

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly

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President's Letter

Friends,

As I write this, we enter into Holy Week, a beautiful time to deepen and enrich our faith in the Triune God and the salvific sacrifice made by Jesus for us. Jesus's suffering reminds us that we, too, as faithful Catholics, will undergo suffering, but that it can have salvific meaning if we join it to Christ's. Indeed, it seems to me that, through the years, the suffering of many in the Fellowship, and perhaps of the Fellowship itself, caused by our unwavering devotion to God and to his teaching Magisterium, may have enriched the universal Church. Let us pray it is so.

This fall (September 28-30) we will hold our convention at Benedictine College in Kansas. The board decided to meet at a Catholic college so as to reach students and seminarians who might not otherwise be aware of the Fellowship and of how membership in the Fellowship will help them to maintain their faith as they proceed in life.

At the banquet, we will honor the head of the U.S. Bishops' pro-life committee, Archbishop Joseph Naumann, in whose diocese we will be meeting, with our Cardinal O'Boyle Award. Our dear and courageous colleague, Fr. Thomas Weinandy, will receive the Founder's Award. In addition, we will present the Cardinal Wright Award to the prolific husband and wife team, Nick and Mary Eberstadt, both of whom will speak to us during the convention.

The convention theme is "The Future of Science, Technology, and the Human Person." Our program committee is lining up a great program that I am sure you will find edifying. Please watch for announcements in your emails, or visit the web page for up-to-date information.

As this convention is a bit of a variation from our usual practice of meeting in hotels in major cities, I hope you will make a special effort to join us and ensure the convention is a success.

William Saunders, Esq.
President of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

From the Editor's Desk

With this issue, the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly* takes on a new look. In addition to publishing articles and book reviews chosen from among those submitted for our consideration, the FCSQ will also include a selection of the papers presented at our annual conventions – in the present case, from our 2017 meeting on Catholicism and the Social Sciences.

In accord with the Fellowship's Statement of Purposes (printed on the back cover), we welcome papers from scholars in any discipline that contribute to our mission of being at the service of the Catholic faith. There is no requirement that one be a member of the Fellowship in order to submit a paper for consideration by the FCSQ, but we hope that those who send us their work will also consider joining the Fellowship.

A prominent part of the FCS Statement of Purpose is the work of promoting solid academic support for the Church in its task of guarding the faith and defending it with fidelity. For this reason the *Quarterly* specially welcomes papers that will help to clarify the challenges that the Church in our day needs to meet as well as papers that will critically evaluate the variety of responses that are proposed to these challenges.

One important (but often underserved) aspect of our *métier* is to read and evaluate new contributions in our various fields. In the hope that the FCSQ can provide an important service for the Church, I hope that our readers will consider writing respectful (but where necessary, hard-hitting) reviews of books that appear in their fields. Another important way to serve our readership would be for scholars to offer review articles that summarize and critique the trends in their fields and subfields, especially as the knowledge of these trends are relevant for the aims of the Fellowship.

Yet another cherished part of the work of our organization is to be a *fellowship* of Catholic scholars. In recent months we have lost a number of our dedicated members, and we are glad to be able to include in these pages some memorial notices. *Requiescant in pace.*

Joseph W. Koterski, S.J.
Editor, FCSQ

The Uncertain Future of Catholic Social Doctrine

*George Weigel**

ABSTRACT: This essay raises the suggestion that the classical period of Catholic Social Doctrine that begins with Pope Leo XIII's *Rerum Novarum* may have come to end with Pope John Paul II's *Centesimus Annus*. After reviewing the principal tenets of the encyclicals of the classic period, the essay examines the documents issued on social issues during the pontificates of Benedict XVI and of Francis, to determine which elements have been retained from the classic period and which elements have departed from that tradition.

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW EVANGELIZATION must bear witness in public life to the truths that Catholicism regards as essential to the free and virtuous society. In *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st-Century Church*, I wrote that the Church's social witness could not be held hostage to political fads and ideological passions, but ought to reflect that remarkable body of thought known as Catholic social doctrine, which traces its papal lineage to Pope Leo XIII. I further suggested that there was a line of architectonic continuity between Leo's *Rerum Novarum* and Benedict XVI's *Caritas in Veritate*. I then argued that the paradigm for the twenty-first-century Church's social witness and public policy engagement should be reformed, such that all vestiges of the Constantinian Church-as-political-player model were finally abandoned in favor of the model of the public Church as moral teacher and moral witness. Such a paradigm shift, I proposed, would require a self-denying ordinance on the part of the Church's official leadership, so that (for example) the bishops of the United States would give absolute priority to witness and advocacy on behalf of the life issues and religious freedom in full while restraining the impulse to take a position on virtually every conceivable public policy question. And I concluded by arguing that far greater efforts at teaching the Church's social doctrine to the faithful were necessary if the Church of the New Evangelization were to be the social witness that it was called to be by Our Lord's Great Commission, the Church's social doctrine, and the Second Vatican Council.

The past several years have led me to think that we may, in the future, come

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to see the classic period of Catholic social doctrine as having run its course, from *Rerum Novarum* through *Centesimus Annus*. On some readings there are some aspects of *Caritas in Veritate* that might extend the classic period into the pontificate of Benedict XVI. But other aspects of *Caritas in Veritate*, and the social teaching of the present pontificate, force me to consider the possibility that the classic period of the social doctrine may be over and that current efforts to use a different basis for articulating social doctrine have an uncertain future.

That intuition leads me to no great insights into what that future might be, although I think certain danger signals are clear and should be flagged now. But in order to justify the intuition, and perhaps is set a course for a future that would be characterized by a social doctrine *ressourcement*, it would be helpful to come to grips with the intellectual architecture of the social doctrine from *Rerum Novarum* through *Centesimus Annus*. Doing so will allow us to see what has changed in recent decades, and what intellectual materials are available for a possible *ressourcement* and development in the future.

The chief architect of Catholic social doctrine during its classic period was Pope Leo XIII. Born in 1810 into the minor Italian nobility and elected pope in 1878 as a caretaker, he died in 1903 after what was then the second longest pontificate in reliably recorded history. Gioacchino Vincenzo Raffaele Luigi Pecci came to the papacy at one of the lowest points in that ancient office's historic fortunes. On the demise of the Papal States in 1870 and Pope Pius IX's withdrawal from public view as the "prisoner of the Vatican," the great and good of Europe thought the papacy and the Church a spent force in world-historical terms. Yet over the next quarter-century, Leo XIII created the modern papacy and set loose dynamics of renewal in the Church that would eventually lead to the Second Vatican Council, even as he was demonstrating to statesmen that he was a canny, even wily, operator on the world stage.

More to the point for our purposes here, Leo XIII, as Russell Hittinger writes, was also possessed by "a relentless drive to diagnose historical contingencies in the light of first principles." He was, in that sense, a kind of papal public intellectual, and like his twentieth- and twenty-first-century papal successors, he believed in reading "the signs of the times." But unlike the radical secularists of his time and ours, Leo XIII believed in reading the signs of the times through lenses ground by both faith and reason. His determination to try to understand the deep currents of history through reason, informed by a biblical vision of the human person and human communities, is the providential personal passion at the magisterial root of Catholic social doctrine. Moreover, Leo, who began to disentangle the Church in Europe from the evangelically stifling embrace of the old regimes, was also an acute analyst of the pathologies of political modernity.

Leo's analysis might be summarized in one phrase: no *telos*, no justice. Or, if you prefer: no metaphysics, no morals. Or, to leave the technical vocabulary of

philosophy: no grounding of politics and economics in the deep truths of the human condition, no society fit for human beings.

Thus Leo “read” the “empty shrine” at the center of political modernity – an emptiness enforced by coercive state power in exercises like the German *Kulturkampf* and the Italian *Risorgimento* – as the concrete, historical result of a dramatic revolution in European intellectual life. In that revolution, metaphysics had been displaced from the center of reflection; thinking-about-thinking had replaced thinking-about-truth; and because of that, governance had come unstuck from the first principles of justice. The natural sciences, which had replaced metaphysics as the most consequential of intellectual disciplines, could provide no answer to the moral question with which all politics in the Western tradition begins: How ought we live together? Worse, when science stepped outside its disciplinary boundaries and tried its hand at social and political prescription, it let loose new demons such as Social Darwinism that would prove lethal in the extreme when they shaped the national tempers that led to the great slaughters of the First World War.

Leo tried to fill the empty shrine at the heart of political modernity with reason, and with the moral truths that reason can discern. This was, to be sure, reason informed by biblical faith and Christian doctrine. But the genius of Leo XIII, public intellectual, was that he found a vocabulary to address the social, political, and economic problems of his time that was genuinely ecumenical and accessible to all – the vocabulary of public reason, drawn from the natural moral law embedded in the world and in us. In one of his great encyclicals on political modernity, *Immortale Dei*, published in 1885, Leo wrote that “the best parent and guardian of liberty amongst men is truth.” Unlike the postmodern Pontius Pilates who imagine that the cynical question “What is truth?” ends the argument, Leo XIII understood that this question, which can be asked in a non-cynical and genuinely inquiring way, is the beginning of any serious wrestling with the further question: How ought we live together?

This analysis of the basic problem of political modernity then led Leo to pose a cultural challenge to the post-*ancien régime* public life of the West: a challenge to think more deeply about law, about the nature of freedom, about civil society and its relationship to the state, and about the limits of state power. In the course of issuing that challenge through several major encyclicals, Leo erected the scaffolding on which Catholic social doctrine, in its classic period, would be built. Leo XIII’s concept of law, drawn from Thomas Aquinas, challenged the legal positivism of his time and ours, according to which the law is what the law says it is, period. That may be true, at a very crude level. But such positivism (which is also shaped by the modern tendency to see civil laws as analogous to the “laws” of nature) empties law of moral content, detaches it from reason, and treats it as a mere expression of human willfulness. Leo challenged political modernity to a

nobler concept of law – one synthesized by Russell Hittinger as “a binding precept of reason, promulgated by a competent authority for the common good.” Thus law is not mere coercion; law is authoritative *prescription* grounded in reason. True law reflects moral judgment and its power comes from its moral persuasiveness. Law appeals to conscience, not just to fear.

Given this understanding of law, it should come as no surprise that Leo challenged political modernity to a nobler concept of freedom. Following Thomas Aquinas rather than William of Ockham (the first proto-modern distorter of the truth about freedom), Leo XIII insisted that freedom is not sheer willfulness. Rather, as Leo’s worthy successor John Paul II would later put it, freedom is the human capacity to know what is truly good, to choose it freely, and to do so virtuously, as a matter of habit. On this line of argument, a talent or capacity for freedom grows in us; we cut short that learning process if we insist, with the culture of the imperial autonomous Self, that my freedom consists in doing what I want to do, *now*.

Leo XIII’s challenge to political modernity was also a challenge to the omnicompetence of the state. Leo was a committed defender of what we would call “civil society” and of what were called in his day “voluntary private associations.” Society, according to Leo XIII, was composed of a richly textured pluralism of associations, of which the state was but one (albeit an important one). But before there was the state in its modern sense, society included a plethora of voluntarily entered, free associations (which, to reduce the matter to its simplest form, included the family, business and labor associations, civic groups, and religious communities). These free associations were goods in themselves, communities expressing different forms of friendship and human solidarity. Thus the just state would take care to protect these societies, for they contribute to the common good in unique ways – not least by forming the habits of heart and mind that make willful men and women, so constantly tempted to selfishness, into good citizens.

Moreover, Leo proposed, the state’s responsibility to provide legal protection for the functioning of free associations ought not be something conceded out of a sense of largesse or governmental *noblesse oblige*. That responsibility, too, was a matter of first principles – in this case, the principle of the limited, law-governed state. For a state that can recognize free human associations that exist prior to the state, not just as a matter of historical chronology but as a matter of the deep truths of the human condition, is a state that has recognized the boundary-markers of its own competence, and thus the limits of its legitimate reach.

In the first papal social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum*, published in 1891, Leo XIII drew on these essentially Thomistic convictions about law, freedom, civil society, and the state to lay down the first two foundational principles of classic Catholic social doctrine: the personalist principle and the principle of the common

good – what we might call today the human rights principle and the communitarian principle. The first teaches us that all right thinking about society, polity, culture, and economics begins with the inherent dignity and built-in value of the individual human person, not with the state, the party, the tribe, the social class, the gender group, or the ethnic group. The second principle, which complements and completes the first and thereby distinguishes classic social doctrine from any form of libertarianism, teaches us that rights should be exercised in such a way that an individual's actions in the spheres of politics, economics, and culture contribute to the general welfare of society, not simply to his or her aggrandizement. For the individual is not a monad for whom society is merely a means of protection, as in Thomas Hobbes's conception. Society itself is a natural phenomenon, and living one's inalienable dignity in and for the general welfare of society is thus essential for the integral development of the human person.

A third foundational principle was cemented into the foundations of the classic social doctrine by Pope Pius XI in the 1931 encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*: the principle of subsidiarity, which might be called today the free-associational principle or the principle of civil society. The principle of subsidiarity was already implicit in Leo's understanding of the rich social pluralism of the rightly ordered society. Under the lengthening shadow of European totalitarianism, Pius XI made the principle explicit by teaching that decision-making should be left at the lowest possible level (that is, the level closest to those most affected by the decision, commensurate with the common good). Thus a counter-statist principle is part of the fundamental architecture of the social doctrine: again, not in any libertarian sense, but as an expression of the Catholic claim, which dates back to medieval times, that the order of culture and the order of power – *studium* and *imperium* – must be distinguished. The related Catholic conviction, which has a similar historical pedigree, is that society exists prior to the state, ontologically as well as historically, such that the state exists to serve society, not the other way around.

These were the fundamental ideas and foundational principles of the classic social doctrine inherited by John Paul II – concepts and principles that Karol Wojtyła had taught in the Silesian seminary in Cracow during his professorial days. As pope, Wojtyła cemented a fourth principle into the social doctrine's foundation, and built upon that foundation an extended structure that, when it was articulated in *Centesimus Annus* in 1991, seemed poised to frame the evolution of the social doctrine for decades to come.

The fourth foundational principle was the principle of solidarity, or what might be called the principle of civic friendship. A society capable of fostering integral human development cannot be, as Rawlsians would have it, merely contractual and legal; the free and virtuous society, John Paul taught, required a more richly textured complex of relationships. Jacques Maritain called it "civic

friendship”: an experience of fellow-feeling, of brotherhood, of mutual participation in a common and noble enterprise. The people of Poland experienced it during the 1980s and gave the name of this principle to its chief public expression. Americans experienced it on 9/11 (and have experienced it too infrequently since, although the response to Hurricane Harvey suggests that civic friendship and solidarity have not completely atrophied in the United States).

On these four foundational principles – personalism, the common good, subsidiarity, and solidarity – John Paul II extended the Church’s understanding of social doctrine and built it into a more complex edifice that was, nonetheless, fully congruent with the classic Leonine intellectual architecture.

In the 1981 encyclical, *Laborem Exercens*, John Paul proposed a rich phenomenology of work, teaching that work is an expression of human creativity and a participation in the sustaining creative power of God; thus work ought not be understood as constraint (and still less punishment for original sin), but as an expression of human freedom. And through our work (taught the personalist pope who had himself broken rocks in a quarry as a manual laborer), we do not simply make more, we become more.

In the 1987 encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* John Paul spoke of a “right of economic initiative,” a kind of right-to-entrepreneurship, which he described as another expression of the creativity of the human person that reflects into the world the divine creativity. *Sollicitudo* also challenged developing countries to resist learned victimhood and incapacity and to become the protagonists of their own development through rigorous political and legal reforms that allow human creativity to flourish in the economy and in culture.

Then came *Centesimus Annus*. While named in honor of the centenary of *Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus* in fact extended the social doctrine into the twenty-first century and the third millennium while concisely summarizing the primary contributions of the social doctrine’s chief architect. It did so by stressing seven key points:

1. A free society must also be a virtuous society, for the innate human thirst for freedom will be frustrated, and new forms of tyranny will emerge, if freedom is not mediated through virtue.

2. The free and virtuous society of the twenty-first century and the third millennium will be composed of three interlocking parts – a democratic polity that allows for the participatory exercise of social responsibility; a free economy that allows for the responsible exercise of freedom in the economic sphere; and a vibrant public moral culture that disciplines and directs the tremendous human energies let loose by free politics and free economics.

3. Democracies and free economies are not machines that can run by themselves. It takes a certain kind of people, living certain virtues, to run self-governing polities and free economies so that they do not self-destruct. The task

of the moral-cultural sector is to form those habits of heart and mind in the people, and the primary public task of the Church is to form that public moral-cultural sector through the witness and advocacy of Catholic disciples.

4. Freedom must be tethered to moral truth and ordered to goodness if freedom is not to become self-cannibalizing. If there is only “your truth” and “my truth” and if neither of us recognizes anything as “the truth,” then we have no horizon of judgment against which to debate or settle our differences other than pragmatic accommodation. And when pragmatic accommodation fails, as it must when the issue at hand is grave enough, then either you will impose your power on me or I will impose my power on you – a warning from John Paul II that anticipated Benedict XVI’s thought on the prospect of a “dictatorship of relativism.”

5. Free, voluntary associations are essential to the free and virtuous society because they are the first schools of freedom.

6. Wealth in the postmodern world is primarily a product of ideas, entrepreneurial instincts, and skills: that is, the wealth of nations lies not in the ground that a nation occupies or beneath the ground (a curiously materialistic notion of wealth that had characterized the social doctrine from Leo XIII through Paul VI) but in the human mind – in human creativity.

7. Thus poverty should be considered a matter of exclusion from the networks of productivity and exchange in which wealth is created and distributed; anti-poverty programs should aim at empowering the able poor with the skills and habits necessary to participate in those networks of productivity and exchange; and the primary moral question that exercises the Church’s “option for the poor” shifts from distribution (understood as the equitable sharing of a fixed amount of stuff) to empowerment and inclusion in a world of expanding wealth.

John Paul II made two other notable extensions of the social doctrine. In the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, he suggested that the democratic principle of the equality of all citizens was most securely grounded (given a world where many forms of human inequality are all too apparent) in our common human responsibility to avoid intrinsically evil acts. And finally, in the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, John Paul, drawing out the implications of legalized abortion and euthanasia, taught that the democratic project cannot indefinitely survive a situation in which a certain class of people claims the right and authority to dispose of other people through the private and legally sanctioned use of lethal violence.

Centesimus Annus thus built upon, developed, and fleshed out the classic conceptual architecture of the social doctrine first designed by Leo XIII. The language of *Centesimus Annus*, its rather robust defense of the democratic project, and its understanding of the nature of economic life are different from those found in *Rerum Novarum*. Yet, John Paul’s thinking about these questions of society,

polity, economy, and culture was recognizably “within” the conceptual framework created by Leo XIII – as was John Paul’s thinking in *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* and of *Laborem Exercens* (however much that document also reflected the pope’s personal experience and phenomenological approach to the analysis of work). But the further truth of the matter is that this continuity involved a return to the Leonine architecture, which was not overly evident in the one “outlier” within the social encyclical tradition between *Rerum Novarum* and *Centesimus Annus*: Paul VI’s 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, which seemed to breathe far more of the spirit of Barbara Ward and other left-of-center development economists than of Leo XIII.

