal ordinariates for Anglicans entering into full communion with the Roman Catholic Church. This document allows former Episcopalians and Anglicans the opportunity to bring elements of their distinctive liturgy into the Catholic Church.

The same year of Newman’s beatification (2010) Professor JoAnne Cammarata Sylva published her book, *How Italy and Her People Shaped Cardi-*

*nal Newman*. This book provides a little known insight into what is the odyssey of John Henry Cardinal Newman.

Newman was raised at a time when “things Italian and Catholic” were looked upon as foreign and heretical. Despite the fact that his father’s work lent a more cosmopolitan atmosphere to their home, Newman, nevertheless, bore some of the prejudices common to his time. It is to his great credit, the strength of his powerful intellect, and divine grace that he came to see things differently. So differently that “things Italian and Catholic” helped lead him to the Catholic Church.

In 1832, Newman was suffering from exhaustion caused by troubles at Oxford, the untimely death of his youngest sister, Mary Sophia, and the difficulties in writing his book, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. When his friend Richard Hurrell Froude invited Newman to join him and his father on a trip to Italy, Newman happily agreed. The culture and religious practices they observed were less than edifying to the intellectual, emotionally remote Englishmen. However, something did speak to Newman’s heart. When the Froudes returned to England, Newman made the decision to remain in Italy and revisit Sicily. It was a life-changing decision.

Two incidents happened in Sicily which influenced his future. On a lone walk along the countryside Newman heard chant coming from a small church and he was prompted to enter. Here he was edified by the prayerful devotion of the congregation. Later on he was stricken with a serious illness, probably typhoid. His Italian guide, Gennaro, nursed him back to health with such attention and devotion that Newman claimed his own countryman would never have had such a Christian spirit. It was on his voyage back to England that he penned his famous poem, “Lead Kindly Light.”

Professor Sylva then relates all the encounters Newman had with Italians, both living and dead, that influenced him. Some were saints, and some were just ordinary people. Newman’s work on the history of Tradition, its place

in the Church, his desire to find a *via media* between Roman Catholicism and Anglicanism and the famous Tract 90 of the Oxford Movement are all part of his history. One of Newman's objections to the Catholic Church was the devotion to what he called its "Mariolatry." It was only after his introduction to the sermons and writing of St. Alfonso Liguori that his understanding of this matter became clearer. He recognized it as an essential part of Catholic tradition and always credited St. Alfonso with helping him to come to terms with the facts.

A few years earlier, Newman's sister Jimima had recommended a book, *I Promessi Sposi* by Alessandro Manzoni. Newman so enjoyed this book that he thought the life of the character of Fra Cristoforo to be what he considered an ideal priest. Later on in one of his more joyous trips to Italy, Newman expressed a desire to meet with Manzoni. Because Manzoni had undergone a conversion experience of his own, he wanted very much to meet the great Dr. Newman. Unfortunately this meeting never took place.

In chapter 4, "Blessed Dominic Barberi and the Conversion," Professor Sylva recounts the most moving incident of Newman's life. Father Barberi was a humble Italian Passionist priest whose knew that his life's work was to preach the gospel of Christ to the English. This is more surprising in that his knowledge of English was extremely limited. However, his reputation for humility and holiness made his mission well known.

At this point, Newman had left Oxford and was living at Littlemore while discerning his future. Father Barberi was on his way to Belgium and intended to stop at Littlemore to meet with Newman. This was the opportunity both had been waiting for. On the evening of October 9, 1845, the great Dr. Newman knelt before this simple priest and asked for acceptance into the Catholic Church, made his confession and the next day received Holy Communion. In a letter, Father Barberi wrote: "The door opened—and what a spectacle for me to see at my feet John

Henry Newman begging me to hear his confession and to admit him into the bosom of the Catholic Church!"