Populorum Progressio did remain within the Leonine architecture insofar as Pope Paul wrote of “integral human development,” a useful and quite Leonine addition to the Church’s social doctrine vocabulary. But its seeming fondness for socialism, and what some took to be its endorsement of revolutionary violence under certain circumstances, caused serious problems in Latin America. There, the pope’s teaching was construed according to the Marxist presuppositions of early liberation theology, to the point where Paul VI had to issue a clarification in his 1971 apostolic letter, *Octogesima Adveniens*. Further, *Populorum Progressio*’s notion of “development [as] the new name of peace” seemed to abandon the notion of peace as Augustine’s *tranquillitas ordinis*, the “tranquillity of order,” which had shaped the social doctrine’s thought on law and political life, and which was the conceptual foundation for John XXIII’s quite Leonine 1963 social encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*.

The fact that *Populorum Progressio* was framed as it was, and the claims for it made by its most vocal defenders among Catholic intellectuals and in various Catholic justice-and-peace bureaucracies (including Rome), indicated – as early as the late 1960s – that some in the Church, often well-placed, regarded the classic, Leonine social doctrine as a spent force, and took *Populorum Progressio* as the beginning of a new Catholic social doctrine tradition. The “corrective” applied to *Populorum Progressio* in *Octogesima Adveniens* suggested that Paul VI disagreed. In fact, it might be taken as a parallel to his rejection of the proportionalism embedded in the so-called majority report of the papal birth control commission. And John Paul II certainly disagreed that the Leonine architecture of the social doctrine had outlived its usefulness. That John Paul resisted efforts in 1997 to get him to issue another social encyclical to mark the thirtieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, and in 2002 to do the same for *Populorum Progressio*’s thirty-fifth anniversary, strengthened the argument that *Populorum Progressio* was the conceptual outlier in the line of papal social encyclicals.

But the *Populorum Progressio* enthusiasts were nothing if not relentless, for they began pressing Benedict XVI to issue a social encyclical for *Populorum Progressio*’s fortieth anniversary in 2007, at least two drafts of which, and

possibly three, were rejected by the pope.

Thus we come to *Caritas in Veritate*, Benedict's 2009 social encyclical, which I described at the time as a literary hybrid, a judgment that still strikes me as sound. It includes many of the themes that shaped Benedict's memorable and thoughtful "September addresses" in Regensburg, Paris, London, and Berlin: such as his insistence on the unbreakable linkages between democratic politics and moral truth, his teaching on the parallel linkage between truth and charity, and his warning that charity divorced from truth decays into mere sentimentality. *Caritas in Veritate* also built on the classic Leonine social doctrine as developed by John Paul II in Pope Benedict's emphasis on the social justice dimension of the life issues. Thus Benedict XVI, as heir of Leo, insisted that there cannot be "social justice Catholics" *here* and "pro-life Catholics" *there*, even as he cleverly extended that classic line of thought by linking it to his discussion of environmental question, suggesting that people who are blind to the moral claims of unborn children are unlikely to make a serious contribution to a human ecology that cares for the natural world. Benedict also made creative, "Leonine" moves in *Caritas in Veritate* by describing religious freedom and a generous openness to life as key factors in economic development, and he added a further "Leonine" corrective to *Populorum Progressio* by suggesting, albeit gently, that kleptocratic thugocracies had more to do with third-world countries' perennial impoverishment than a lack of international development aid.

That *Caritas in Veritate* was a conceptual and literary hybrid, however, is unmistakably demonstrated by the extensive passages in the encyclical that suggest either intellectual muddle or a deliberate rejection of the social doctrine's classic Leonine conceptual architecture in favor of the claim that *Populorum Progressio* began the social doctrine anew. The former include the encyclical's lengthy section on "gift," the foundation of its call for "forms of economic activity marked by quotas of gratuitousness and communion." This is a section so clotted and confused that it risked veering into precisely that sentimentality the encyclical cautions against. The latter include such *Populorum Progressio*-style tropes as the emphasis on wealth redistribution rather than wealth creation and a repetition of Paul VI's call for a "world political authority" to ensure integral human development.

One consultor to the Pontifical Council on Justice and Peace – the chief Roman repository of the claim that *Populorum Progressio* set the social doctrine of the Church on a new and non-Leonine course – claimed precisely that in the debate immediately following the release of *Caritas in Veritate*. The nature of that new course was unclear. But that something serious, and perhaps disorienting, and quite possibly disturbing, was afoot in the development of the social doctrine was underscored by Pope Francis's 2015 social encyclical on the environment.

Like *Caritas in Veritate*, *Laudato Si'* retained certain elements of the Leonine

conceptual architecture of the classic social doctrine tradition as defined by Leo XIII and developed for the twenty-first century by John Paul II. Francis picked up the theme of “human ecology” from John Paul and Benedict and taught, with them, that integral human development cannot be measured by GDP alone, but also requires measurement by humanity’s growth in beatitude. Like his two predecessors, Francis warned against freedom disconnected from truth; and like them, he also insisted that such life issues as abortion, euthanasia, and embryo-destructive stem-cell research are social justice issues. Moreover, his insistence that “there can be no ecology without an adequate anthropology” struck resonant chords with the classic tradition (even if that anthropology was rather sparsely developed in the encyclical).

But like much of Francis’s magisterium (bracketing the encyclical *Lumen Fidei*, which Francis acknowledged as having been written almost entirely by Benedict XVI before his abdication), *Laudato Si’* was a great, sprawling ramble that combined passages of biblical exegesis (sometimes quite moving) with personal observations, pastoral correction and instruction, and a stringent notion of anthropogenic global warming that is at least debatable. Indeed, the consultation on climate change held by the Pontifical Academy of Science to aid in the preparation of the encyclical deliberately excluded eminent scientists who had raised serious questions about the more extreme claims of the anthropogenic global warming guild, as well as those scientists who accepted the fact of global warming but cautioned that addressing it would involve inevitable trade-offs, especially in terms of third-world economic development. This blinkered approach to the science on which the encyclical depended for its empirical analysis was in striking contrast to the far more empirically acute analysis of the dynamics of post-Industrial Revolution economics in *Centesimus Annus*. And throughout the encyclical, there was little evidence, beyond the themes previously noted, that either the document’s drafter or its official author understood themselves to be working within a coherent if evolving intellectual structure that was marked for over a century by stable reference points drawn from the natural moral law.

Given the polarization of virtually everything in both the world and the Church in these last years of the second decade of the twenty-first century, raising concerns about the uncertain future of Catholic social doctrine in light of *Populorum Progressio*, *Caritas in Veritate*, and *Laudato Si’* will inevitably result in charges of sour grapes and be dismissed as the crotchets of those who had long promoted the Leonine approach. That is unfortunate, especially in terms of the Church’s social doctrine itself. Catholic social doctrine has moral force only if the moral reasoning that informs its policy proposals is sophisticated, rooted in both revelation and reason, and thus defensible as both distinctly Catholic and yet accessible to all people of good will. And that is the danger that the abandonment of the Leonine architecture of the classic social doctrine poses. Unmoored from

Leo's conceptual scaffolding as developed by his successors, especially Pius XI and John Paul II, the social teaching of the popes is at grave risk of becoming what so much of the social and political commentary of both liberal and evangelical Protestantism has become: the expression of ideological and partisan preferences, misconstrued as demands of the Gospel and of moral reason.

From 1891 through at least 2005, classic Catholic social doctrine stood above ideological posturing and partisanship because it was anchored in principles that, while capable of development and fresh application, were also understood to be stable, permanent, and a challenge to all forms of secular reasoning about polity, economy, society, and culture. Were those principles to be forgotten, and the Leonine conceptual architecture of the social doctrine ignored in formulating the social magisterium of the Bishop of Rome, the pope would become another, if grander, form of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the president of the World Council of Churches, or, if the image is not too shocking, Franklin Graham or Jerry Falwell, Jr.: a man espousing his personal political and economic views, doubtless justifying them in the name of the Gospel, but absent any serious intellectual foundation for his analysis, his proposals, and the arguments marshaled on their behalf.

And that would be a very bad thing: not only for the Church, but for a world in great need of an example of serious, religiously informed moral reasoning on matters of public policy, in place of the ideological virtue-signaling that too often passes for religious commentary on public policy today. Thus any renewal of the social doctrine tradition of the Catholic Church will necessarily involve a Leonine *ressourcement*, in which the classic reference points first articulated by Leo XIII and then developed by Pius XI and John Paul II once again give conceptual ballast to the entire enterprise.

Understanding and Responding to Our Transgender Moment

Ryan T. Anderson*

ABSTRACT: At the heart of the transgender moment are radical ideas about the human person – in particular, that people are what they claim to be, regardless of contrary evidence. Transgender activists do not admit that this is a metaphysical claim. They do not want to have the debate on the level of philosophy, so they dress it up as a scientific and medical claim. But modern medicine cannot reassign sex physically, and attempting to do so does not produce good outcomes psychosocially. Transgender medicine is based on a transgender worldview. But the worldview promoted by transgender activists is inherently confused and filled with internal contradictions. Activists never acknowledge those contradictions. Instead, they opportunistically rely on whichever claim is useful at any given moment. But if you pull too hard on any one thread of transgender ideology, the whole tapestry comes unraveled.

PEOPLE SAY THAT WE LIVE in a postmodern age that has rejected metaphysics. That is not quite true. We live in a postmodern age that promotes an alternative metaphysics. As I explain in *When Harry Became Sally: Responding to the Transgender Moment*, at the heart of the transgender moment are radical ideas about the human person – in particular, that people *are* what they claim to be, regardless of contrary evidence. A transgender boy *is* a boy, not merely a girl who *identifies as* a boy. It is understandable why activists make these claims. An argument about transgender identities will be much more persuasive if it concerns who someone *is*, not merely how someone *identifies*. And so the rhetoric of the transgender moment drips with ontological assertions: people *are* the gender they prefer to be. That is the claim.

Transgender activists do not admit that this is a metaphysical claim. They do not want to have the debate on the level of philosophy, so they dress it up as a scientific and medical claim. And they have co-opted many professional associations for their cause. Thus the American Psychological Association, in a pamphlet titled “Answers to Your Questions about Transgender People, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression,” tells us, “*Transgender* is an umbrella term for persons whose *gender identity, gender expression, or behavior* does not conform to that typically associated with the sex to which they were assigned at birth.”¹

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¹American Psychological Association, “Answers to Your Questions About Trans-

Notice the politicized language: a person's sex is "assigned at birth." Back in 2005, even the Human Rights Campaign referred instead to "birth sex" and "physical sex."²

The phrase "sex assigned at birth" is now favored because it makes room for "gender identity" as the real basis of a person's sex. In an expert declaration to a federal district court in North Carolina concerning H.B. 2 (a state law governing access to sex-specific restrooms), Dr. Deanna Adkins stated, "From a medical perspective, the appropriate determinant of sex is gender identity."³ Dr. Adkins is a professor at Duke University School of Medicine and the director of the Duke Center for Child and Adolescent Gender Care (which opened in 2015). Adkins argues that gender identity is not only the preferred basis for determining sex, but "the only medically supported determinant of sex."⁴ Every other method is bad science, she claims: "It is counter to medical science to use chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, external genitalia, or secondary sex characteristics to override gender identity for purposes of classifying someone as male or female."⁵

This is a remarkable claim, not least because the argument recently was that gender is only a social construct, while sex is a biological reality. Now, activists claim that gender identity is destiny, while biological sex is the social construct.

Adkins does not say whether she would apply this rule to all mammalian species. But why should sex be determined differently in humans than in other mammals? And if medical science holds that gender identity determines sex in humans, what does this mean for the use of medicinal agents that have different effects on males and females? Does the proper dosage of medicine depend on the patient's sex, or on his or her gender identity?

But what exactly is this "gender identity" that is supposed to be the true medical determinant of sex? Adkins defines it as "a person's inner sense of belonging to a particular gender, such as male or female."⁶ Note that little phrase "such as," implying that the options are not necessarily limited to male or female. Other activists are more forthcoming in admitting that gender identity need not be restricted to the binary choice of male or female, but can include both or neither. The American Psychological Association, for example, defines "gender identity" as "a person's internal sense of being male, female, or something else."⁷

Adkins asserts that being transgender is not a mental disorder, but simply "a normal developmental variation." And she claims, further, that medical and mental

gender People, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression," p. 1, <http://www.apa.org/topics/lgbt/transgender.pdf>.

² Moulton and Seaton, *Transgender Americans: A Handbook for Understanding*, 5.

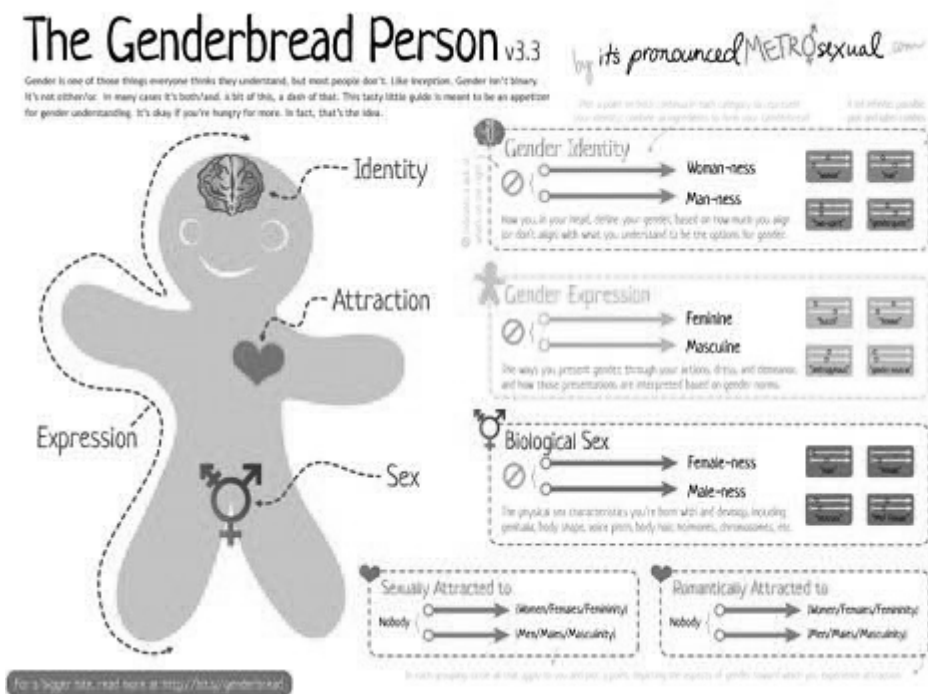
³ Declaration of Deanna Adkins, M.D., U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina, Case 1:16-cv-00236-TDS-JEP, p. 5.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁷ American Psychological Association, "Answers to Your Questions About Transgender People, Gender Identity, and Gender Expression."



health professionals who specialize in the treatment of gender dysphoria are in agreement with this view.⁸

Transgender Catechism

These notions about sex and gender are now being taught to young children. Activists have created child-friendly graphics for this purpose, such as the “Genderbread Person.”⁹ The Genderbread Person teaches that when it comes to sexuality and gender, people have five different characteristics, each of them falling along a spectrum.

There’s “gender identity,” which is “how you, in your head, define your gender, based on how much you align (or don’t align) with what you understand to be the options for gender.” The graphic lists “4 (of infinite)” possibilities for gender identity: “woman-ness,” “man-ness,” “two-spirit,” or “genderqueer.” The second characteristic is “gender expression,” which is “the way you present gender, through your actions, dress, and demeanor.” In addition to “feminine” or “masculine,” the options are “butch,” “femme,” “androgynous,” or “gender neutral.” Third is “biological sex,” defined as “the physical sex characteristics you’re born with and develop, including genitalia, body shape, voice pitch, body hair; hormones, chromosomes, etc.” The final two characteristics concern sexual orientation: “sexually attracted to” and “romantically attracted to.” The options

⁸ Declaration of Deanna Adkins, 6.

⁹ Sam Killermann, “The Genderbread Person v3,” *It’s Pronounced Metrosexual* (March 16, 2015), <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2015/03/the-genderbread-person-v3/>.

include “Women/Females/ Femininity” and “Men/Males/Masculinity.” Which seems rather binary.

The Genderbread Person tries to localize these five characteristics on the body: gender identity in the brain, sexual and romantic attraction in the heart, biological sex in the pelvis, and gender expression everywhere. The Genderbread Person presented here is the most recent, version 3.3, incorporating adjustments made in response to criticism of earlier versions. But even this one violates current dogma. Some activists have complained that the Genderbread Person looks overly male.

A more serious fault in the eyes of many activists is the use of the term “biological sex.” *Time* magazine drew criticism for the same transgression in 2014 after publishing a profile of Laverne Cox, the “first out trans person” to be featured on the cover. At least the folks at *Time* got credit for trying to be “good allies, explaining what many see as a complicated issue,” wrote Mey Rude in an article titled “It’s Time for People to Stop Using the Social Construct of ‘Biological Sex’ to Defend Their Transmisogyny.” (It is hard to keep up with the transgender moment.) But *Time* was judged guilty of using “a simplistic and outdated understanding of biology to perpetuate some very dangerous ideas about trans women,” and failing to acknowledge that biological sex “isn’t something we’re actually born with, it’s something that doctors or our parents assign us at birth.”¹⁰

Today, transgender “allies” in good standing don’t use the Genderbread Person in their classrooms, but opt for the “Gender Unicorn,” which was created by Trans Students Educational Resources (TSER).¹¹ It has a body shape that doesn’t appear either male or female, and instead of a “biological sex” it has a “sex assigned at birth.” Those are the significant changes to the Genderbread Person, and they were made so that the new graphic would “more accurately portray the distinction between gender, sex assigned at birth, and sexuality.”¹²

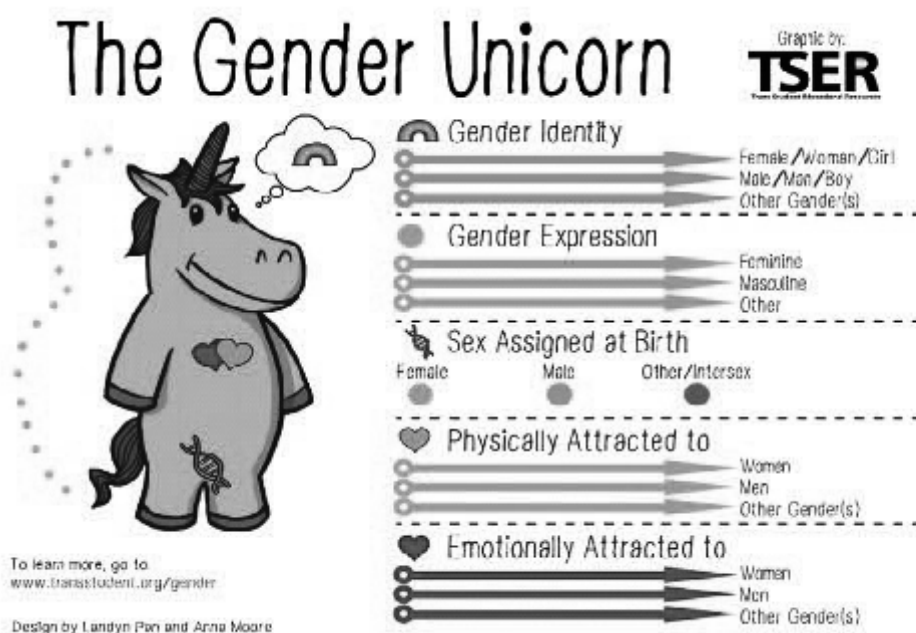
According to TSER, “Biological sex is an ambiguous word that has no scale and no meaning besides that it is related to some sex characteristics. It is also harmful to trans people. Instead, we prefer ‘sex assigned at birth’ which provides a more accurate description of what biological sex may be trying to communicate.”¹³ The Gender Unicorn is the graphic that children are likely to encounter in school. These are the dogmas they are likely to be catechized to profess.