This was not Newman's last encounter with his Italian influence. In September of 1846 Newman arrived in Milan on his way to Rome to the College of Propaganda to begin his studies toward ordination to the Catholic priesthood. There he sought to connect with Antonio Rosmini, the priest founder of the Institute of Charity, philosopher, patriot, and promoter of the Catholic Revival in Italy. Newman noted: "We find ourselves among the friends of Rosmini and are surprised to find how much the Rosminians are doing in these parts." Although they never met, Newman recognized Rosmini as being a prominent Catholic theologian. Both Alessandro Manzoni and Antonio Rosmini were important influences in Newman's life. However, he was never able to meet either of them on his trips back to Italy as a Catholic.

Father Giovanni Perrone, S.J., as Professor Sylva notes, was a theologian and professor of dogmatic theology at the Roman College who had written about Tradition. This was a subject which Newman had struggled with for a long time. Newman was desirous to meet with Father Perrone to be sure that his [Newman's] ideas were not contradictory to Catholic dogma. He wrote: "I don't like to begin my career in the Catholic Church with a condemnation." In the spring of 1847 a troubled Newman decided to entrust his ideas to Father Perrone. He wrote: "I am able to err but I do not wish to be a heretic." The dialogue between the two became known as "The Newman-Perrone Paper on Development." However, it was not published until the 1930s. Perrone responded to Newman's paper with numerous suggestions, and it is clear that Newman wanted this type of approval and input from him. Sylva notes: "Perrone's participation in and affirmation of Newman's concepts of development gave much legitimacy in Rome to Newman's reputation as a writer and theologian." The friendship between the

two priests continued for many years.

Finally, the influence of St. Philip Neri and the Oratorian tradition plays a very prominent role in Newman's story. St. Philip Neri lived in the sixteenth century and established the Congregation of the Oratory. It is mostly formed for older priests who live in community but are independent. They pay for most of their own expenses and take no monastic vows. Newman was discerning his own vocation either to the Dominican order or to the Society of Jesus, but finally settled on establishing an Oratory in England. He was much influenced by the life of St. Philip Neri and was impressed by the life of the Oratorians in Italy. He formally asked the pope for permission to establish an Oratory in Birmingham and thus was successful in bringing the Oratory way of life to England.

By 1856 Newman had been ordained for almost ten years. He established two Oratories in England, one in Birmingham and one in London. A problem arose between the two communities over their charism and independence. Newman was forced to return to Rome to meet with Pope Pius IX. According to Sylva, "Newman's third trip to Italy was a very enlightening one for him and for the Birmingham Oratory.... The Pope had even given him an image of St. Philip!"

Newman's final trip to Italy was in 1879, when Pope Leo XIII conferred on him the Red Hat of a cardinal. He returned to his beloved Birmingham Oratory and said his last Mass on Christmas Day, 1889. John Henry Cardinal Newman died on August 11, 1890, at the age of 89. His last letter was written to a priest friend one month before his death. He wrote: "I feel very grateful for your most tender care and thoughtfulness and affectionate attachment towards me. . . . I wish my want of power of showing my gratitude could be brought home to my many friends and true benefactors." Among them were all his Italian friends. Christina Rossetti (Anglo-Italian poet and Newman contemporary) paid homage to Newman in a poem:

“In the grave, wither thou goest.”  
(Ecclesiastes 9:10)

O weary Champion of the Cross,  
lie still:  
Sleep thou at length the  
all-embracing sleep:  
Long was thy sowing day,  
rest now and reap:  
Thy fast was long, feast now  
thy spirit's fill.

According to Professor Sylva, “as the years went by Newman did not significantly increase his understanding of the Italian language, but he was never to forget the Italians who had embraced him as a Catholic and who had helped him to understand the Catholic Tradition.”

In the 1890 words of Cardinale Alfonso Capeceelatro: “Newman has been at the same time English and Italian, an excellent Englishman observing the character and rare qualities of his race. . . an excellent Italian because from the Vicar of Christ. . . [H]e has drawn firmness of belief.”

In *How Italy and Her People Shaped Cardinal Newman*, Jo Anne Cammarata Sylva presents an engaging account of this little known facet of Newman's life. In fluid and appealing prose she takes us on his Italian journey, proving that truly “heart speaks to heart.” She provides the reader with numerous quotations from Newman's letters, sermons, and writings, and provides an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources. Her one omission is that there is no index—a flaw which could have been easily remedied. In short, this is a book worth reading.