¹⁰ Mey Rude, “It’s Time for People to Stop Using the Social Construct of ‘Biological Sex’ to Defend Their Transmisogyny,” *Autostraddle* (June 5, 2014), <https://www.autostraddle.com/its-time-for-people-to-stop-using-the-social-construct-of-biological-sex-to-defend-their-transmisogyny-240284/>.

¹¹ Trans Student Educational Resources, “The Gender Unicorn,” <https://www.transstudent.org/gender>.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.



While activists claim that the possibilities for gender identity are rather expansive – man, woman, both, neither – they also insist that gender identity is innate, or established at a very young age, and thereafter immutable. Dr. George Brown, a professor of psychiatry and a three-time board member of the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH), stated in his declaration to the federal court in North Carolina that gender identity “is usually established early in life, by the age of two to three years old.”¹⁴ Addressing the same court, Dr. Adkins asserted that “evidence strongly suggests that gender identity is innate or fixed at a young age and that gender identity has a strong biological basis.”¹⁵ (At no point in her expert declaration did she cite any sources for any of her claims.)

Transgender Contradictions

If the claims presented in this article strike you as confusing, you’re not alone. The thinking of transgender activists is inherently confused and filled with internal contradictions. Activists never acknowledge those contradictions. Instead, they opportunistically rely on whichever claim is useful at any given moment.

Here I am talking about transgender *activists*. Most people who suffer from gender dysphoria are not activists, and many of them reject the activists’ claims. Many of them may be regarded as victims of the activists, as I show in my book. Many of those who feel distress over their bodily sex know that they aren’t really the opposite sex, and do not wish to “transition.” They wish to receive help in

¹⁴ Declaration of George R. Brown, M.D., DFAPA, U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina, Case 1:16-cv-00425, p. 7.

¹⁵ Declaration of Deanna Adkins, 4.

coming to identify with and accept their bodily self. They do not think their feelings of gender dysphoria define reality. But transgender activists do. Regardless of whether they identify as “cisgender” or “transgender,” the activists promote a highly subjective and incoherent worldview.

On the one hand, they claim that the real self is something other than the physical body, in a new form of Gnostic dualism, yet at the same time they embrace a materialist philosophy in which only the material world exists. They say that gender is purely a social construct, while asserting that a person can be “trapped” in the wrong gender. They say that there are no meaningful differences between man and woman, yet they rely on rigid sex stereotypes to argue that “gender identity” is real, while human embodiment is not. They claim that truth is whatever a person says it is, yet they believe there’s a *real* self to be discovered inside that person. They promote a radical expressive individualism in which people are free to do whatever they want and define the truth however they wish, yet they try ruthlessly to enforce acceptance of transgender ideology.

It is hard to see how these contradictory positions can be combined. If you pull too hard on any one thread of transgender ideology, the whole tapestry comes unraveled. But here are some questions we can pose:

If gender is a social construct, how can gender identity be innate and immutable? How can one’s identity with respect to a social construct be determined by biology in the womb? How can one’s identity be unchangeable (immutable) with respect to an ever-changing social construct? And if gender identity is innate, how can it be “fluid”? The challenge for activists is to offer a plausible definition of gender and gender identity that is independent of bodily sex.

Is there a gender binary or not? Somehow, it both does and does not exist, according to transgender activists. If the categories of “man” and “woman” are objective enough that people can identify as, and *be*, men and women, how can gender also be a spectrum, where people can identify as, and *be*, both, or neither, or somewhere in between?

What does it even mean to have an internal sense of gender? What does gender feel like? What meaning can we give to the concept of sex or gender – and thus what internal “sense” can we have of gender – apart from having a body of a particular sex? Apart from having a male body, what does it “feel like” to be a man? Apart from having a female body, what does it “feel like” to be a woman? What does it feel like to be *both* a man and a woman, or to be *neither*? The challenge for the transgender activist is to explain what these feelings are like, and how someone could know if he or she “feels like” the opposite sex, or neither, or both.

Even if trans activists could answer these questions about feelings, that still wouldn’t address the matter of reality. Why should feeling like a man – whatever that means – *make* someone a man? Why do our feelings determine reality on the question of sex, but on little else? Our feelings don’t determine our age or our height. And few people buy into Rachel Dolezal’s claim to identify as a black

woman, since she is clearly not. If those who identify as transgender *are* the sex with which they identify, why does that not apply to other attributes or categories of being? What about people who identify as animals, or able-bodied people who identify as disabled? Do all of these self-professed identities determine reality? If not, why not? And should these people receive medical treatment to transform their bodies to accord with their minds? Why accept transgender “reality,” but not trans-racial, trans-species, and trans-abled reality? The challenge for activists is to explain why a person’s “real” sex is determined by an inner “gender identity,” but age and height and race and species are not determined by an inner sense of identity.

Of course, a transgender activist could reply that an “identity” is, by definition, just an inner sense of self. But if that’s the case, gender identity is merely a disclosure of how one feels. Saying that someone is transgender, then, says only that the person has feelings that he or she is the opposite sex. Gender identity, so understood, has no bearing at all on the meaning of “sex” or anything else. But transgender activists claim that a person’s self-professed “gender identity” *is* that person’s “sex.” The challenge for activists is to explain why the mere feeling of being male or female (or both or neither) *makes* someone male or female (or both or neither).

Gender identity can sound a lot like religious identity, which is determined by beliefs. But those beliefs don’t determine reality. Someone who identifies as a Christian believes that Jesus is the Christ. Someone who identifies as a Muslim believes that Muhammad is the Final Prophet. But Jesus either is or is not the Christ, and Muhammad either is or is not the Final Prophet, regardless of what anyone happens to believe. So, too, a person either is or is not a man, regardless of what anyone – including that person – happens to believe. The challenge for transgender activists is to present an argument for why transgender beliefs determine reality.

Determining reality is the heart of the matter, and here too we find contradictions. On the one hand, transgender activists want the authority of science as they make metaphysical claims, saying that science reveals gender identity to be innate and unchanging. On the other hand, they deny that biology is destiny, insisting that people are free to be who they want to be. Which is it? Is our gender identity biologically determined and immutable, or self-created and changeable? If the former, how do we account for people whose gender identity changes over time? Do these people have the wrong sense of gender at some time or other? And if gender identity is self-created, why must other people accept it as reality? If we should be free to choose our own gender reality, why can some people impose their idea of reality on others just because they identify as transgender? The challenge for the transgender activist is to articulate some conception of truth as the basis for how we understand the common good and how society should be ordered.

As I document in depth in *When Harry Became Sally*, the claims of transgender activists are confusing because they are philosophically incoherent.

Activists rely on contradictory claims as needed to advance their position, but their ideology keeps evolving, so that even allies and LGBT organizations can get left behind as “progress” marches on. At the core of the ideology is the radical claim that feelings determine reality. From this idea come extreme demands for society to play along with subjective reality claims. Trans ideologues ignore contrary evidence and competing interests; they disparage alternative practices; and they aim to muffle skeptical voices and shut down any disagreement. The movement has to keep patching and shoring up its beliefs, policing the faithful, coercing the heretics, and punishing apostates, because as soon as its furious efforts flag for a moment or someone successfully stands up to it, the whole charade is exposed. That’s what happens when your dogmas are so contrary to obvious, basic, everyday truths. A transgender future is not the “right side of history,” yet activists have convinced the most powerful sectors of our society to acquiesce to their demands. While the claims they make are manifestly false, it will take real work to prevent the spread of these harmful ideas.

The Science of Sex Change

And these ideas can be harmful. There are human costs to getting human nature wrong. Contrary to the claims of activists, sex isn’t “assigned” at birth – and that’s why it can’t be “reassigned.” Sex is a bodily reality that can be recognized well before birth with ultrasound imaging. The sex of an organism is defined and identified by the way in which it (he or she) is organized for sexual reproduction.

This is just one manifestation of the fact that natural organization is “the defining feature of an organism,” as neuroscientist Maureen Condic and her philosopher brother Samuel Condic explain. In organisms, “the various parts ... are organized to cooperatively interact for the welfare of the entity as a whole. Organisms can exist at various levels, from microscopic single cells to sperm whales weighing many tons, yet they are all characterized by the integrated function of parts for the sake of the whole.”¹⁶

Male and female organisms have different parts that are functionally integrated for the sake of their whole, and for the sake of a larger whole – their sexual union and reproduction. So an organism’s sex – as male or female – is identified by its organization for sexually reproductive acts. Sex as a status – male or female – is a recognition of the organization of a body that can engage in sex as an act.

That organization is not just the best way to figure out which sex you are; it is the only way to make sense of the *concepts* of male and female at all. What else could “maleness” or “femaleness” even refer to, if not your basic physical capacity for one of two functions in sexual reproduction?

The conceptual distinction between male and female based on reproductive

¹⁶ Maureen L. Condic and Samuel B. Condic, “Defining Organisms by Organization,” *National Catholic Bioethics Quarterly* 5, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 336.

organization provides the only coherent way to classify the two sexes. Apart from that, all we have are stereotypes.

This shouldn't be controversial. Sex is understood this way across sexually reproducing species. No one finds it particularly difficult – let alone controversial – to identify male and female members of the bovine species or the canine species. Farmers and breeders rely on this easy distinction for their livelihoods. It's only recently, and only with respect to the human species, that the very concept of sex has become controversial.

And yet, as we saw earlier, medical experts such as Dr. Adkins profess that “[f]rom a medical perspective, the appropriate determinant of sex is gender identity.”¹⁷ In her sworn declaration to the federal court, Dr. Adkins called the standard account of sex – an organism's sexual organization – “an extremely outdated view of biological sex.” Dr. Lawrence Mayer responded in his rebuttal declaration: “This statement is stunning. I have searched dozens of references in biology, medicine and genetics – even Wiki! – and can find no alternative scientific definition. In fact the only references to a more fluid definition of biological sex are in the social policy literature.”¹⁸ Just so. Dr. Mayer is a scholar in residence in the Department of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and a professor of statistics and biostatistics at Arizona State University.

Modern science shows that our sexual organization begins with our DNA and development in the womb, and that sex differences manifest themselves in many bodily systems and organs, all the way down to the molecular level. In other words, our physical organization for one of two functions in reproduction shapes us organically, from the beginning of life, at every level of our being.

Cosmetic surgery and cross-sex hormones cannot change us into the opposite sex. They can affect appearances. They can stunt or damage some outward expressions of our reproductive organization. But they can't transform it. They can't turn us from one sex into the other.

“Scientifically speaking, transgender men are not biological men and transgender women are not biological women. The claims to the contrary are not supported by a scintilla of scientific evidence,” explains Dr. Mayer.¹⁹ Or, as Princeton philosopher Robert P. George put it, “Changing sexes is a metaphysical impossibility because it is a biological impossibility.”²⁰

The Psychosocial Outcomes of Sex Change

Sadly, just as “sex reassignment” fails to reassign sex biologically, it also fails to bring wholeness socially and psychologically. As I demonstrate in *When Harry*

¹⁷ Declaration of Deanna Adkins, 5.

¹⁸ Expert Rebuttal Declaration of Lawrence S. Mayer, M.D., M.S., Ph.D, U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina, Case 1:16-cv-00425-TDS-JEP.

¹⁹ Declaration of Lawrence S. Mayer, M.D., M.S., Ph.D, U.S. District Court, Middle District of North Carolina, Case 1:16-cv-00425-TDS-JEP, Exhibit K.

²⁰ Robert P. George, “Gnostic Liberalism,” *First Things* (December 2016).

Became Sally, the medical evidence suggests that it does not adequately address the psychosocial difficulties faced by people who identify as transgender.

Even when the procedures are successful technically and cosmetically, and even in cultures that are relatively “trans-friendly,” transitioners still face poor outcomes. Dr. Paul McHugh, the University Distinguished Service Professor of Psychiatry at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, explains:

Transgendered men do not become women, nor do transgendered women become men. All (including Bruce Jenner) become feminized men or masculinized women, counterfeits or impersonators of the sex with which they “identify.” In that lies their problematic future.

When “the tumult and shouting dies,” it proves not easy nor wise to live in a counterfeit sexual garb. The most thorough follow-up of sex-reassigned people – extending over thirty years and conducted in Sweden, where the culture is strongly supportive of the transgendered – documents their lifelong mental unrest. Ten to fifteen years after surgical reassignment, the suicide rate of those who had undergone sex-reassignment surgery rose to twenty times that of comparable peers.²¹

Dr. McHugh points to the reality that because sex change is physically impossible, it frequently does not provide the long-term wholeness and happiness that people seek. Indeed, the best scientific research supports McHugh’s caution and concern.

Here’s how the *Guardian* summarized the results of a review of “more than 100 follow-up studies of post-operative transsexuals” by Birmingham University’s Aggressive Research Intelligence Facility (Arif):

Arif, which conducts reviews of healthcare treatments for the NHS, concludes that none of the studies provides conclusive evidence that gender reassignment is beneficial for patients. It found that most research was poorly designed, which skewed the results in favour of physically changing sex. There was no evaluation of whether other treatments, such as long-term counselling, might help transsexuals, or whether their gender confusion might lessen over time.²²

“There is huge uncertainty over whether changing someone’s sex is a good or a bad thing,” said Chris Hyde, the director of Arif. Even if doctors are careful to perform these procedures only on “appropriate patients,” Hyde continued, “there’s still a large number of people who have the surgery but remain traumatized – often to the point of committing suicide.”²³

Of particular concern are the people these studies “lost track of.” As the *Guardian* noted, “the results of many gender reassignment studies are unsound because researchers lost track of more than half of the participants.” Indeed, “Dr. Hyde said the high drop out rate could reflect high levels of dissatisfaction or even suicide among post-operative transsexuals.” Dr. Hyde concluded: “The bottom line is that although it’s clear that some people do well with gender reassignment

²¹ Paul McHugh, “Transgenderism: A Pathogenic Meme,” *Public Discourse* (June 10, 2015), <http://www.thepublicdiscourse.com/2015/06/15145/>.

²² David Batty, “Mistaken identity,” *Guardian* (July 30, 2004), <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/jul/31/health.socialcare>.

²³ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2004/jul/30/health.mentalhealth>.

surgery, the available research does little to reassure about how many patients do badly and, if so, how badly.”²⁴

Arif conducted its review back in 2004, so perhaps things have changed in the past decade? Not so. In 2014, a new review of the scientific literature was done by Hayes, Inc., a research and consulting firm that evaluates the safety and health outcomes of medical technologies. Hayes found that the evidence on long-term results of sex reassignment was too sparse to support meaningful conclusions and gave these studies its lowest rating for quality:

Statistically significant improvements have not been consistently demonstrated by multiple studies for most outcomes. . . . Evidence regarding quality of life and function in male-to-female (MtF) adults was very sparse. Evidence for less comprehensive measures of well-being in adult recipients of cross-sex hormone therapy was directly applicable to GD patients but was sparse and/or conflicting. The study designs do not permit conclusions of causality and studies generally had weaknesses associated with study execution as well. There are potentially long-term safety risks associated with hormone therapy but none have been proven or conclusively ruled out.²⁵

The Obama administration came to similar conclusions. In 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid revisited the question whether sex reassignment surgery would have to be covered by Medicare plans. Despite receiving a request that its coverage be mandated, they refused, on the ground that we lack evidence that it benefits patients. Here’s how the June 2016 “Proposed Decision Memo for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery” put it:

Based on a thorough review of the clinical evidence available at this time, there is not enough evidence to determine whether gender reassignment surgery improves health outcomes for Medicare beneficiaries with gender dysphoria. There were conflicting (inconsistent) study results – of the best designed studies, some reported benefits while others reported harms. The quality and strength of evidence were low due to the mostly observational study designs with no comparison groups, potential confounding and small sample sizes. Many studies that reported positive outcomes were exploratory type studies (case-series and case-control) with no confirmatory follow-up.²⁶

The final August 2016 “Decision Memo for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery” was even more blunt. It pointed out that “[o]verall, the quality and strength of evidence were low due to mostly observational study designs with no comparison groups, subjective endpoints, potential confounding

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Hayes, Inc., “Hormone therapy for the treatment of gender dysphoria,” *Hayes Medical Technology Directory* (Lansdale, PA: Winifred Hayes, 2014), quoted in Cretella, “Gender Dysphoria in Children and Suppression of Debate,” *Journal of American Physicians and Surgeons* 21 (Summer 2016): 52. See also “Sex reassignment surgery or the treatment of gender dysphoria,” *Hayes Medical Technology Directory* (2014).

²⁶ Tamara Syrek Jensen et al., “Proposed Decision Memo for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery,” U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, File No. CAG-00446N (June 2, 2016), <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-proposed-decision-memo.aspx?NCAId=282>.

(a situation where the association between the intervention and outcome is influenced by another factor such as a co-intervention), small sample sizes, lack of validated assessment tools, and considerable lost to follow-up.” That “lost to follow-up,” remember, could be pointing to people who committed suicide.

And when it comes to the best studies, there is no evidence of “clinically significant changes” after sex reassignment:

The majority of studies were non-longitudinal, exploratory type studies (i.e., in a preliminary state of investigation or hypothesis generating), or did not include concurrent controls or testing prior to and after surgery. Several reported positive results but the potential issues noted above reduced strength and confidence. After careful assessment, we identified six studies that could provide useful information. Of these, the four best designed and conducted studies that assessed quality of life before and after surgery using validated (albeit non-specific) psychometric studies did not demonstrate clinically significant changes or differences in psychometric test results after GRS [gender reassignment surgery].²⁷

In a discussion of the largest and most robust study – the study from Sweden that Dr. McHugh mentioned in the quote above – the Obama Centers for Medicare and Medicaid pointed out the nineteen-times-greater likelihood for death by suicide, and a host of other poor outcomes:

The study identified increased mortality and psychiatric hospitalization compared to the matched controls. The mortality was primarily due to completed suicides (19.1-fold greater than in control Swedes), but death due to neoplasm and cardiovascular disease was increased 2 to 2.5 times as well. We note, mortality from this patient population did not become apparent until after 10 years. The risk for psychiatric hospitalization was 2.8 times greater than in controls even after adjustment for prior psychiatric disease (18%). The risk for attempted suicide was greater in male-to-female patients regardless of the gender of the control. Further, we cannot exclude therapeutic interventions as a cause of the observed excess morbidity and mortality. The study, however, was not constructed to assess the impact of gender reassignment surgery *per se*.²⁸

These results are tragic. And they directly contradict the most popular media narratives, as well as many of the snapshot studies that do not track people over time. As the Obama Centers for Medicare and Medicaid pointed out, “mortality from this patient population did not become apparent until after 10 years.” So when the media tout studies that only track outcomes for a few years, and claim that reassignment is a stunning success, there are good grounds for skepticism.

As I explain in my book, these outcomes should be enough to stop the headlong rush into sex-reassignment procedures. They should prompt us to

²⁷ Tamara Syrek Jensen et al., “Decision Memo for Gender Dysphoria and Gender Reassignment Surgery,” U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, File No. CAG-00446N (August 30, 2016), <https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-decision-memo.aspx?NCAId=282&bc>.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, discussing Cecilia Dhejne et al., “Long-term follow-up of transsexual persons undergoing sex reassignment surgery: cohort study in Sweden,” *PLOS ONE* 6 (February 2011): e16885.

develop better therapies for helping people who struggle with their gender identity. And none of this even begins to address the radical, entirely experimental therapies that are being directed at the bodies of children to transition them.²⁹

The Purpose of Medicine, Emotions, and the Mind

Behind the debates over therapies for people with gender dysphoria are two related questions: How do we define mental health and human flourishing? And what is the purpose of medicine, particularly psychiatry?

Those general questions encompass more specific ones: If a man has an internal sense that he is a woman, is that just a variety of normal human functioning, or is it a psychopathology? Should we be concerned about the disconnection between feeling and reality, or only about the emotional distress or functional difficulties it may cause? What is the best way to help people with gender dysphoria manage their symptoms: by accepting their insistence that they are the opposite sex and supporting a surgical transition, or by encouraging them to recognize that their feelings are out of line with reality and learn how to identify with their bodies? All of these questions require philosophical analysis and worldview judgments about what “normal human functioning” looks like and what the purpose of medicine is.

Settling the debates over the proper response to gender dysphoria requires more than scientific and medical evidence. Medical science alone cannot tell us what the *purpose* of medicine is. Science cannot answer questions about meaning or purpose in a moral sense. It can tell us about the function of this or that bodily system, but it can't tell us what to do with that knowledge. It cannot tell us how human beings ought to act. Those are philosophical questions.

While medical science does not answer philosophical questions, every medical practitioner has a philosophical worldview, explicit or not. Some doctors may regard feelings and beliefs that are disconnected from reality as a part of normal human functioning and not a source of concern unless they cause distress. Other doctors will regard those feelings and beliefs as dysfunctional in themselves, even if the patient does not find them distressing, because they indicate a defect in mental processes. But the assumptions made by this or that psychiatrist for purposes of diagnosis and treatment cannot settle the *philosophical* questions: Is it good or bad or neutral to harbor feelings and beliefs that are at odds with reality? Should we accept them as the last word, or try to understand their causes and correct them, or at least mitigate their effects?

While the current findings of medical science, as shown above, reveal poor psychosocial outcomes for people who have had sex-reassignment therapies, that conclusion should not be where we stop. We must also look deeper for philosophical wisdom, starting with some basic truths about human well-being and healthy functioning. We should begin by recognizing that sex reassignment is physically impossible. Our minds and senses function properly when they reveal

²⁹ See *When Harry Became Sally*, chap. 6 in particular.

reality to us and lead us to knowledge of truth. And we flourish as human beings when we embrace the truth and live in accordance with it. A person might find some emotional relief in embracing a falsehood, but doing so would not make him or her objectively better off. Living by a falsehood keeps us from flourishing fully, whether or not it also causes distress.

This philosophical view of human well-being is the foundation of a sound medical practice. Dr. Michelle Cretella, the president of the American College of Pediatricians – a group of doctors who formed their own professional guild in response to the politicization of the American Academy of Pediatrics – emphasizes that mental health care should be guided by norms grounded in reality, including the reality of the bodily self. “The norm for human development is for one’s thoughts to align with physical reality, and for one’s gender identity to align with one’s biologic sex,” she says.³⁰ For human beings to flourish, they need to feel comfortable in their own bodies, readily identify with their sex, and believe that they are who they actually are. For children especially, normal development and functioning require accepting their physical being and understanding their embodied selves as male or female.

Unfortunately, many professionals now view health care – including mental health care – primarily as a means of fulfilling patients’ desires, whatever those are. In the words of Leon Kass, a professor emeritus at the University of Chicago, today a doctor is often seen as nothing more than “a highly competent hired syringe”:

The implicit (and sometimes explicit) model of the doctor-patient relationship is one of contract: the physician – a highly competent hired syringe, as it were – sells his services on demand, restrained only by the law (though he is free to refuse his services if the patient is unwilling or unable to meet his fee). Here’s the deal: for the patient, autonomy and service; for the doctor, money, graced by the pleasure of giving the patient what he wants. If a patient wants to fix her nose or change his gender, determine the sex of unborn children, or take euphoriant drugs just for kicks, the physician can and will go to work – provided that the price is right and that the contract is explicit about what happens if the customer isn’t satisfied.³¹

This modern vision of medicine and medical professionals gets it wrong, says Dr. Kass. Professionals ought to profess their devotion to the purposes and ideals they serve. Teachers should be devoted to learning, lawyers to justice, clergy to things divine, and physicians to “healing the sick, looking up to health and wholeness.” Healing is “the central core of medicine,” Kass writes; “to heal, to make whole, is the doctor’s primary business.”

To provide the best possible care, serving the patient’s medical interests, requires an understanding of human wholeness and well-being. Mental health care must be guided by a sound concept of human flourishing. The minimal standard of care should begin with a standard of *normality*. Dr. Cretella explains how this

³⁰ Michelle Cretella, “Gender Dysphoria in Children and Suppression of Debate,” 51.

³¹ Leon R. Kass, “Neither for Love nor Money: Why Doctors Must Not Kill,” *Public Interest* 94 (Winter 1989): 28.

standard applies to mental health:

One of the chief functions of the brain is to perceive physical reality. Thoughts that are in accordance with physical reality are normal. Thoughts that deviate from physical reality are abnormal – as well as potentially harmful to the individual or to others. This is true whether or not the individual who possesses the abnormal thoughts feels distress.³²

Our brains and senses are designed to bring us into contact with reality, connecting us with the outside world and with the reality of ourselves. Thoughts that disguise or distort reality are misguided – and can cause harm. In *When Harry Became Sally*, I argue that we need to do a better job of helping people who face these struggles.

³² Cretella, “Gender Dysphoria in Children and Suppression of Debate,” 51. I would slightly tweak Dr. Cretella’s phrasing here. The philosopher in me bristles a little at her definition of normality as applied to the brain. After all, plenty of people have false beliefs about reality, including physical reality: think about our debates over global warming and climate change. Both sides of the debate can’t be right. Disagreement about contested issues is the norm for human rationality: frequently we don’t immediately see the correct answer. We have to discover it discursively, usually in a communal process of give and take, point and counterpoint. I am sure Cretella agrees and would readily acknowledge all of this.

The Church as a Mediating Institution

*Brandon Vaidyanathan**

ABSTRACT: This essay examines the role of the Church as a mediating institution, particularly in the context of migration, for research on migration sheds much light on the vital role played by the Church in such mediation between individuals and the state.

THE CHURCH PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE as a mediating institution in society. By mediating institution I mean what Peter Berger and Richard John Neuhaus defined as “those institutions standing between the individual and his private life and the large institutions of public life.”¹ In this paper I want to look at the role of the Church as a mediating institution, particularly in the context of migration, because the research on migration sheds much light on the vital role played by the Church in such mediation between individuals and the state.

Typically, when we think of the Church as a mediating institution, we think of those parishes that provide social services and help members form a sense of community, or the social bonds and sense of trust in such communities, the cultivation of civic skills, and so on. But these things are really only one aspect of the mediating role that the Church plays.

I want to explore here the distinction between “cultural” and “structural” forms of mediation. Cultural mediation mainly has to do with what is going on within churches: how they shape their members’ sense of meaning or civic skills or how they meet their needs. One way of talking about this is the idea of “social capital.” Structural mediation, on the other hand, has to do with the role of the Church as a macro-level entity in its relationship to other institutions – to the state, certainly, but also other institutions, including other religions. Structural mediation at the macro-level conditions and impinges upon the workings of congregations and parishes and upon individuals.

In the U.S., a lot of the research on the role of the Church as a mediating institution has been either about social capital or about post-1965 immigrants (for the U.S. changed its immigration policy in 1965). We have survey data at the national level on “social capital” and even on congregations, such as the National Congregations Study. But outside of the U.S. and Western Europe, there is not

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¹ Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus. “To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Institutions” (Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute, 1977).

much survey research on the ways religion mediates between individuals and the state. We do, however, have a rich body of case studies. We do not have representative sample surveys that can tell us, for instance, that “80 percent of Catholic parishes around the world conduct such-and-such activities or have such-and-such impact.” But these case studies should not be seen as simply anecdotal. Methodologically, what we learn from case studies is something important about the workings of causal powers and mechanisms of religious institutions, and more importantly, about the conditions that activate or inhibit some of those causal powers. This is to use the theory of “powers ontology” characteristic of critical realism, a philosophy of science that sees emergent entities as having distinctive powers that are activated or inhibited differently in different contexts.²

What are these powers? At the macro-global level, we can see the Church as a transnational organization with diplomatic expertise, moral authority, a governance structure, and so on. This gives it certain kinds of causal capacities, but it also subjects it to certain constraints by other institutions.

At the organizational level, it has a number of other powers and capacities, including:

- a. organizational form (unlike house churches), which affords visibility;
- b. leadership structure (full-time clergy, who require religious visas in certain countries; lay involvement in leadership can also vary);
- c. space (which allows the possibility of holding meetings, the possibility of interactions across ethnic and class groups or conflict between them);
- d. doctrinal beliefs (some activated, some not);
- e. practices (prayer and worship);
- f. pan-ethnic membership.

All of these can facilitate the flourishing of members and contribute to broader society beyond just church membership. But they can also inhibit flourishing, as we will see.

In what follows, I will focus on three aspects of the Church as a mediating institution, under the following headings: (1) cultural mediation, (2) structural mediation, and (3) mediation between the state and the individual.

1. Cultural Mediation

Cultural mediation has to do with what is going on within churches: How do they shape members, or others in broader society, who come to them or who are in need? This is where the bulk of research is concentrated. Cultural sociologists³

² Dave Elder-Vass, *The Causal Power of Social Structures: Emergence, Structure and Agency* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

³ Orlando Patterson, “Making Sense of Culture,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 40 (2014): 1-30; Omar Lizardo, “Improving Cultural Analysis: Considering Personal Culture in Its Declarative and Nondeclarative Modes,” *American Sociological Review* 82, no. 1

propose that we think of two types of culture:

(1) *Declarative culture*. This has to do with beliefs, values, meanings – things that we can articulate. As Berger and Neuhaus note, the state apparatus is not especially competent in providing meaning, identity, and personal fulfilment; these are found in the private sphere. So, religious communities provide theological beliefs, doctrines, theodicies, and so on that are especially relevant to people in unsettled times, such as moving to a new country, whether as a guest worker, refugee, or other kind of immigrant. But these meanings and beliefs are also crucial in shaping how these people are received and helped.

In her comparative research on Haitian immigrants in three countries,⁴ Margarita Mooney depicts how people's theologies guide them through their struggles in this world by focusing them on the world to come. Her work shows how religious meanings play a vital role in organizing and sustaining moral communities.

(2) *Non-declarative culture*. This has to do with aspects of culture that we cannot articulate: things like skills, habits, dispositions, capacities.

These two modes of knowing are cognitively acquired, encoded, and deployed through very distinct mechanisms. You cannot learn how to shoot a three-pointer in basketball or how to ride a bike by reading a book or attending a lecture; these are different forms of knowledge.

So, when we think about how cultural mediation happens, we need to keep in mind Gilbert Ryle's distinction between "knowing that" – the beliefs, values, doctrines, and so on that are taught in declarative mode – and "knowing how," which has to do with practically encoded skills and capacities.⁵

Churches are sites for the cultivation of both these forms of culture, but they do not go hand in hand. Just because churches teach certain beliefs, it does not mean that members have the occasions to encode them as practical skills. Conversely, the kinds of skills and capacities by which people learn to navigate practically the life of a faith community may be at odds with formal beliefs to which those communities aspire.

Keeping this in mind, I want to turn to another important theme in the research on cultural mediation, namely, how churches cultivate certain types of capital among members. In using the term "capital" there is a basic underlying idea of some exchange value or fungibility that allows for the analogy with economic capital.

(2017): 88-115.

⁴ Margarita Mooney, *Faith Makes Us Live: Surviving and Thriving in the Haitian Diaspora* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009).

⁵ Gilbert Ryle, "Knowing How and Knowing That: The Presidential Address," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, vol. 46 (1945): 1-16.

Social Capital

Probably the most influential concept here is “social capital.” Robert Putnam, for instance, defines social capital as the social ties, social connections, and bonds in various groups and communities, as well as the norms of reciprocity that arise from them.⁶ He sees this as a vital necessity for building and maintaining democracy. One can see traces of this kind of idea in the work of de Tocqueville as well.⁷

This assertion does not mean these activities are performed only in democracies, or that they necessarily lead to democratization. Political scientists like Ariel Armony have shown that most of the activities that are considered indicators of social capital or civic engagement – joining voluntary organizations, electing officers, participatory decision-making, developing rules and constitutions, and so on – are prevalent in a number of non-democratic contexts, including ethno-nationalist movements, racist groups, prison gangs, and militias.⁸

Putnam distinguishes two kinds of social capital: bonding capital, which has to do with ties between homogenous groups of people, and bridging capital (ties between heterogeneous groups of people). How do churches contribute to these forms of capital?

There is abundant data on how churches foster bonding social capital. Particularly in contexts of migration, churches become a vital site for the generation and cultivation of social bonds.⁹ Part of this is because religious communities become vital to the identities of immigrants. Research in the U.S. and Europe shows that the religious identities of migrants become more salient to them than they were in their home countries.¹⁰ Religious communities also become vital sites for the preservation and continuation of language, ethnic customs, local festivals, local foods, and so on.¹¹ The connections that people make here often

⁶ Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2001).

⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003).

⁸ Ariel Armony, *The Dubious Link: Civic Engagement and Democratization* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

⁹ Wendy Cadge and Elaine Howard Ecklund, “Immigration and Religion,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 33 (2007): 359-79.

¹⁰ Janet Saltzman Chafetz and Helen Rose Ebaugh, *Religion and the New Immigrants: Continuities and Adaptations in Immigrant Congregations* (Lanham, MD: Altamira Press, 2000); Prema Kurien, *A Place at the Multicultural Table: The Development of an American Hinduism* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2007); Nancy Foner and Richard Alba, “Immigrant Religion in the US and Western Europe: Bridge or Barrier to Inclusion?” *International Migration Review* 42, no. 2 (2008): 360-92.

¹¹ Kenneth J. Guest, *God in Chinatown: Religion and Survival in New York’s Evolving Immigrant Community* (New York: New York University Press, 2003); Pyong Gap Min, “The Structure and Social Functions of Korean Immigrant Churches in the United States,” *International Migration Review* 26, no. 4 (1992): 1370-94.

help them find housing and employment.

When it comes to bridging social capital, however, we see mixed results. In the U.S., we are observing tensions in a number of Catholic parishes between older and newer generations of migrants. It is not uncommon to find a parish divided into two communities: an elderly generation of Polish or Irish folks who immigrated before 1965 and whose kids have either moved out to suburbs or stopped attending; and a newer generation of Hispanic immigrants who arrived in the last couple of decades. There are strong tensions between these communities: for example, older people see Mexicans as being selfish for not tithing, without realizing that in Mexico this is not really a norm because the churches are owned by the state. Older immigrants understand worship as requiring quiet reverence, whereas the new immigrants want jubilant, lively, celebratory expression, which older parishioners see as disrespectful.¹²

In cases where there are multiple ethnic communities vying for the limited space available in the church to hold their group meetings, it can get pretty political. Different ethnic factions start competing for the favorable attention of the pastor and access to resources for their own groups. In one case I studied, when the parish priest did not grant one of the ethnic groups its request, the group tried to get the parish shut down.

Bridging is difficult not just across ethnicities but also across generations, because the interests and priorities of the first generation of immigrants are different from those of the second generation. The research shows various forms of tension here.

There is tension between ascribed and achieved identities: That one's religious identity becomes more salient after migrating does not mean necessarily that one's personal faith is stronger. The religious identity of, say, an Irish or Italian or Mexican immigrant to the U.S. (or a Muslim immigrant to Europe, for that matter) is often a way to maintain continuity with tradition: this is who we are, and this is how we have always done things; it is an ascribed identity. For subsequent generations, though, a religious identity is something achieved; it needs to be chosen among all the other options available through schools, peers, media, and so on. At this point we may observe individuals changing religions, from Catholic to evangelical or Pentecostal Christianity, or to no religion at all.

Another issue across generations occurs when foreign-born immigrants retain leadership of their ethnic associations or parish councils, and so on, within their own generation. For many, these leadership roles are not available to them elsewhere in society, and so it becomes a key means of finding respect and exerting influence. Some communities also prioritize causes back in their home

¹² Patricia Snell Herzog and Brandon Vaidyanathan, "Conflict & Community: Twin Tensions in Becoming a Multiethnic Congregation," *Review of Religious Research* 57, no. 4 (2015): 507-29.

country – such as raising money for their own hometowns and seminaries – which creates a tension with the second generation, who would prefer to support local causes instead.¹³

These sorts of data pose an important problem for the concept of social capital, if the term is used as more than a metaphor. Its different components do not necessarily hang together as though there were some true underlying property of the group.¹⁴

Another more analytical (rather than prescriptive/positive) conception of social capital is found in the work of Pierre Bourdieu.¹⁵ For him, social capital means simply the ties and connections that serve to maintain and reproduce power and social distance (old boys' networks, for instance). We can see this in ethnographies of parishes as well.

Cultural Capital

In contrast to social capital, cultural capital has to do with the skills, habits, competencies, and dispositions that are cultivated in religious settings but are transferable to other contexts. Some of this could include what is called “human capital” – intentional training in certain kinds of skills: English-language skills, resume-writing, and so on, which many church communities around the world offer to immigrants. Entrepreneurship skills might also be included, though it seems that Catholic parishes do not emphasize this very much, in comparison with some other religious communities.

¹³ Prema Kurien, *Ethnic Church Meets Mega Church: Indian American Christianity in Motion* (New York: New York University Press, 2017).

¹⁴ There is considerable scholarship that uses this concept to say that people or communities possess a measurable amount or “stock” of social capital. Network ties, associational membership, attitudes of trust and so on are added to produce a composite measure of social capital that is supposed to indicate some underlying quality of the group. But how do you weight these different dimensions, especially if they do not necessarily hang together (for example, associational membership and trust: have you been to a parish council meeting?) So, as sociologist Robert Fishman notes: “There is no plausibly equivalent metric for assessing the total ‘social wealth’ of an individual or a collective actor. One cannot exchange family ties for professional connections, or the reverse.” Robert M. Fishman, “On the Costs of Conceptualizing Social Ties as Social Capital,” in *Social Capital: Reaching Out, Reaching In*, ed. Viva Ona Bartkus and James H. Davis (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2009), 67-83 at 70. The attempt to come up with some undifferentiated composite measure of social capital does not seem possible or very useful. We get a concept where the whole actually tells us less than the sum of the parts. The concept also has a tautological dimension: social capital is understood as the cause of things like giving, volunteering, and trust, but those are the very things that define social capital in the first place.

¹⁵ Pierre Bourdieu, “The Forms of Capital,” *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*, ed. John G. Richardson (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 1986), 241-58.

Primarily what I refer to here are skills and dispositions that are not cultivated primarily because they are going to help someone get a job: rather, they are things like leadership skills, organizational skills, even things like using Excel spreadsheets or Power Point, that are cultivated in a youth group or parish council. But it turns out, as I have found in some of my research in India and the Middle East, these skills become very useful to people in their workplaces, and people even say they were promoted at work because of these skills that they picked up in their churches. If you have church groups where members have some of these skills (for example, they are corporate professionals), they can cultivate these skills among younger members in the group by getting them involved in making presentations and so on, which in turn gives these members an advantage in their workplace.