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***Catholicism and Historical Narrative. A Catholic Engagement with Historical Scholarship.*** Edited by Kevin Schmiesing. New York: Rowan and Littlefield. 2014. x + 215 pp. \$67.50.

*Reviewed by Rev. John Gavin, S.J.,  
College of the Holy Cross.*

The Incarnation—the self-emptying of God the Son and his assumption of human flesh in time—makes Christianity a radically historical faith. The conception, birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus are understood by Christians to be both the fulfillment and expansion of the Jewish historical narrative. Furthermore, this new life in Christ continues to embrace all times and peoples in the Church during the temporal pilgrimage toward the fulfillment of history in the coming of the Lord. In the words of the Catholic historian Christopher Dawson, “Thus the Christian view of history is not a secondary element derived by philosophical reflection from the study of history. It lies at the very heart of Christianity and forms an integral part of the Christian faith.”

The essay collection *Catholicism and Historical Narrative* asks an important question for Catholic historians and general students of history: how does the Christian practice the craft of historical narrative, particularly within the strictures imposed by the secular academy, while also holding that “Christ is the great interpreter and Lord of history” (John Paul II)? As editor Kevin Schmiesing notes in his introduction, “When a historian or group of historians have generated and disseminated a compelling story, that narrative exerts enormous influence over the way the subject matter in question is understood by posterity” (viii). Very often these modern narratives marginalize or even demonize Christianity, forcing Christian scholars to respond not only through a careful review and interpretation of evidence, but also through the framing of a new metahistory that corrects or redirects the secular “story.” Thus Paul Radzilowski, in his opening essay, considers the tensions a Catholic historian faces in the shaping of method and the formation of narrative for a wider audience, while maintaining a distinctly Christian vision. In particular, he notes that since historians must engage various facets of human existence—the economic, social, spiritual, aesthetic, etc.—in their craft, Christian historians offer the discipline invaluable theologi-

cal and philosophical tools for the interpretation of the human story that are lacking in the strictly secular view.

Other essays in this volume represent exercises in the correction of distorted historical narratives. Keith Cassidy offers an invaluable chapter, “A Convenient Untruth: The Pro-Choice Invention of an Era of Abortion Freedom,” which concisely reviews ecclesial and civic understandings of abortion through the ages. Clement Mulloy unmasks the historical biases found in the conventional histories of Margaret Sanger, founder of Planned Parenthood, through a fascinating comparison with Monsignor John Ryan, a contemporary champion of workers' rights and a crusader against legalized contraception. Finally, Ernest Greco takes on the endless “Pius wars” surrounding the accusations of papal indifference toward the plight of Jews and the Vatican sympathy for fascism during the Second World War.

Another set of essays recovers and examines neglected contributions of Catholics to the American historical narrative. Marynita Anderson laments the fact that “few textbook writers bothered to embrace the presence and accomplishments of American Catholics” and helps to fill this lacuna through an informative overview of the contributions of American nuns in the nineteenth century. Thomas Jodziewicz demonstrates how Dorothy Day, Peter Maurin, and the Catholic Worker movement in fact restored in a radical way the social and religious foundations of the American experiment. John Quinn, in the remarkable story of Catholicism in antebellum Newport, Rhode Island, and Adam Tate's story of Catholics during the fiftieth anniversary of the Declaration of Independence, are case studies on the early formation of a Catholic narrative of history within an environment that was often hostile to Catholicism.

As with any essay collection, the variety of voices and topics may not appeal to everyone. Yet both the professional historian and the curious reader will certainly find many gems in this volume. May it inspire more robust scholarship and richer historical narratives.

Michael Gubser. *The Far Reaches: Phenomenology, Ethics and Social Renewal in Central Europe*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014. xiii + 335 pp.

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

Professor Gubser opens his narrative with the statement: “The history of phenomenology is partly the history of friendships among the early disciples of Husserl in Munich and Gottingen, among East European dissidents who joined together against their regimes, and among scholars who study philosophy today.”

Given Gubser’s extensive tracking, it seems clear that over the course of a century Husserl’s school not only gave birth to an extensive body of academic phenomenological research but has produced a valuable body of social and ethical thought that proved useful to Eastern Europeans as they defended their personal and communal rights against hostile regimes and what they perceived as the technological leveling of a materialist culture. Avoiding politics, Husserl’s Eastern European disciples found hope that a renewal of ancient European culture, defined by its sources, Hellenic in origin and Christian in its evolution, might turn the tide. Religious experience and moral considerations became an important focus of phenomenological investigation, so much so that Husserl feared that religious commitment could compromise the philosophical rigor of his method of inquiry.

Gubser distinguishes between German/Austrian phenomenology and that of Eastern Europe. Brentano, Max Scheler, and Dietrich von Hildebrand are taken as representative of the former; Jan Patocka, Josef Tishner, and Karl Wojtyla as representative of Eastern Europe, where their promotion of a personalist and communitarian social vision contrasted with both liberal and totalitarian modernity.

In common, those Eastern Europeans who took their lead from Brentano and Husserl found in phenomenology the language and methodology they needed to celebrate human dignity

by acknowledging the transcendent nature of man, a human being, possessed of a spiritual soul with an eternal destiny. The crisis of modernity it was thought “lay in the tendency to reduce the world to elemental clay for human molding.” Scheler’s phenomenology gave his followers the means not only to recognize a hierarchy of goods but also to speak of a hierarchy of values subjectively experienced.

Gubser devotes separate chapters to Max Scheler, Jan Patocka, and Karol Wojtyla, but he also provides an extended treatment of the person and insight of Dietrich von Hildebrand whom he credits for his early understanding that modern antipersonalism, embodied in what von Hildebrand called “the rise of mass man and the state leviathan” directly leads to fascist nihilism.

Without diminishing the importance of Scheler, von Hildebrand, and others in the phenomenological movement, Gubser is fascinated with the career of Karol Wojtyla, who as John Paul II became the most renowned figure in the movement’s Eastern drift.

“John Paul II,” Gubser writes, “was not the first pope to link personalism with an overt political and social agenda. The anti-communist platform of his early papacy, along with his persistent critique of liberal individualism referred back to Leo XIII’s denunciation of capitalist excess and Pius XI’s introduction of personalism as anti-totalitarian.”

Before his election to the Chair of Peter, Wojtyla served as both Cracow’s archbishop and as a professor of philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin. Gubser believes that of the numerous books that have been written about John Paul II’s career, few have examined the philosophy that was to influence his papal teaching.

Wojtyla’s philosophy had many sources. Prominent among them was the scholastic tradition represented by Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, whose major work, *God, His Existence and His Nature*, remains a viable source of Thomistic teaching on the subject. Under the direction of Garrigou-Lagrange, Wojtyla wrote the first of his two doctoral dissertations on the mysticism of

St. John of the Cross. His *habilitationsschrift*, the second dissertation, critically examined the thought of Max Scheler. Wojtyla agreed with Scheler that feelings are a crucial element in the domain of human moral experience, something too often neglected by rationalistic philosophers. He sympathized with Scheler’s moral philosophy as contrasted with John Stuart Mill’s utilitarianism and the emphasis on sentiment that was characteristic of the Scottish school of moral philosophy. But Wojtyla objected to what he called Scheler’s emotional reductionism for naively reducing the ethical encounter to feelings alone, for as such it lacked any rational entailment. Scheler’s values, Wojtyla claimed, could not be rationally defended or even classified. Wojtyla was forceful in his criticism of Scheler’s notion of God. Scheler’s phenomenology, he maintained, granted access to the idea of God, the Godlike in man, but not to God himself.

After severely criticizing Scheler in his *habilitationsschrift*, Wojtyla over time and on a second reading, as it were, came to appreciate and utilize many of Scheler’s insights. In the light of his Thomistic studies, Wojtyla believed that Aquinas presupposed “subjective experience” but lacked the tools to explore it, tools that phenomenology would later provide. In the end Wojtyla came to recognize that Thomism and phenomenology are compatible. Phenomenology lacks the metaphysics which those steeped in the Aristotelian or scholastic tradition can provide. It can be noted that Michael Gubser’s sweeping historical study may be fruitfully approached in conjunction with Robert Sokolowski’s popular *Introduction to Phenomenology*.