Among skills and capacities, we can also include civic capabilities. For immigrants to the U.S., churches have played an important role in helping members study for citizenship exams, acquiring citizenship, and encouraging voting. In some contexts, the Church also plays a role in activities of political mobilization such as protesting. But the Church also plays a crucial role in places where Catholics do not have the possibility of becoming citizens, and thereby shapes their sense of belonging and ability to give back.

Financial Capital

People often turn to the Church as a source of financial help. Parishes around the world have things like benevolence committees and funds set aside for members (and even sometimes non-members) with needs. Churches also have volunteer groups that are organized to serve not only those in the parish but also the needy in the broader community (visiting prisoners, visiting hospitals, serving the homeless). In her research on migrants, Margarita Mooney argues that the Church is not just a place where they receive help, but also a place where they learn to give. Being a one-way recipient of aid from a state agency creates a sense of disempowerment, compared with receiving help from people in the church or prayer group, where there is also the possibility of giving back. The Church creates the space in which people learn to give, develop the desire to give back, and develop habits of giving, which then, as I find in some of my research, starts to spill over into other contexts outside the Church.

Having summarized some of the main forms of cultural mediation, I now want to turn to look at structural mediation.

2. Structural Mediation

Structural mediation has to do with the role of the Church as a macro-level entity in its relationship to other macro-level entities. Here I chiefly want to discuss political and social regulations that shape most of what we discussed above.

Political Regulations

What are the effects of different configurations of church-state relationships? Margarita Mooney, who based on her research on Haitian migrants to three countries (the U.S., Canada, and France), identifies three models:

(1) *Cooperation*: In Miami, Mooney finds that the relationship between the Church's social service center and state agencies is one of cooperation. The Church's center receives state funding (which took considerable advocacy on the part of Church leaders), but it is not just one-way: these state agencies also look to the Church for guidance on how best to serve the needs of the community. This is, I would argue, a form of subsidiarity as mutuality: it is not just that state delegates to churches, but also the state learns from churches.

(2) *Conflict*: In the Montreal case, the state has been trying to replace the Church's social service office to Haitian migrants. Because the state does not want to give any funding to churches, they want to avoid funding associations with any ties to the Church, even if these associations serve the broader community and not just their members. This impedes not only the ability of the Church to help these migrants, but also their ability to assimilate into society without the support they need.

(3) *Invisibility*: The third model, which she calls invisibility, is found in Paris. Because the French government believes integration must occur at the individual level, the ethnic community is of no consequence to them. Associations, therefore, are invisible to the state. In fact, much research shows that in Europe at large this is the perception: ethno-religious associations are seen as a hindrance to the integration of individuals. The state, in this model, believes that it knows what is best for the individual and sees the cultural mediation that churches provide as irrelevant if not problematic. (As an aside, France is also a peculiar case, because in spite of its commitment to *laïcité*, the state funds Catholic schools and allows students freedom of religious expression there. As a result, female Muslim students who want to wear headscarves flock to Catholic schools.¹⁶)

As a consequence, when you look at the same migrant group – e.g., Haitian Catholics – in these three different contexts, in the cooperation model we find more of those forms of capital to be mobilized, and structurally, more opportunities for members of those communities to assimilate and find upward socio-economic mobility. Conversely, the conflict and invisibility models will likely inhibit the long-term integration of these communities and foster their stagnation and inhibit their mobility (which then can produce societally harmful effects such as unemployment, gang violence, and so on).

(4) I would also like to propose a fourth category, which is *cooptation*. This has to do with cases where the Church perhaps does not want the state's help.

¹⁶ Jose Casanova, "Public Religions Revisited," in *Religion: Beyond a Concept*, ed. Hent de Vries (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 101-19.

Consider the archdiocese of Bangalore in India. In the 1950s India reorganized its states along the lines of majority language. The city of Bangalore became the capital of a state where the regional language is Kannada. The majority of Catholics, however, are an import from a different state, whose mother tongue is Tamil. After Vatican II, when the language of the liturgy shifted to the vernacular, there began a series of disputes in the Church. Tamil and English speakers constituted most of the parishes in the heart of the city; Kannada speakers were predominant in rural areas. Tamil-speaking priests got the large parishes in the city; Kannada priests were relegated to the boonies – no electricity or water; even the translation of the liturgy to Kannada took longer. Meanwhile in broader society we see the rise of a linguistic nationalism; the agenda of the new linguistic state and their activists resonated with the Kannada priests, who started demanding that Kannada be instituted as the official language of the liturgy. This produced a legacy of violent conflict. Five years ago, the rector of the seminary was murdered by priests because of these language politics.¹⁷

Social Restrictions

Having talked about political regulations, I want to discuss the role of social restrictions – in particular, the role of the dominant religion. In the Arabian Gulf, we have non-democratic Islamic countries, where churches are given land by the state, and the freedom of worship is within confined spaces; it is not true freedom of religion. Proselytism is prohibited by law. The Church will not baptize a Muslim, for fear of being shut down. India, by contrast, is a democratic country, which is purportedly secular (constitutionally, the government should treat all religions equally). But we now have a fundamentalist Hindu party in power, which around the country is enforcing anti-conversion laws. Priests to whom I talk there make a point to say, “See, we’re not converting anybody!” Right-wing parties also sponsor violent attacks on churches. The visibility of the Church – a key causal capacity at the meso-level – plays a crucial role here. When fundamentalist groups are angry because of some news about American evangelical church plants that converted Hindus, they attack Catholic churches, clergy, and nuns. These different kinds of political and social regulations affect the ways in which churches can function as effective mediating institutions.

3. Conclusion: Mediating between the State and the Individual

We have talked so far about the Church as a mediating institution. But mediation between what or whom, exactly? As Berger and Neuhaus put it, the

¹⁷ See Brandon Vaidyanathan, “The Politics of Liturgy in the Archdiocese of Bangalore,” in *Catholics in the Vatican II Era: Local Histories of a Global Event*, ed. Kathleen Cummings, Timothy Matovina Sprows, and Robert A. Orsi (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 18-205.

mediation is between the state and the individual. But what kind of state, and what kind of individual? Now in most of the research on this topic, the state is assumed to mean a democratic government (as found in the global North); so we know very little about non-democratic contexts, and we also know little about the role of the Church in response to migration flows within the global South.

Also the kinds of “individuals” the research focuses on are mainly citizens and new immigrants (that is, new permanent residents and refugees). Assumed here is a kind of “teleology of naturalization,” as anthropologist Neha Vora argues.¹⁸ The individuals on whom much of the research focuses are either legal citizens or those who can politically assimilate into their host society. What is overlooked are various modes of what sociologist Syed Ali calls “permanent impermanence.”¹⁹ There is a growing number of contexts in which juridico-legal assimilation is not possible for many residents, Catholics included. Only thirty countries offer birthright citizenship. When you look at the Arabian Gulf, which is where I grew up, the majority of the population of some of these countries like the United Arab Emirates is composed of expats, some of whom are third- or fourth-generation expats, with no possibility of citizenship – and in some of these cities, because of the Filipino and Indian populations, we have possibly the largest Catholic parishes in the world (in terms of membership), such as one parish of 300,000 Catholics, for example. Given today’s climate, I think the Church will increasingly find herself in contexts where the majority of its members are non-citizens – whether guest workers or undocumented migrants.

We also need more comparisons of the role of the Church in democratic and non-democratic contexts. Because we may, unfortunately, be moving toward a world in which the difference is not all that significant.

¹⁸ Neha Vora, *Impossible Citizens: Dubai’s Indian Diaspora* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013).

¹⁹ Syed Ali, “Permanent Impermanence,” *Contexts* 9, no. 2 (2010): 26-31.

For Children, Marriage Is More Than a Piece of Paper

*Laurie DeRose**

ABSTRACT: In recent decades, much of the globe has witnessed a retreat from marriage. The 2017 World Family Map Report investigated whether the rise of births to cohabiting couples has contributed to instability in children's lives. Data from individual children's life histories in the United States and Europe showed that children were about twice as likely to see their parents split before they reached age twelve, even when controlling for the education level of mothers and grandmothers. Using data from numerous countries around the globe, this study also finds that family instability is higher in countries where more children are born to cohabiting couples and that growth of cohabitation is associated with increases in the instability of the children's family. In other words, marriage seems to be associated with more family stability for children across much of the globe, whereas cohabitation is typically associated with more instability.

IN RECENT DECADES, much of the globe has witnessed a retreat from marriage. This means that more children are being born outside of marriage in countries around the world. Childbearing within cohabiting unions has grown even more than childbearing among lone mothers.

What does this mean for stability in children's lives? On the one hand, children born to cohabiting couples have a decided advantage over children born to lone mothers: they start out life with both biological parents. On the other hand, cohabiting unions are not as stable as marriages. For the 2017 World Family Map Project,¹ we pursued two distinct ways of demonstrating that cohabitation and marriage did not yield the same degree of stability for children.

The first way used data on European and American children born around 1993. From surveys in seventeen different countries,² we were able to identify the proportion of children born to cohabiting parents who experienced family stability (no parental union disruption) through age twelve. We compared that figure to the proportion of children born to married parents who experienced family stability

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¹ See <http://worldfamilymap.ifstudies.org/2017/>.

² See <http://www.nonmarital.org/HarmHist.htm> for how the surveys were harmonized into a single dataset.

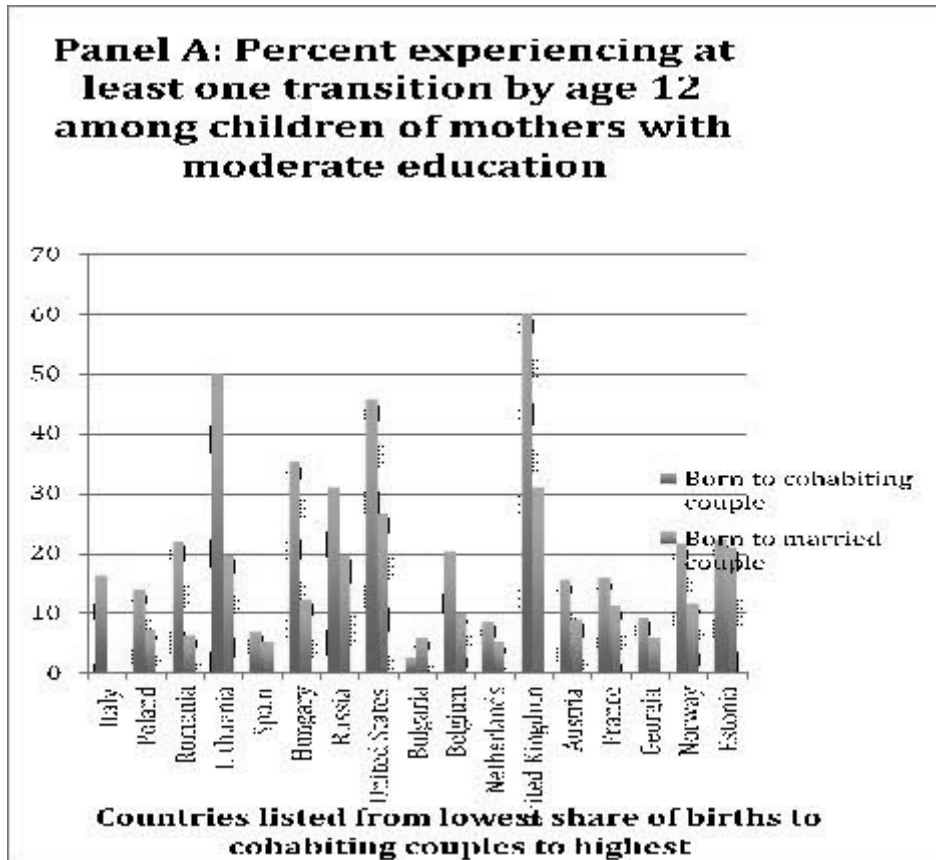
through age twelve.

Overall, the risk of parental union disruption was about twice as great for children born in cohabitation than for those born within a marriage. By itself, this is not a remarkable finding because even those who think that marriage confers stability nonetheless recognize that marriage implies a greater commitment than cohabitation.

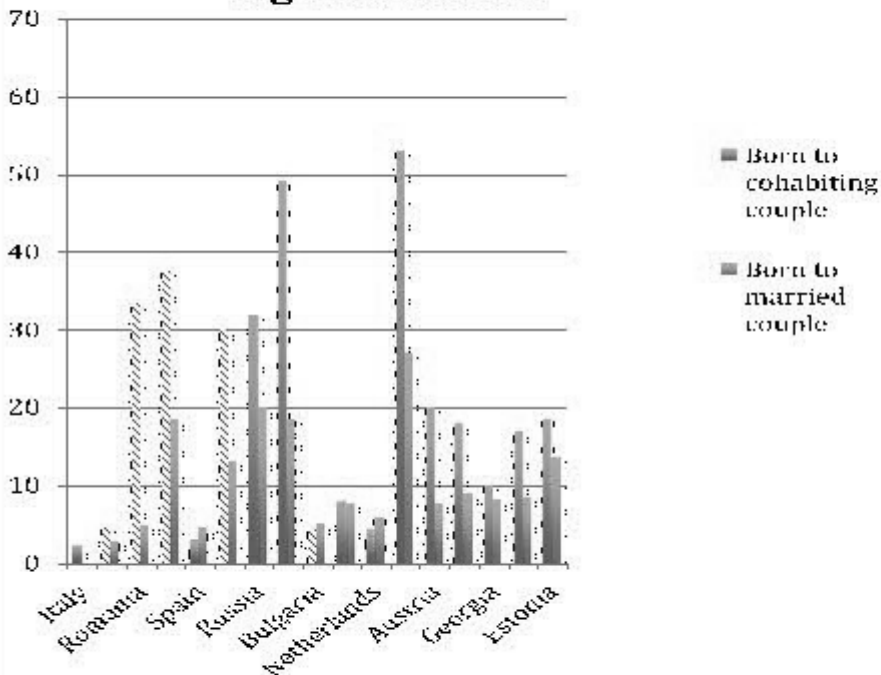
What is more striking is that our figures did not change much when controlling for the education level of the mother or the education level of the grandmother. This topic is relevant to the question of whether marriage per se matters for family stability because cohabitation is generally more common among the less educated, and unions are generally less stable among the less educated. These correlations mean that we could envision a stability advantage that we associate with marriage that actually has nothing to do with marriage itself but only reflects the greater resources that married people commonly have. Our results, instead, support the idea that marriage itself matters, because even when controlling for socioeconomic status across the preceding two generations, children born within marriage have more stable family lives than children born within cohabitation.

This point can be understood by noting the rates of union disruption when graphed in terms of various levels of maternal education. If education levels were driving the relationship between partnership context at birth and subsequent stability, we would expect to see similar rates of union disruption within a given educational group regardless of whether the child's biological parents were married when he or she was born. That is, all of those subject to elevated risk would be found across various educational groups, not within them. Instead, parental break-ups were much more common in the case of children born in cohabiting unions at each of three educational levels. Although there were a few exceptions – for example, among children of moderately educated mothers in Bulgaria, the children whose parents were married at birth were more likely to experience parents who split up than children whose parents were cohabiting at birth – the instability risk associated with cohabitation was consistently present among almost all other countries at every education level. In other words, there is a stability premium associated with marriage that does not depend on maternal education level.

Figure 1: Union status at birth and subsequent stability

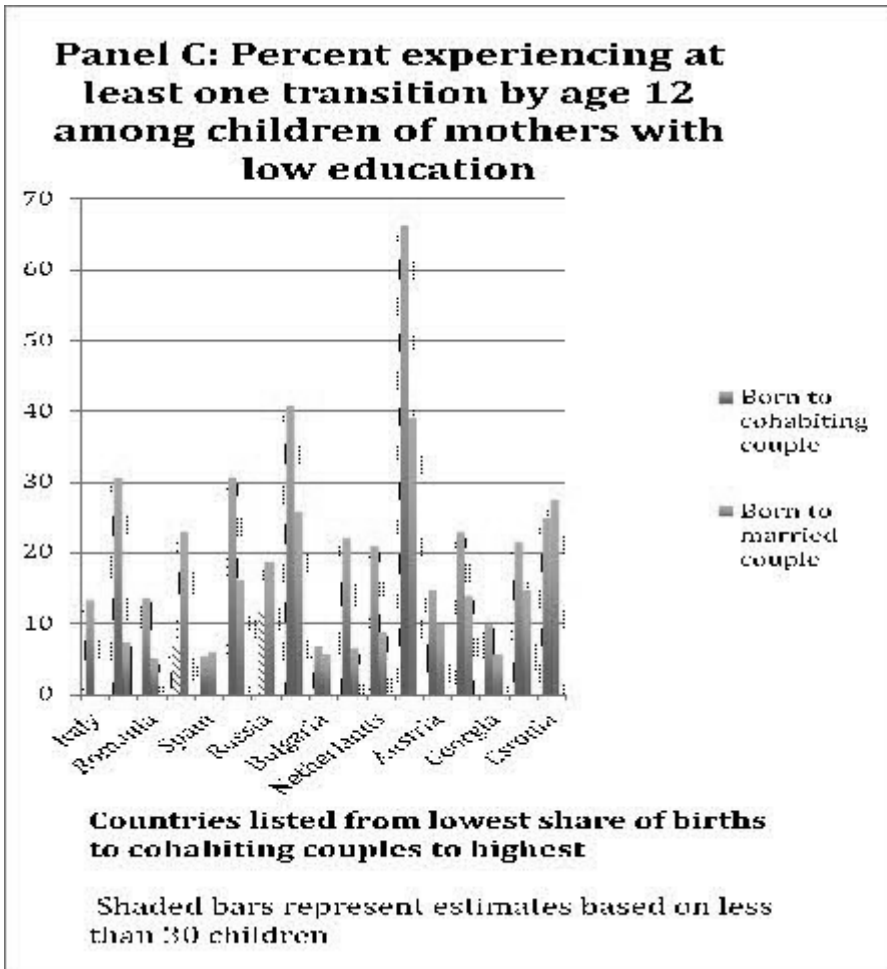


Panel B: Percent experiencing at least one transition by age 12 among children of mothers with high education



Countries listed from lowest share of births to cohabiting couples to highest

Shaded bars represent estimates based on less than 30 children



It is also of particular importance that the countries in Figure 1 are arrayed in a way that ranges from those with low proportions of births in cohabitation to those with high proportions, and yet there is no clear pattern in the stability gap. In these data, the relative stability of cohabiting and marital unions for children did not depend on how normative cohabitation had become.

We also investigated how the prevalence of birth to cohabiting parents influences the chances that twelve-year-olds will still be living with both their biological parents. The results in Figure 1 are drawn from individual children's life histories.

Our second analysis instead focuses on *societies*: it asks the question whether fewer children experience family stability where cohabitation is more common (and also where it is growing). This macro-level analysis answers one important question in its own right, but it also allows us to include countries from across the globe, for the data requirements of the analysis were not as stringent: we did not need individual life histories. We used cross-sectional data on partnership context at birth to predict the proportion of children who would be living with both biological parents in a later cross-section.³

The relationship across a hundred countries that is shown in Figure 2 demonstrates a clearly negative association: countries with more cohabiting births have fewer children living with both biological parents.