Maurice Finocchiaro. *The Trial of Galileo: Essential Documents*. Translated and edited by Maurice A. Finocchiaro. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 2014. xii + 160 pp.

Reviewed by Jude Dougherty,  
The Catholic University of America.

This book draws upon Finocchiaro's previously published works, *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History* (1989) and *Retrying Galileo: 1633-1992* (2005), at once making those masterful works more readily accessible, while adding some new material.

The narrative really begins with Copernicus, who in 1543 published his epoch-making, *On the Revolutions of Heavenly Spheres*. The book updated an idea originally advanced in ancient Greece by the Pythagoreans and by Aristarchus of Samos—namely, that the earth rotates on its own axis daily and revolves around the sun yearly. Copernicus advanced a new argument supporting an old idea, albeit a hypothetical one. It had the advantage of simplicity in accounting for the known movement of the heavenly bodies. It contradicted the physics or the science of motion at the time. Copernicus realized that his hypothesis did not prove the earth's motion, but his argument was so important that it could not be ignored.

Galileo, as a professor of mathematics at the University of Padua, did not embrace the Copernican view until 1609, when he became actively involved in astronomy. Until then he actually believed that the anti-Copernican arguments outweighed the supposed heliocentric view. But between 1609 and 1613 Galileo's telescopic discoveries convinced him of the merit of the Copernican view. His telescope had enabled him to make a series of startling discoveries. He found that a profusion of stars exists besides those available to the naked eye. He found that the Milky Way and the visible celestial nebulas are dense collections of a large number of individual stars. He also discovered that the planet Jupiter has four moons revolving about it at different distances with different periods. Upon publication of these findings in his book *The Sidereal Messenger*, Galileo became a celebrity. Soon after he also discovered the phases of Venus and the reality of sun spots. In 1613 he published the *History and Demonstrations concerning Sunspots*. These discov-

eries substantially strengthened the case for Copernicanism.

Galileo's discoveries did not settle the issue of the truth of the Copernican view of the earth's motion, given that there was some astronomical counterevidence, mainly the failure to detect an annual stellar parallax, and because of the fact that the physics of a moving earth had not been explicitly articulated. Above all there was the theological objection to a view that seemingly was incompatible with Sacred Scripture. Even though scientific arguments favored the geokinetic theory, they were inconclusive; the earth's motion remained a hypothesis. Galileo knew the difference between a hypothetical explanation and a demonstration.

Upon the publication of *The Sidereal Messenger* in 1610, Galileo was accused of heresy. The Congregation of the Holy Office commissioned a panel of eleven members to assess the charges. The panel unanimously found Galileo guilty of heresy. Although that was the committee's finding, Churchmen were divided on the issue. Paolo Antonio Foscarini, a Carmelite friar, had published a book in 1615 arguing that the earth's motion was compatible with Sacred Scripture. Pope Urban VIII, an admirer of Galileo, apparently was not convinced of the incompatibility of the heliocentric theory and the Catholic faith and intervened to prevent Galileo from being charged with heresy.

Robert Cardinal Bellarmine, acting on behalf of the Holy Office, privately warned Galileo not to teach the Copernican view as having been established, and Galileo apparently agreed to comply. Previously Bellarmine had written to Foscarini that "there is no danger in saying that by assuming the earth moves and the sun stands still, one saves all the appearances better than by postulating eccentrics and epicycles, and that is sufficient for the mathematician." In part the dispute was about the nature of a hypothesis and its role in the search for truth. Is a hypothesis a mere instrument, a calculation, or an observational prediction that can be more or less convenient,

but neither true nor false? Or is it an assumption about physical reality that is more or less probable and potentially true or false but not yet known with certainty? Galileo was right about the earth's movement, but he could not offer demonstrative evidence for his conclusion. Obviously the evaluation of his arguments must be regarded as a separate issue from his being right in his conclusion contradicted both a visual sense report and Sacred Scripture. His opponents demanded incontrovertible evidence.

Galileo's further telescopic discoveries convinced him beyond all doubt that Copernicus was right, and given his temperament, Galileo could not remain silent. Galileo subsequently conceived a work that would discuss all aspects of the question and in 1632 published *The Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems: Ptolemaic and Copernican*. With that publication, it was clear that he had come down on the side of Copernicus in violation of Bellarmine's injunction. Hence the trial of 1633, in which Galileo was convicted of "vehement suspicion of heresy" and forbidden to promote the Copernican view in any form. Always treated with great respect, he was never imprisoned nor did he suffer any physical harm, but he was sentenced to "house arrest" which he served in part while lodged in the Tuscan Embassy in Rome, the Palazzo Firenze, and later at the Villa Medici, and still later at the residence of the Archbishop of Siena, and finally in his own home, where he died in 1642.

This short review cannot do justice to Finocchiaro's informative study. Suffice it to say, anyone who dares to venture an opinion on what René Descartes called "l'affaire Galileo" must at least be familiar with the narrative and texts provided by Finocchiaro's detailed studies.

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**R**ev. Austin Green, O.P., a member, died March 24, 2014. Dominican Father Austin E. Green, a priest for nearly 61 years, died March 24. The Chicago native was 93 and had been a Dominican for 68 years.

Father Green served in the Navy during WWII and joined the Dominican order in 1946. He was ordained in 1953.

His many ministries in education included working with the deaf for 25 years in Dallas. He also served with the deaf apostolate at Blessed Francis Xavier Seelos Parish in the Bywater area.

Since 2009, he resided at St. Anthony of Padua Church in New Orleans.

**H**elen Hull Hitchcock, wife of James Hitchcock, former president of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars and professor emeritus of history at St. Louis University, died on October 20, 2014. She was founding director of Women for Faith & Family and editor of its quarterly journal, *Voices*. She was also co-founder of the Adoremus-Society for the Renewal of the Sacred Liturgy and editor of its *Adoremus Bulletin*, a monthly publication. Helen is survived by Dr. Hitchcock and their four daughters and six grandchildren.

**If you would like to receive one of these books to review for the Quarterly, please email Alice Osberger—Osberger.1@nd.edu**

***Newman and His Family.*** Edward Short. London: Bloomsbury, paperback (2013), pp. 425.

***Culture and Abortion.*** Edward Short. Leominster, Herefordshire, UK: Gracewing, paperback (2013), pp. 277.

***The Prospects and Perils of Catholic-Muslim Dialogue.*** Robert R. Reilly. McLean, VA: Faith and Reason Institute and the Westminster Institute, paperback (2013), 43 pp.

***Stephen Larigaudelle Dubuisson, S.J. (1786-1864) and the Reform of the American Jesuits.*** Cornelius Michael Buckley, S.J. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, hardcover (2013), pp. 305.

***The Philosophy of Nature.*** D. Q. McNerny, copyright. The Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter, Elmhurst Township, Pennsylvania, third edition, hardcover (2014), pp. 506.

***Being in the World: A Quotable Maritain Reader,*** edited by Mario O. D'Souza, C.S.B., with Jonathan R. Seiling. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, paper (2014).

***Bishop Sheen: Mentor and Friend.*** Monsignor Hilary C. Franco, as Told to Lisa and Geno Delfino. New Hope, KY: New Hope Publications, paper (2014), pp. 160.

***Vocation to Virtue.*** Kent J. Lasnoski. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, hardcover (2014), pp. 247.

***Morality Truly Christian, Truly African: Foundational, Methodological, and Theological Considerations.*** Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, C.S.Sp. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, hardcover (2014), 384 pp.

***The Crisis of Religious Liberty: Reflections from Law, History, and Catholic Social Thought.*** Stephen M. Krason, editor. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, hardcover (2015), pp. 195.

***Cybertheology: Thinking Christianity in the Era of the Internet.*** Antonio Spadaro. Translated by Maria Way. Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, paper (2014), pp. 137.