We also asked the question whether growth in the proportion of all births that occur to cohabiting couples predicts a growth in the share of children with unstable family lives. For this analysis, we were limited to the sixty-eight countries that offered data from at least two points in time (two surveys between which the change in partnership context at birth could be measured and two surveys between which the change in children's living arrangements could be measured). Here the relationship is not as strong, but nonetheless points to decreasing stability for children born to cohabiting couples.

Stability matters in children's lives. Children with stable family lives fare better across a wide variety of measures (educational success, emotional health, and more). The growth in cohabitation does not seem to serve children well.

³ See <http://worldfamilymap.ifstudies.org/2017/> for the wide variety of data sources employed for this exercise.

Figure 2

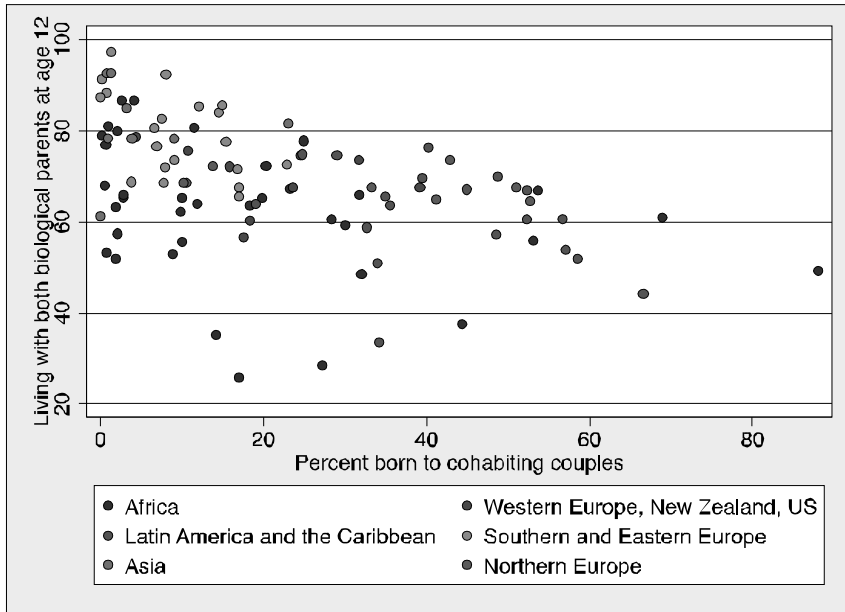
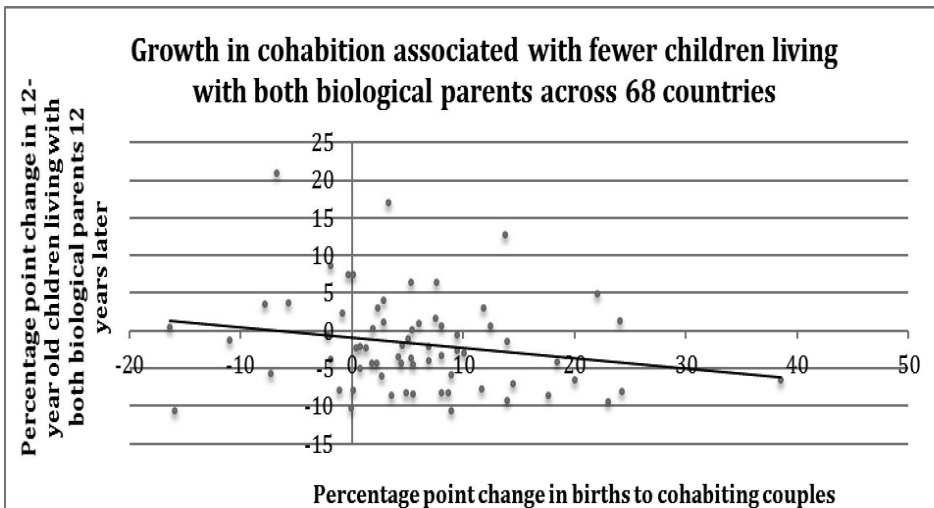


Figure 3



The Seton Option: Catholic Schools and Good Citizens

Catherine R. Pakaluk*

ABSTRACT: Catholic schools have been in decline in number and population since the early 1960s, when more than 5.2 million students were enrolled in approximately 13,000 schools. Today, Catholic schools enroll only about 1.8 million students, or approximately 3 percent of the total school children in the United States. In the last major papal encyclical on education, *Divini Illius Magistri*, Pius XI argued that Catholic schools were essential for the health of the Church and for the making of good citizens. If this is right, then the decline of the Catholic schools should be a cause for concern and may have some explanatory power for thinking about various levels of civic disorder and political breakdown. I review a few of the existing studies on the relation between religious schools and citizenship, and I highlight areas for new research suggested by these reflections.

IN HIS DULLES LECTURE in March of 2017 on the social vision of Leo XIII in the twentieth century, Russell Hittinger explained that the “realist” paradigm of the Church for social order may be formulated as a revision of “the Aristotelian dictum: The human person is a domestic (matrimonial-familial) animal, a political animal, and an ecclesial animal.”¹ This formulation is derived from the “three necessary societies” – so-called by Pius XI, who developed and advanced Leo’s social vision: “Now there are three necessary societies,” says Pius XI, “distinct from one another and yet harmoniously combined by God, into which man is born: two, namely, the family and civil society, belong to the natural order; the third, the Church, to the supernatural order.”² Of these Hittinger warns: “Should these societies wither, we would have social problems. *A demise of the necessary societies would mark a social calamity.*”³

What, then, contributes to the health and sustenance of these societies? The answer is obviously complex, since each society depends upon the other, and not in a simplistic part-to-whole relation. For instance, domestic society is certainly the smallest “cell” of civil society, but civil society is not the mere summation of

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¹ Russell Hittinger, “The Three Necessary Societies,” *First Things* (June/July 2017): 19-26, at 20.

² *Divini Illius Magistri*, 11.

³ Hittinger, 20 (emphasis mine).

many families. And while the family is *prior to* civil society in the order of nature, the family is not a complete society: she depends upon civil society to achieve the ends proper to her. Therefore, civil society can either “obstruct” or “aid” the domestic society – usually it does both. And families can supply or fail-to-supply what is needed for civil society – not merely bodies, but citizens, patriots, hard-workers, soldiers, inventors, statesmen, farmers, entrepreneurs, heroes, and saints.

Mediating institutions “mediate” because they sit between the individual and the state. The family is not a “mediating” institution, for it is the first and primary society. Rather, we can say that mediating institutions sit between domestic society and the state, and they populate civil society at various levels. Mediating institutions are the “stuff” of civil society. Individuals and families should not be “naked,” as it were, before the state, but rather “clothed” with multiple layers of associations, loyalties, identities, communities, and so forth. These associations include schools, churches, clubs, recreational groups, arts, music and cultural associations, and so on. Importantly, the closer these layers of association are to the family, the more important they are to the health of individuals and the health of the three societies taken together. Thus, for instance, many a place of education, especially colleges, has affectionately been called *alma mater*. The Church is also *mater* (and *magistra*). Familial language – *mater* – is used to refer to the mediating institutions closest to the family, for their role is taken to be so important, so formative, as to be “like a mother.” The Church is, of course, in the order of grace, a mother indeed. While the Church constitutes her own “society” – the ecclesial one – churches in general, and other religious institutions, are “parts” of civil society.

Already in 1931 Pius XI worried that mediating institutions were in such grave decline as to herald the near collapse of civil society and the demise of the state itself. In *Quadragesimo Anno* he wrote:

When we speak of the reform of institutions, the State comes chiefly to mind, not as if universal well-being were to be expected from its activity, but because things have come to such a pass through the evil of what we have termed “individualism” that, following upon the overthrow and near extinction of that rich social life which was once highly developed through associations of various kinds, there remain virtually only individuals and the State. This is to the great harm of the State itself; for, with a structure of social governance lost, and with the taking over of all the burdens which the wrecked associations once bore, the State has been overwhelmed and crushed by almost infinite tasks and duties.⁴

In *Quadragesimo Anno*, Pius XI refers principally to labor associations – “industries and professions” – when he talks about the retreat of civil society. He

⁴ *Quadragesimo Anno*, 78.

urges states then to encourage, through social policy, the re-establishment of guilds and workers' associations. But he begs and implores that these associations be thoroughly imbued with Christian principles. The central message of *Quadragesimo* is roughly this: “two things are especially necessary [for the restoration of social order]: reform of institutions and correction of morals.”⁵ Reform of institutions means principally that civil society should be repopulated with robust *mediating institutions*. Correction of morals means that institutions should assist in the formation of habits of heart and mind necessary for abiding in the third society: the ecclesial one. Put together, Pius's remedy is the reform of Christian institutions. He is unflinchingly blunt: “All experts in social problems are seeking eagerly a structure so fashioned in accordance with the norms of reason that it can lead economic life back to sound and right order. But this order ...will be wholly defective and incomplete unless all the activities of men harmoniously unite to imitate and attain, in so far as it lies within human strength, the marvelous unity of the Divine plan.”⁶

Quadragesimo Anno (1931) is usually studied on its own, but to do this is a mistake. In fact, it is the third document of a remarkable “triplet” in the social magisterium of Pius XI with *Divini Illius Magistri* (1929) – on Christian Education⁷ and *Casti Connubii* (1930) – on Christian Marriage. The unity across this trio is striking, as is evidenced perhaps most dramatically by the fact that Pius XI's exposition of the three societies quoted above occurs not in *Quadragesimo* but in the first of these documents, the encyclical on Christian education. “Education is a social, and not a mere individual activity,” begins the passage on the three necessary societies. Pius's formulation of things in *Divini Illius Magistri* is the same as that found in *Quadragesimo*: reform of institutions and correction of morals. Catholic schools, he argues, are necessary for the restoration of social order. They are necessary for the life of all three societies, domestic, civil, and ecclesial. And – this is critical – since the three societies are necessary for the state, Catholic schools are necessary for the state. In this, as in the framework of the three societies, Pius XI was following Leo XIII. Consider this from the 1885 encyclical *Spectata Fides*:

For it is in and by these schools that the Catholic faith, our greatest and best inheritance, is preserved whole and entire. In these schools the liberty of parents is respected; and, what is most needed, especially in the prevailing license of opinion and of action, *it is by these schools that good citizens are brought up for the State; for there is no better citizen than the man who has believed and practiced the Christian faith from his childhood.* The

⁵ *Quadragesimo Anno*, 77.

⁶ *Quadragesimo Anno*, 136 (emphasis mine).

⁷ *Divini Illius Magistri* is the most recent papal encyclical on Catholic education in general. John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* concerned universities and seminaries in particular.

beginning and, as it were, the seed of that human perfection which Jesus Christ gave to mankind, are to be found in the Christian education of the young; for the future condition of the State depends upon the early training of its children. The wisdom of our forefathers, *and the very foundations of the State*, are ruined by the destructive error of those who would have children brought up without religious education. You see, therefore Venerable Brethren, with what earnest forethought parents must beware of entrusting their children to schools in which they cannot receive religious teaching.⁸

Divini Illius Magistri develops this very theme, at even greater length than in *Spectata Fides*, including the theoretical argument about the three societies; there Pius XI aims to work out the assignment of rights and duties for education between the three societies. He locates primary responsibility for schools with the family and the Church (domestic and ecclesial societies), considered as a partnership between the natural and supernatural societies whose joint primary end is the salvation of their members. But he is quick to anticipate the objection that Catholic schools might ghettoize citizens or otherwise harm the state:

From such priority of rights on the part of the Church and of the family in the field of education, most important advantages, as we have seen, accrue to the whole of society. Moreover in accordance with the divinely established order of things, no damage can follow from it to the true and just rights of the State in regard to the education of its citizens.⁹

Beyond its theoretical arguments, *Divini Illius Magistri* is exceeded by few encyclicals in the social magisterium for its bracingly concrete remarks. For instance, Pius says: “unjust and unlawful is any monopoly, educational or scholastic, which, physically or morally, forces families to make use of government schools, contrary to the dictates of their Christian conscience, or contrary even to their legitimate preferences.”¹⁰ He also rejects “co-education of the sexes,” sex education, and naturalism in educational pedagogy (the view that the child is a blank slate without original sin). He even quotes a decision of the U.S. Supreme Court – to my knowledge the only time this occurs in the documents of the social magisterium.¹¹ Pius also argues that there is no such thing as a school that is religiously neutral: “the school...if not a temple, is a den.”¹² Catholics are forbidden to send their children to non-Catholic schools unless they have a dispensation from the local ordinary.¹³

⁸ *Spectata Fides*, 4 (emphasis mine).

⁹ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 41.

¹⁰ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 48.

¹¹ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 37, on the rights of parents not to be forced into using government schools.

¹² *Divini Illius Magistri*, 78.

¹³ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 79.

One conclusion is this: for the health and sustenance of the three necessary societies, there is at least one *necessary* mediating institution – the Catholic school. In itself Catholic schools are not sufficient, but if this component of Catholic education is understood integrally as requiring the active collaboration of Catholic families and the Church, the result is something that looks like a sufficient institution. Pius provides a vision of the whole when he says:

Whoever refuses to admit these principles, and hence to apply them to education, must necessarily deny that Christ has founded His Church for the eternal salvation of mankind, and maintain instead that civil society and the State are not subject to God and to His law, natural and divine. Such a doctrine is manifestly impious, contrary to right reason, and, especially in this matter of education, extremely harmful to the proper training of youth, and disastrous as well for civil society as for the well-being of all mankind. On the other hand from the application of these principles, there inevitably result immense advantages for the right formation of citizens. This is abundantly proved by the history of every age. Tertullian in his *Apologeticus* could throw down a challenge to the enemies of the Church in the early days of Christianity, just as St. Augustine did in his; and we today can repeat with him: “Let those who declare the teaching of Christ to be opposed to the welfare of the State furnish us with an army of soldiers such as Christ says soldiers ought to be; let them give us subjects, husbands, wives, parents, children, masters, servants, kings, judges, taxpayers and tax gatherers who live up to the teachings of Christ; and then let them dare assert that Christian doctrine is harmful to the State. Rather let them not hesitate one moment to acclaim that doctrine, rightly observed, the greatest safeguard of the State.”¹⁴

If the Leonine proposal is correct – that Catholic schools are necessary for the health and safety of the state – then we have new reasons to be concerned and new ways of thinking about the challenges facing us as citizens in the United States. Catholic schools have been in decline in number and enrollment since a peak in the early 1960s, when more than 5.2 million students, around 10 percent of school children, were enrolled in approximately 13,000 schools.¹⁵ Today, Catholic schools enroll only about 1.8 million students, or approximately 3 percent of the total school children in the United States. Since 2006 – just over the last ten years – elementary school enrollments have declined 28 percent, and the total number of schools by nearly 20 percent. Curiously, 99 percent of Catholic elementary schools are co-educational, as are 70 percent of Catholic secondary schools. Less than three percent of the professional staff in Catholic schools are religious or clergy.

There is an extensive literature on Catholic schools in the fields of sociology and economics. Most of this research has focused on a single question: do

¹⁴ *Divine Illius Magistri*, 53, quoting Augustine, Ep. 138.

¹⁵ Dale McDonald and Margaret Schultz, “United States Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools 2016-2017: The Annual Statistical Report on Schools, Enrollment, and Staffing” (2017). Retrieved from http://www.ncea.org/NCEA/Proclaim/Catholic_School_Data/Catholic_School_Data.aspx.

children in Catholic schools have better outcomes than those who do not, where “better” is defined according to standard measurable outcomes such as test scores, high school graduation, college matriculation, and in some cases longer-term labor market outcomes. This line of research was largely initiated by a 1982 study by Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore, in which the authors used the first data collection of the High School and Beyond (HSB) study to show that Catholic school students had higher test scores than public school students.¹⁶ Three decades of intervening research have mostly discredited the original Coleman, Hoffer, and Kilgore thesis: the higher test scores observed routinely in Catholic schools are now mostly attributed to observed and unobserved differences between the students in Catholic schools and those in public schools, sometimes called “selection” effects. There is some agreement that Catholic schools have a positive impact on high school graduation rates and college matriculation¹⁷ and on academic performance of urban minorities.¹⁸

But none of this is really the question we want to take up. If Catholic schools are the safeguard of the state, I suspect that it is not because they produce higher test scores, even if we would like that very much. The title of a well-known study by Bryk, Lee, and Holland gets closer to the right question: *Catholic Schools and the Common Good*.¹⁹ This book-length study combined qualitative and quantitative evidence with some historical and philosophical background on Catholic schools. The authors aimed at understanding why it was that some students seemed to thrive in Catholic schools, especially minorities and disadvantaged students. The study itself is limited by common problems in religion research: most especially, a simplistic view of how religious schools might be different from other schools. But I am willing to forgive most of this for the sake of getting the question right. How might social science – bounded in any case by field-specific methods and practices – aim to get a sense of the relation between Catholic schools and the good of civil society and of the State?

I have no quick answer, but I would like to mention three studies from the economics literature – each for a different purpose.

First, Thomas Dee, an economist and associate dean of Stanford’s Graduate School of Education, had a small but remarkable paper in 2005 that went mostly

¹⁶ Thomas Hoffer, Andrew M. Greeley, and James S. Coleman, “Achievement Growth in Public and Catholic Schools,” *Sociology of Education* 58, no. 2 (1985): 74-97.

¹⁷ William N. Evans and Robert M. Schwab, “Finishing High School and Starting College: Do Catholic Schools Make a Difference?” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 110, no. 4 (1995): 941-74.

¹⁸ Derek Neal, “The Effects of Catholic Secondary Schooling on Educational Achievement,” *Journal of Labor Economics*, 15, no. 1 (1997): 98-123.

¹⁹ Anthony S. Bryk, Valerie E. Lee, and Peter B. Holland, *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995).

unnoticed called “The Effects of Catholic Schooling on Civic Participation.” He notes that “the promotion of adult civic engagement is one of the primary goals of public schools. And the putatively negative effects of private schooling on civic engagement provide one of the most fundamental motivations for publicly provided schooling.”²⁰ He examines the effect of Catholic schooling on adult propensities to vote and volunteer. He finds substantially large and positive effects of Catholic schooling on voter turn-out, but nothing especially noteworthy in volunteer patterns. In one early version of this paper, he makes the following comment in his concluding remarks:

[T]he evidence from [my] analysis does constitute a highly suggestive (though circumstantial) case that Catholic schools are actually better than public schools at promoting adult civic participation. Furthermore, since the case for the public production of schooling is based on the hypothesis that private schools are *worse* at promoting civic engagement, this qualified evidence may make a useful contribution to ongoing policy debates.²¹

Dee is saying that, in the face of an overwhelming presumption against Catholic schools, merely to have shown that they are not worse counts as an important finding.

From Dee’s study I want to draw one important lesson: that to answer questions about schooling and the common good, social science will need to find ways to connect the experiences of children in schooling with adult behaviors. These outcomes need not be limited to “civic” ones. Successes in the labor market may be considered as well as successes in family life and religious participation – the other two societies.

A second paper worth mentioning does just this, but does not examine religious schools. In an ambitious long-term follow-up to the Tennessee Project STAR study (an experiment in the mid-1980s in which more than 11,000 students were randomly assigned to small- or regular-sized kindergarten classrooms), Raj Chetty and his colleagues show that “higher quality” kindergarten experiences are predictive of greater success, broadly measured, in adult life. They say: “Previous work has shown that small classes increased students’ standardized test scores by about 5 percentile rank points in grades K-3...but the longer run effects were less impressive...falling to 1-2 percentile points in grades 4-8.”²² Then they say:

²⁰ Thomas S. Dee, “The Effects of Catholic Schooling on Civic Participation,” *International Tax and Public Finance* 12, no. 5 (2005): 605–25 (emphasis mine).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Raj Chetty, John N. Friedman, Nathaniel Hilger, Emmanuel Saez, Diane Whitmore, and Danny Yagan Schanzenbach, “How Does Your Kindergarten Classroom Affect Your Earnings? Evidence From Project STAR,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 126, no. 4 (2011): 1593-1660.