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# Shakespeare and Catholic Social Doctrine

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Reading many of Shakespeare's plays can help a theologian better understand and apply some of the basic principles of Catholic social doctrine. For example, in *Troilus and Cressida*, the play presenting his view of the Trojan War, Shakespeare makes plain the difficulty of following the judgment of reason. Act II, Scene 2 opens at a council meeting of the Trojan leaders. King Priam reports that Nestor, a counselor to the Greeks, has made a peace proposal. If the Trojans return Helen, the wife of Menelaus, who was carried off to Troy by Paris, the Greeks will lift their siege of Troy and go home, and forget all the harm and damage caused by the Trojans in the war.

Hector speaks first, saying that the Trojans should give Helen up because she is not theirs and, therefore, reason dictates this course of action. Hector's brother, Troilus, argues that reasons should not determine Trojan decision-making. Another son of King Priam, Helenus, chides Troilus for his low regard for reason, arguing that Priam should conduct great affairs on the basis of reason. Unaffected by the reasoning of Hector and Helenus, Troilus responds, "Manhood and honor / Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their thoughts / With this crammed reason." Hector quite reasonably responds, "Brother, [Helen] is not worth what she doth cost / The keeping."

Troilus then tries another argument. He points out that Trojan authorities agreed that Paris should take vengeance on the Greeks for holding captive an old aunt, the sister of Priam, who was forced to marry a Greek by the name of Telemon. Troilus further notes that the Trojan leaders gave their consent to Paris's plan to abduct Helen, thus implying that Paris acted wisely. Cassandra, the sister of Troilus, Paris, and Hector, then prophesies that Troy will fall if they do not return Helen. Hector asks Troilus

whether any "discourse of reason" can cause him to question his passionate commitment to the war. Troilus answers that Cassandra is "mad" and that Trojan honor is at stake. Paris backs Troilus, arguing that people would accuse Paris and the Trojan leaders of being frivolous if they did not insist on keeping Helen. Paris points out that he had the "full consent" of the Trojan leaders, which was a source of great encouragement to him.

Priam reproaches his son saying, "Paris, you speak / Like one besotted on your sweet delights." Paris responds that he "would have the soil [stain] of her fair rape / Wiped off in honorable keeping her." Hector then answers both Troilus and Paris with a series of powerful arguments. He first compares his two brothers to the young men whom Aristotle says are not fit hearers of moral philosophy because they follow their hot passions rather than reason. They are incapable of impartially judging between right and wrong. Their wills are so benumbed that they don't see that Nature teaches all to return a wife to her husband. "These moral laws / Of nature and of nations speak aloud / To have her back returned." He then adds that to continue in wrongdoing makes the offense against the moral law even more grievous. He almost concludes his argument by affirming that his acceptance of "truth" led him to the foregoing observations. Then, in a total about-face Hector finally disregards all his good arguments and declares that he is inclined to side with his spirited brothers against what reason so compellingly indicates. "My spritely brethren, I propend [incline] to you / In resolution to keep Helen still; / For 'tis a cause that hath no mean dependence / Upon our joint and several dignities." It turns out that what is more important to Hector than the wisdom discerned by reason is the glory and honor he hopes to gain by fighting the Greek heroes. His passions

trump reason just as Troilus's and Paris's passions do.

The passions of Troilus and Paris, however, prevent them from even realizing that reason indicates they should return Helen to her husband and, thereby, bring to an end all the suffering caused by the war. Hector, measured human being that he is, is able to see the truth ascertained by reason, but chooses not to follow it. As one critic of this play noted, Shakespeare believes that "[folly] is a permanent feature of human existence," which he so clearly shows in *Troilus and Cressida*. In their pursuit

of social justice activists and scholars must keep in mind that human beings will sometimes choose to follow their disordered passions rather than the clear judgment of reason. From Shakespeare's presentation of human nature in his play, one could also infer that leaders in government, the Church, the university or in any deliberative body could be tempted at times to set aside sound judgments of reason under the influence of various passions. ✕

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