“However, the end goal of education is not merely to increase test scores. We use test scores because we think they are a good proxy for lifetime outcomes. But no one has ever verified this assumption. The goal of our project was to fill this important gap by linking the STAR data to data on adult outcomes. We find evidence that kindergarten test scores are indeed very good at predicting later outcomes.” What outcomes? Labor market earnings, but also college matriculation, likelihood of being married, living in a good neighborhood and/or owning a house, and saving for retirement. The study suggests that being in a higher quality kindergarten classroom increases your likelihood of being married by age 27.

From this paper I want to draw a lesson that builds on the first one: looking at adult (and child) outcomes that are more obviously linked to the goals of a good human life, such as a successful marriage, will give us a better sense of the relationship between Catholic schools and the common good. And so here is an obvious piece of research waiting to be done: apply the long-term adult outcomes question to the original Coleman, Kilgore, and Hoffer hypothesis.

A final study to think about is the 2008 paper by Jon Gruber and Dan Hungerman, subtitled “The Church vs. the Mall.” They ask: What happens when the Church faces increased secular competition? This study examines the data on Church attendance and participation around the elimination of the so-called Blue laws, which had prohibited the opening of certain stores and restaurants on Sunday. The authors find that the elimination of the Blue laws is associated with declines in attendance, as well as falls in every other available measure of participation.”²³ They find a significant and direct causal effect of increased “competition” for Sunday time on Church attendance and participation (including charitable contributions). Thus, Gruber and Hungerman show that secular institutions can and do have a deleterious effect on Christian ones. This has profound implications for schools, and it verifies the wisdom of Pius XI who warned: “Accordingly, unjust and unlawful is any monopoly, educational or scholastic, which, physically or morally, forces families to make use of government schools.”²⁴

But here is an interesting thing for the scholar of education: many economists have looked at ways in which private religious schools provide “competition” for public schools by asking whether such competition makes public schools “better” (for example, more efficient, or higher quality). On the other hand, there has been no attention to the Gruber-Hungerman thesis as regards schools. What happens when religious schools face increased secular competition? What draws

²³ Jonathan Gruber and Daniel M. Hungerman, “The Church versus the Mall: What Happens When Religion Faces Increased Secular Competition?” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 123, no. 2 (2008): 831-62.

²⁴ *Divini Illius Magistri*, 48.

students and families from religious to secular schools? These are important research questions and the answers are not obvious. Churches and religious people are fond of identifying the unfair advantage created by public school financing: how can you compete with something that is putatively free? And yet, it happens all the time. There are many products that are free (or close to it) that have a very small market share because they are considered inferior goods. What kind of goods are these various types of schools? It often seems to me that both religious persons and secular persons think of schools as basically interchangeable goods with small “flavor” differences. But in fact we know very little about the real substitutability of these goods, yet we make all kinds of assumptions about how they are related to each other, or how they might in the future relate to each other. There is a tremendous amount of interesting work that can be done to advance our understanding of what the educational “product” really is, in the end. Some of my own work has gone so far as to ask whether there is any objective product at all – but only perhaps a relational product defined by a dyad.

There has been a great deal of interest in the last few decades – dating at least as far back as MacIntyre’s *After Virtue*²⁵ and evidenced now in our conversation on Dreher’s *Benedict Option*²⁶ and the various contemporary challenges to citizenship – on the question of whether and to what extent Catholics can accept the terms of citizenship in a political regime that provides a constitutional defense of the slaughter of innocents. This debate hangs on various questions related to political liberalism and the extent to which the American project is bound up with the same. But this interest in the “political” question (as compared with, say, the mid-century era in which Catholics seemed quite overcome with how well things were going) has struck me of late as a little bit misplaced, or perhaps out of order.

What I mean is this: let’s say for the sake of argument that there is some ambiguity as to the question of Catholics and the American political enterprise. Let’s also say, after reflecting on the last major encyclical on Christian education, that there is absolutely no ambiguity about whether and to what extent Catholics can participate in the system of government schools sometimes favorably called “public schools.” If this is the case, then the three percent number is a pretty good measure of our correspondence to a necessary norm of Christian life. How can we work out our obligations with respect to things that are ambiguous – the place of Christians in American political life – when we have not been able to carry out a much simpler task, which is to protect and maintain the strength and vitality of Catholic schools?

²⁵ Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981).

²⁶ Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2017).

The logic of *Divini Illius Magistri* is that Christian schools are prior to the state in a certain sense, since they are a proper activity of families and Churches, each of which is prior to the state. Therefore, questions about the “political” question are downstream from the success or failure of Christian schools. What we are seeing now is quite likely the playing out of a sequence predicted perfectly by Pius XI in his letter on the Third Reich: “The Church cannot wait to deplore the devastation of its altars and the destruction of its temples, if an education, hostile to Christ, is to profane the temple of the child’s soul.... Then the violation of temples is nigh.”²⁷

But, one might object, can we really tease out what is the effect of a rotten political order, from what is the effect of a rotten educational order? Surely, at some point they become hopelessly entangled. One might even make a strong argument that a rotten political order gave rise to the rotten educational order – through, for instance, choking off religious schools in just the manner that Pius XI decries and that Gruber-Hungerman demonstrates. And this would be true.

But Catholic parents, clergy, and bishops bear responsibility too. The corrupt arrangement was accepted with precious little resistance, mostly willing to go along with the romance of the public school system. There were marches on Washington for women’s rights, for civil rights, for unborn rights, but not for the rights of religious schools. It seems that we basically agreed with Tom Brokaw when he said that public schools are the “great common ground. Public education after all is the engine that moves us as a society toward a common destiny.”²⁸ In fact, it is very difficult to find any religious or cultural leader of the last half century who has urged a complete severing of ties with the American public school system on the order of what is clearly required by *Divini Illius Magistri*. Even Alisdair MacIntyre, whose work has dealt extensively with questions of education and the common good, has not found reason to oppose the secularization of education.²⁹

Perhaps, I say, we do not need a new Benedict. Perhaps we need a new Elizabeth Seton.

²⁷ *Mit Brennender Sorge*, 39.

²⁸ Pam Dudding-Burch, “Locals Celebrate National School Board Appreciation Month,” *News Journal* (2018). Retrieved from <https://radfordnewsjournal.com/feed/locals-celebrate-national-school-board-appreciation-month/>.

²⁹ MacIntyre has many works on education, but for a good overview with references, see, for instance: Alasdair MacIntyre and Joseph Dunne, “Alasdair MacIntyre on Education: In Dialogue with Joseph Dunne,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 36, no. 1 (2002): 1-19.

Reasonable Faith or Faithful Reason? Critical Realist Personalism and Catholic Scholarship*

*D. Paul Sullins***

ABSTRACT: This essays examines the merits of an approach called Critical Realist Personalism as a way to break out the impasse of metaphysical naturalism. The essay concentrates on the thought of Christian Smith as a representative of this position.

THE SMALL SCHOOL OF Critical Realism has emerged since the 1970s as a vigorous response to the metaphysical impasse of much of modern philosophy of science. Although Critical Realism is presented as a general critique of scientific method, it is social science that is mostly in view and there that the school has gained the most ground, though it remains decidedly small. Social scientists generally regard it as one of those small exotic subfields, out of the mainstream, with its own extensive in-group jargon, much like ethno-methodology or Austrian economics.

Critical Realism has gained more acceptance among Catholic social scientists, for whom it provides a welcome respite from the juggernaut of secularism in the academy. Two of its primary, and most prolific, proponents are prominent Catholic social scientists: Margaret Archer, currently president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, and Christian Smith, the eminent sociologist of religion at Notre Dame. Such scholars have developed a Critical Realism theory of the human person – “Critical Realist Personalism” – that proposes to offer a theoretical framework for exploring social life that aligns well with virtue theory, the natural law, and Catholic social thought. Smith, in particular, urges that “Critical Realist Personalism offers an abundantly promising approach for [Christian scholars] who wish to break out of the narrow confines of metaphysical

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naturalism.”¹

In this essay I will attempt to evaluate this claim as presented in the work of Christian Smith. Smith argues repeatedly for the intellectual superiority of Critical Realist Personalism to possible secular alternatives, as he himself deploys it to develop a comprehensive theory of human persons and society. But the claim also turns on how and in what senses scholarship enabled by Critical Realist Personalism can be Christian or Catholic – a question that Smith barely addresses. The evaluation will proceed in three steps.

First, I will introduce the central ideas of Critical Realism and summarize them as exemplified in Smith’s application of Critical Realist Personalism. To clarify Smith’s thorough exemplification of Critical Realism in the work I summarize, and to distinguish it from other portions of his wide-ranging corpus that are not so closely allied with Critical Realism, I will denote it as “Critical Realism according to Smith.” Next, I will examine the question whether, or in what senses, that body of work, as a prime exemplar of Critical Realist Personalism-inspired social science by a Catholic scholar, can be considered Catholic scholarship. I will then conclude with a consideration of the root question: what is the goal and purpose of scholarship that claims to be Catholic?

1. Critical Realist Personalism in the Work of Christian Smith

The fundamental claim of Critical Realism, as the name implies, is that the external world is *real* in an Aristotelian sense. Aristotle, you may recall, thought that the referents of experience (substances) expressed universal forms that determined their particular character. Many today refer to such principles as “essences.” Critical Realism tends to refer to them as “structures” or “causes” of observed states. Aristotle asserted that essences are associated with substances themselves, or are real (realism), though they are more general than substances, in response to Plato’s theory that they pre-exist things in an ideal realm (idealism) and are unique to each substance. Today Critical Realist Personalism asserts that human nature, social structures, and moral norms are real, with a definable character and causal power that shape human life, in response to the doubts of modern skepticism that they exist at all.

For Aristotle, general essences can be perceived only after repeated experience by induction, a process of logical comparison and classification that is at the basis of what we know today as the scientific method. Science, for Aristotle, consists in the endeavor to discern and classify the universal character (being or reality, the Greek word *on*) of the welter of existing things under the various

¹ Christian Smith, “Response to Paul Sullins,” *Christian Scholar’s Review* 46, no. 2 (Winter 2017): 163.

categories and relations that we can recognize. But we must also give an account of being itself apart from any attributes, or *ontology*. Being, on this view, consists of all the subjects that we could know or study, but without any of the predicates that delimit the studies of the particular sciences. As the many forms of predicated being are known inductively from experience with things, so the unified notion of being qua being is induced from the experience of science.²

Critical Realism argues that the essences of social reality are not strictly hierarchical, as Aristotle believed, and as may be true in some of the natural sciences. Rather, the structures or causes of human society are largely emergent properties, which may not appear at a lower level of analysis but are discernible at a higher level, much like the emergent properties of chemical compounds that are not observed in the component chemicals themselves. Rather than induction, accordingly, for social science Critical Realism generally advocates the method of “retroduction,” which involves a critical analysis, on the model of analytic philosophy or phenomenology, to discern what kind of reality would give rise to the experience we have. This critical examination of social experience to discern its real structures or causes gives rise to the name “Critical Realism,” and is the primary method employed in Critical Realism according to Smith.³

Critical Realism according to Smith begins by arguing that contemporary social science, and by extension modern thought generally, is severely limited by the adoption of ontologies that are, in Smith’s terms, “fatally flawed.”⁴ The critical philosophies of Descartes, Hume, and Kant, and the rise of epistemological positivism, have corroded confidence in knowing anything beyond sense experience, or perhaps cognition, leaving the modern intellectual project without access to transcendence. Essences, substances, and causes are mental constructions that may help us understand or cope with experience (idealism) or deceive us regarding it (empiricism), but are not thought to pertain to an objective reality.

Critical Realism according to Smith engages in hard-hitting critiques of the secularist assumptions of the main fields of twentieth-century social science – anthropology, psychology, and sociology – which rejected a moderate realism in

² Aristotle’s most focused discussion of these ideas is in *Metaphysics*, book 9.

³ The central concepts of Critical Realism derive from the philosophical work of Roy Bhaskar, as set forth in *The Possibility of Naturalism: A Philosophical Critique of the Contemporary Human Sciences* (New York: Routledge, 1998); *A Realist Theory of Science* (New York: Routledge, 2008); and other works. The best short introduction that I know of to Critical Realism in the social sciences is Andrew Sayer’s introduction (pp. 1-28) to his book *Realism and Social Science* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2000).

⁴ Christian Smith, *What Is a Person?: Rethinking Humanity, Social Life, and the Moral Good from the Person Up* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), 198.

the form of structural functionalism in favor of only empirical, positivistic knowledge of society. The result was an uneasy amalgam of cultural relativism and rational choice theory, unable to provide a convincing explanation of human motivations. By contrast, Critical Realism according to Smith argues that the recognition that the world exists is a necessary first step to understanding scientific knowledge correctly. Rather than seeking objectivity that ineluctably ends in relativism, Smith argues, most extensively in the book *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture*, that the knowledge we possess is “based crucially on sets of basic assumptions and beliefs that themselves cannot be empirically verified or established with certainty, that are not universal, and for which no ‘deeper,’ more objective or independent, common body of facts or knowledge exists”; thus, “[w]e are all inescapably trusting, believing animals.”⁵ Every social order is an expression of moral or sacred ideas, identities, and orientations, expressed both in personal ideals and social institutions.

In opposition to the prevailing theory of rational choice, which sees humans as autonomous individuals whose lives are determined by their place in a social order that expresses ideology and power, Critical Realism according to Smith develops an account of personhood by affirming that persons are irreducibly relational beings who generate social structures, which thus relate to universal features of human nature, including moral norms. Personhood is an emergent property of human capacities, the fulfillment of which in freedom and autonomy forms the chief purpose of human life and society. Human persons seek to flourish, that is, to fulfill their personhood, by pursuing certain basic goods and interests in the context of, or interaction with, the structures of society.⁶

The result is a comprehensive, highly elaborated account of human personhood, structure, and agency. Critical Realism according to Smith criticizes modern social science for seeking to explain complex human phenomena with short, simple explanations, an error that Smith emphatically avoids. His root definition of “person,” for example, is this:

a conscious, reflexive, embodied, self-transcending center of subject experience, durable identity, moral commitment and social communication who – as the efficient cause of his or her own responsible actions and interactions – exercises complex capacities for agency and intersubjectivity in order to sustain his or her own incommunicable self in loving relationships with other personal selves and with the nonpersonal world.⁷

⁵ Christian Smith, *Moral, Believing Animals: Human Personhood and Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 150.

⁶ Smith, *What Is a Person?*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 103.

The “complex capacities” referred to are thirty in number, presented in five levels of complexity (existence, primary experience, secondary experience, creating, and highest order capacities),⁸ elaborated by over forty specific causal relationships,⁹ which enable the emergence of personhood as something greater than the sum of its parts.

Human actions stem from a motivation to realize what Critical Realism according to Smith calls “natural human goods”: ends that are, by nature, constitutionally good for all human beings, and thus consistent with human dignity. Humans seek to fulfill six basic goods and interests – physical survival; security and pleasure; knowledge of reality; identity coherence and affirmation; exercising purposive agency; moral affirmation; and social belonging and love¹⁰ – in interaction with social structures, which are

durable patterns of human social relations, generated and reproduced through social interactions and accumulated and transformed historically over time, that are expressed through lived bodily practices, which are defined by culturally meaningful cognitive categories, motivated in part by normative and moral valuations and guides, capacitated by and imprinted in material resources and artifacts, controlled and reinforced by regulative sanctions, which therefore promote cooperation and conformity and discourage resistance and opposition.¹¹

Evil results from the failure to realize these ends. In this way Critical Realism according to Smith ambitiously situates the idea of personhood at the center of our attempts to understand how we might shape good human lives and societies.

2. Christian Scholarship?

Smith, a self-identified Christian scholar, elaborates a comprehensive anti-reductionist account of human personhood and social structure that persons of faith are likely to find illuminating and insightful. His theory, a form of natural law eudaimonism, is similar to many Christian philosophical anthropologies, and certainly presents a better explanation of human life and meaning, in most regards, than hedonism or relativism. It may therefore be surprising to learn that it is emphatically not a religiously informed account of human life, nor even one that includes reference to transcendence.

Despite the potential of Christian revelation and even Critical Realism to

⁸ Ibid., 54, Table 1.

⁹ Ibid., 74, Figure 3.

¹⁰ Christian Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct: A Personalist Theory of Human Goods, Motivations, Failure, and Evil* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2015), 190.

¹¹ Smith, *What Is a Person?* 326.

address such matters coherently, Smith's account of human personhood and flourishing is radically naturalistic, more so than even many secular theories. Religion and religious institutions are simply not included in Critical Realism according to Smith's otherwise meticulously comprehensive account of the conditions for human flourishing. Smith "make[s] no distinction between human soul and spirit"; by either term he "simply mean[s] the non-corporeal dimensions of human persons, which, again, belong to the natural world."¹² Among the motivations and capacities for human agency he sets forth, there is no recognition that humans express a capacity for relationship with God or orientation to transcendent meaning.

This naturalism is striking. An understanding of the human orientation to transcendence is not accessible to social science, of course, but its existence is one of the most well-attested findings of social research. Every social order on earth expresses a recognizable sense of the sacred and a solemnization of meaning beyond death; a fact that Smith himself articulates forcefully. In sociological theory, moreover, religion is hardly an exotic feature. The centrality of religion and moral norms in society was fundamental to the work of the classic sociologists Émile Durkheim and Max Weber, and the structural functionalist Talcott Parsons (whom Smith commends for standing against the tide of relativistic reductionism), all personally atheists who were committed to a thoroughly empirical account of the social order. Smith also makes no mention of family or kinship, though these are also universal features of society, which most persons would acknowledge as primary influences on personhood and flourishing. Smith himself, in *Moral, Believing Animals*, discusses at length the role of religion in developing moral beliefs by arguing against a purely naturalistic account for the origins of religion, before then providing a purely naturalistic account of human dignity in that book and of personhood and flourishing in his subsequent books.

This remarkable inconsistency, it appears, is not merely an oversight, but signifies a commitment, despite Critical Realism according to Smith's emphasis on ontology, realism, and personhood, to exclude any notion of transcendent meaning from Smith's theory. Even Aristotle, whose ontology Critical Realism according to Smith resembles in many respects, recognized that the nature of reality predisposed a creator (though perhaps Hegel, minus the idealism, is a better exemplar here). If, as Critical Realism according to Smith claims, reality is that which causes, and if causes are emergent like the tree from the acorn, and if entities are interdependent, not autonomous, then what is the emergent cause of the sum of reality? If, in the language of Critical Realism according to Smith, observed human behavior allows us retroductively to apprehend the reality of the

¹² Ibid., 10 n. 17.

human soul, dignity, and morality, why does not the perception of the reality of the soul, dignity, and morality also allow us to retroductively apprehend the reality corresponding to aspirations to a higher purpose for human life than merely human life itself?

Smith acknowledges that his “account would not unfairly be understood as a secular analogue to other natural law accounts that may be religiously oriented.”¹³ He maintains, however, that it is nonetheless a legitimate exercise of Christian scholarship. The reason for a secular theory, he argues, is strategic. By excluding elements of transcendence that may not be acceptable to secular scholars, he is encouraging the acceptance and support of his theory’s main goals by a wider range of scholars:

As to theistic accounts, I find some of them persuasive. But I also hope for a coherent account of dignity that does not depend exclusively on theistic beliefs. My own reasons for believing in dignity are at rock bottom theistic. But the defense of human dignity today and in the future will require more than only believers in God to support the cause. I am interested in a defensible account of dignity that bridges across as many people of good will as possible, one that includes as many discussion partners as it is able who believe in and want to protect human dignity.¹⁴

In response to the critique presented above, Smith argues:

There are many ways for non-theological theoretical accounts of some part of reality to be “Christian.” ... At the very least, my critical realist personalism reflects a baseline compatibility with Christian faith. Even more, for those with the eyes to see it, my personalism reflects Christian influences in its constructive formation.¹⁵

Smith’s position here, if I understand it correctly, is that because his theory does not contradict Christianity – and he is convinced of it, in part, because he is a Christian – then his scholarship is thereby Christian, even though it purposely excludes theistic beliefs. To require more than this, in fact, he judges to be “too narrow and exacting” for social science.¹⁶

There are, in my view, two serious problems with this way of understanding Christian scholarship. First, whatever Christian influences Smith’s personalism may reflect in its formation, by excluding from his developed theory the elements of those accounts that he admits he finds convincing, he is thereby withdrawing from his discussion partners the possibility that they too may be exposed to and

¹³ Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct*, 25.

¹⁴ Smith, *What Is a Person?* 452.

¹⁵ Smith, “Response to Paul Sullins,” 162.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

possibly convinced by those same elements. It may, of course, be the case that the discussion partners in view have already decided against those elements such that excluding them is a condition of discourse on their part. But in that case the question of Christian scholarship has already been conceded; at least, it is hard to see how a theory can become Christian by withholding elements of Christianity.

The second, and more serious, problem with Smith's position is that, if the theistic position is true, then the attempt to exclude or avoid it in elaborating a theory of society or human personhood will inevitably weaken or distort the theory. By excluding elements of Christianity from his theory, Smith not only precludes any potential benefit of considering the elements he has excluded, but also prevents a clear understanding of the elements that remain. This limitation is evident at a number of points in his account, but perhaps most clearly in his struggle to account for human evil. As Smith acknowledges, this poses "a most problematic challenge for my teleological personalism."¹⁷

Evil, according to Critical Realism according to Smith, stems from a failure to thrive or flourish on the part of some. It is, in Critical Realism terms, a limitation of their being, which for Critical Realism according to Smith results from the lack of certain requisite social goods:

Achieving human flourishing requires a specific set of resources, experiences, and efforts.... People who benefit from and take advantage of the requisites of flourishing stand a good chance of thriving. But the default outcome for those who do not enjoy and capitalize upon these resources, experiences, and efforts is personal failure, stagnation, and degeneration. In some cases, people become evil.¹⁸

Moreover, Critical Realism according to Smith asserts (following Aristotle) that while a few people enact the good, and a few become evil, the mass of persons "do not...undertake the difficult journey toward personal flourishing,"¹⁹ remaining undeveloped in their personhood.

But it is not accurate, empirically or ontologically, to say that most people are latently good, with a few realizing their goodness more fully and a few realizing the lack of goodness more fully. Rather, what we know of human life and behavior, and abundant empirical evidence, suggests another view: that all persons are devoted to *both* good *and* evil and struggle with the conflict and tension between them in their own person. This is, of course, the claim of the Christian doctrine of original sin, though most religions make a similar claim. The claim could easily be falsified empirically, but never has been, which suggests that the

¹⁷ Smith, *To Flourish or Destruct*, 223.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

burden of proof rests on those who, like Smith, want to claim that some people are evil and others are not.

And if the presence of evil, or behavior inconsistent with one's own flourishing, is part of the experience of every person, then it cannot simply be a limitation of human being, the result of missing resources or impaired capacity in some cases, as Smith claims. As a universally observed feature of human beings, such behavior, on Aristotle's terms, must reflect part of human nature itself. Human beings fail to flourish not primarily because the social order is broken (though that may contribute to the failure and we should work to improve it), but because *we* are broken, or (to move to the Christian image) we live in exile from our true selves.

Ignoring the Christian tradition on the problem of evil not only puts Smith at a serious intellectual disadvantage on that question, but also it has implications for his theory at large.

If, as he claims, failure to flourish is natural, yet we also seek to flourish, our *telos* cannot be that which is presented by Critical Realism according to Smith, that is, happiness due to self-expression and virtue in human relationships, since ontologically, no real being exists to thwart its own nature. In the end, by refusing to engage Christian truth, Critical Realism according to Smith never addresses what is, by its own method, the central scientific question regarding human personhood: Why are humans *persons* (and not something else)? Since we are created beings, the question becomes, why were we created with personhood? While Critical Realism according to Smith does not even consider this root question, Christianity provides a cogent and comprehensible answer, which also points us to the proper *telos* of human nature. We are persons, and not something else, because we were created, not merely for human relationships, but for relationship – communion and union – with God.

In an explanation that simply exemplifies the problem, Smith explains that his goal is to give an account of the ontology of human persons “which belong to the natural order” without reference to God “because God, in my understanding, is radically transcendent and so not bound by nature's space, time, material being, or laws.”²⁰ Such a statement incomprehensibly passes over the central Christian ideas of creation and incarnation as if they did not exist. The belief that God in Christ has entered time and space, crucially intervening and transforming the possibilities of human life, is fundamental to the Christian understanding of the world. Since Augustine, at least, Christians have understood this transformation to include human society as well. Catholic Christianity, moreover, asserts that God is bound, in the sense of being inherently characterized, by reason, of which logos

²⁰ Smith, *What Is a Person?* 10 n. 17.

or logic the created order is an expression. None of this appears to matter for Smith's theorizing. Here for Smith, as for Kant, the positing of a radical transcendence that denies creation and incarnation leads to a radical naturalism that limits their understanding; notwithstanding (we might add) the aspiration of both to be identified as Christian thinkers.

3. The Nature of Catholic Scholarship

Smith's central response to the above critique is to protest that he is engaged in social science, not theology. "On the question of evil," he writes, "Sullins confuses a theological account of the human condition before God...with my focused analysis of human failure to realize our natural telic ends broadly."²¹ Rather than theology, Smith asserts that his purpose is to develop a "non-theological theoretical account" of human agency and personhood that, as noted above, has a "baseline compatibility" with the Christian faith.²² The expectation that he would "seek to fully explicate all of the Christian theological implications of a theory, ...weaving science and theology integrally together in one theoretical work into one 'worldview' whole" (a demand he calls "maximal elaboration") is, he objects, "too narrow and exacting."²³

This response, consistent with the position on the question of Christian scholarship taken in Smith's books, clarifies nicely the depth and extent of the problem of Catholic scholarship in the academy. In his response Smith reflects, I believe, the ordinary intellectual norms of the academy, in which academic specialties operate in relative intellectual independence from each other. Theology is one thing, sociology is another; and practitioners of the one should not attempt to do the other. A sociological theory has no obligation or competence to address questions which are considered to belong to theology; nor does theology have anything necessarily to add to sociology.

Though Smith rejects both secularism and relativism in the abstract, the severability of (at least these two fields of) knowledge reflected in Smith's response both secularizes and relativizes his own thought. The Catholic faith's claims to convey certain fundamental truths about reality is relativized into an optional demand of "theology," which makes an external appeal for consideration, as if it were secular knowledge alongside any other knowledge. Smith cannot recognize the need to integrate his theory with Catholic truth because he already perceives that truth not to be integral. He is, as he has explained, a theist personally, but not professionally.

²¹ Smith, "Response to Paul Sullins," 161.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 162.

But Smith, tellingly, goes even further than this. Others may well come to a different assessment than mine of the adequacy of Smith's theory, or particular points of it, relative to Catholic truth; nor is it necessary, in my view, to come to full agreement on the definitional question of which theories should be labeled "Christian" (and by whom). But the secularism of Smith's theory is not primarily the result of ignorance or failure to understand the claims of the faith. It is not, moreover, only a strategic appeal to secular theorists, though it is that in part. Rather, Smith's secularism reflects a judgment that an integral consideration of Christian truth claims and their implications is inimical to his intellectual project. He is explicit about this:

I am simply not interested in maximal elaboration. I do not believe it is necessary or helpful. In fact, the attempts at it that I have seen in sociology have been duds, in my view. So, if by a "Christian account" Sullins means maximal elaboration, then, no, my theory is not Christian, and happily not so.²⁴

For Smith, the integration of science and theology is not only unnecessary, it is actually harmful, to an academic theory that he nonetheless wishes to claim is "Christian" in a more limited sense.

The Catholic tradition emphatically takes the opposite view. Far from seeing Catholic truth or theology as something to be avoided, the constant demand of the Church has been that Christian scholarship incorporate and assume the relevant content of the faith. The medieval scholastics held that philosophy should be the handmaid of theology, by which they meant that philosophy should proceed on the basis of the truth already made known by theology. Today philosophy, as they understood the term, has been differentiated into dozens of specialties, including sociology, but the principle still applies.

The premise of this idea of scholarship, in stark contrast to the modern view of knowledge, is that all knowledge is integrated into a single, rationally accessible whole, a universe, so that every discovery, concept or theory calls us to a deeper understanding of the whole. A Catholic social scientist approaches his or her topic with a rich theoretical tradition in place, which sets the larger perspective in which his or her theory operates. Such an integral perspective, I suggest, is precisely what characterizes Catholic scholarship, in contrast to the narrow specialization of the modern academy.

4. Is Critical Realism a Way Forward for Catholic Scholarship?

That the structure of academic inquiry in our age is at odds with this idea of scholarship will not come as news to most Catholic scholars. The segmentation of

²⁴ Ibid.

academic fields in the modern university into semi-autonomous silos, each with its own intellectual referents, professional associations, and credentialing sequence, reflects (and produces) the idea that the pursuit of knowledge is a highly differentiated, individualized affair with few or no central principles. It is system organized for idiosyncrasy and even idiocy. Scholarly success requires intense specialization, restricts intellectual innovation, and discourages cross-disciplinary collaboration.

This fragmentation reflects, not incidentally, both the (post)modern view of knowledge as incommensurate and the fissiparous tendency of Protestant Christianity. It is predicated on the individual pursuit and equal accessibility of knowledge, which contrasts sharply with the Catholic claim that knowledge is an integrated and unified community enterprise.

Smith's theoretical contradictions may reflect the struggle of a faithful scholar trying to work in an unfaithful context. Modern social science imposes secular norms as articles of faith, with a kind of fundamentalist fervor – and accompanying intolerance of dissent. Smith has himself written one of the best books analyzing this quasi-religious tendency in American sociology.²⁵ In this context, the sociological consideration of ideas associated with Christianity would surely present barriers to a theory's acceptance. Toleration of ideas of the natural law is little higher (though not much), so it may be considered prudent to develop a theory of the natural law, while resolutely avoiding any element of transcendence, as the best approximation one can make to the theory one really believes in. I do not know, and can only speculate, that Smith's theory reflects such stresses, but since they operate widely in the academy, the prospect of such an accommodation is hardly unique to Smith, and confronts many Christian scholars today.

We can have different views on the wisdom of such a compromise. I will briefly note several problems it presents for Catholic scholarship. First and foremost, as already noted, if sanitizing Christian or theistic elements from our work is a condition of discourse, then we have preemptively conceded any hope of Christian scholarship in that work. The second problem follows from this. If Christian scholars in an intolerant context tend to concede their Christianity in order to function, that field will become even more assertively secular than it is currently. In large part our current cultural polarization in the U.S. stems from the tendency of proponents of faith or the natural law to concede cultural space to their opponents for the sake of acceptance or legitimacy. The third problem is that even such an accommodation may not satisfy the seculars in the field, leaving one with the worst of both worlds, in a sense: not Christian enough for Christian scholars,

²⁵ Christian Smith, *The SaCritical Realism Project of American Sociology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).

and too Christian for secular scholars.

Smith, as already noted, strongly promotes Critical Realism as a philosophical ontology that is friendly to metaphysical or spiritual claims, and thus more friendly to Christian thought than the positivism, relativism, and naturalism that currently prevails in the social sciences. For a Catholic scholar, however, the alternative to Critical Realism is not relativism but Aristotle. Those asking the question “Why not Critical Realism?” must answer the question “Why not Aristotle?” Critical Realism presents an account of observed reality that is similar in many ways to that of Aristotle. At times it seems like little more than a repackaging of Aristotelian realism for modern ears. Where Critical Realism differs from Aristotelianism, I am not convinced it offers an advantage. It may well be possible to pursue integral Catholic scholarship on the basis of the philosophy of Critical Realism. But it is certainly possible to do so on the basis of the philosophy of Aristotle; which presents Critical Realism with an insurmountable barrier (in my opinion) to being widely adopted by Catholics. Being superior to relativism (which it certainly is) and as good as Aristotle (which I doubt, but is an open question) is not enough to provide a reason to adopt Critical Realism. Since Leo XIII the Catholic magisterium has taught that the Catholic intellectual tradition is uniquely connected to Western culture and Greek philosophy by means of Thomas Aquinas. Aristotle’s realism has also endured the test of time. In order to be convincing to Catholic scholars, in my view, Critical Realism would have to show itself to be not just equivalent to Aristotle and Thomas, but markedly superior to them. It would also have show their deficiency for integral Catholic thought going forward, in the face of recent papal teaching emphatically to the opposite, thus demonstrating a need to adopt a new ontology. That is a steep requirement for Critical Realism to meet, which, in my opinion, has not come close to being demonstrated in the work of any of its Catholic proponents, including Smith.

5. Conclusion: Faithful Reason

Catholic social scientists are not exempt from the challenging demand of integral understanding in their work. This was explicitly articulated by Pope Saint John Paul II in the 1998 encyclical *Fides et ratio* [*On Faith and Reason*]:²⁶

Finally, I cannot fail to address a word to *scientists*, whose research offers an ever greater knowledge of the universe as a whole and of the incredibly rich array of its component parts, ... I would urge them to continue their efforts without ever abandoning the *sapiential* horizon [where empirical knowledge gives way to what God has revealed] within which scientific and technological achievements are wedded to the philosophical and ethical values which are the distinctive and indelible mark of the human person. Scientists are well

²⁶ John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, 106.

aware that “the search for truth...always points beyond to something higher than the immediate object of study, to the questions which give access to Mystery.”

No matter how inconvenient, this call to integrate discovered truth with revealed truth is not optional for a scholar who aspires to the fullness of Catholic truth. I am not at all suggesting that every individual work of Christian scholarship needs to articulate explicit theological or philosophical commitments. But scholarship is properly productive from a Catholic perspective when and only when it reflects an understanding of life and the universe that engages the revelation of Jesus Christ that comes to us through the Church.

By “engages” here, I mean not only that our reasoning and research is instructed by revealed truth, but also (and for scientists, perhaps more importantly) that we persistently seek to understand what we learn, according to our areas of competence, within the context of the whole of truth. The purpose of this search for integration of knowledge is not primarily to communicate or present truth to others (though it does enable this). It will also, with the possible exception of theology or philosophy, not likely contribute to one’s academic success or esteem from secular peers. The purpose is more fundamental: to understand what we study. If we really do live in a universe created by God, then we don’t really understand anything we discover here until we have “maximally elaborated” it, as best we can, in the light of God and his revelation. The goal is not primarily to make the faith reasonable, but reason faithful.

The Scholastic Origins of the Social Sciences

John D. Mueller*

ABSTRACT: This essay traces the origins of contemporary economics as a social science to the scholastic period. It also provides a re-assessment of Max Weber's *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. It argues that neoscholastic economics is needed to understand Catholic social doctrine and to help solve many of today's economic and social problems.

BUILDING ON ARISTOTLE AND AUGUSTINE, Thomas Aquinas constructed a map of human knowledge that was comprehensive and systematic, with a place for everything, and everything in its place. At the suggestion of Pat Fagan, this essay considers the scholastic origins of the social sciences and how I came to understand its history. So, after providing a little autobiography, I will describe, first, the scholastic origins of economics (my own field) and how modern economics managed to misplace its most important element, the description of our interpersonal relations. Since 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, I will also apply an updated “neoscholastic” version of scholastic economics to re-assess the thesis of Max Weber's famous book, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which Brad S. Gregory has recently incorporated into his own thesis *The Unintended Reformation*. Finally, I will explain how neoscholastic economics provides an analytical toolkit necessary to understand Catholic social doctrine and to help solve many of the economic and social problems that now preoccupy politics, not only in the United States but almost everywhere.

Let me begin with a bit of autobiography. I am the sixth of twelve children – the quintessential middle child. My parents' eyes met above the crowd on a USO dance floor in 1942. (My father stood six feet two inches, and my mother was almost six feet tall.) One of their greatest tricks was to make us think that a family of fourteen is normal. Who could possibly invite us to dinner? We twelve siblings confer every month on a conference call, at which we usually get a quorum, and sometimes all twelve. We also offer interesting material for a longitudinal study of Catholics in America. Among the oldest four, born from 1944 to 1948, three are

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still practicing Catholics (measured by regularly attending Sunday Mass). Among the middle four, born from 1950 to 1955, two are still Catholic. Among the youngest four, born from 1958 to 1963, only one is still Catholic (though another is an evangelical Protestant). Ordinarily, it takes a sample of at least thirty to say anything statistically significant at the 95 percent confidence level. Yet on one matter, the fourteen of us (including my parents) provide a set large enough to be statistically significant at the 99 percent level. The odds that nine of fourteen people would remain married to their first spouse, while eight of them would also worship at least weekly, would happen by mere chance only about once out of a hundred times.

Now, it happens that the day on which this lecture was delivered was also my 38th wedding anniversary. Funny how life turns out. Though a cradle Catholic, I was an atheist when I was married, and my superior moiety a liberal Protestant who was not particularly interested in economics. I also need to hang a lantern on a personal problem. I walk with a cane. Almost the first question anyone diagnosed with multiple sclerosis asks is: “How soon will I need a wheelchair?” Most of us do end up there eventually. If I play my cards right, what I hope will not be as apparent is what Jeffrey N. Gingold calls the “mental wheelchair.” Gingold was a lawyer diagnosed with MS at age 41 after experiencing a sudden cognitive lapse. He was participating in a routine legal procedure involving a client whose case he knew intimately. When the judge asked him to explain why they were there, his carefully prepared notes suddenly made no sense to him, and when he turned to his client, he could not remember anything about her. (Gingold asked his client to explain in her own words why they were there, and after a couple of minutes he was back.) He also describes getting lost driving in his own neighborhood. MS is a disease in which, for reasons that are still unclear, the immune system attacks the central nervous system. The destroyed nerves include the pathways necessary for memory. Fortunately, it is not like Alzheimer’s, which apparently wipes out memories altogether, so that it can turn out that you no longer recognize your spouse. Even so, MS does make retrieving memories much more difficult. The good news is that with sufficient time I can still reach the right answer. On the other hand (though I wouldn’t actually recommend this), one spouse having an incurable, progressively debilitating, and usually fatal disease can be good for your marriage.

Some will ask: Why me? My first reaction was: Well, why *not* me? After a few years working as a newspaper reporter and editor, I have had three interesting careers: first, as speechwriter and then staff economist for then-Congressman Jack Kemp before and during both Reagan administrations; then as an economist for a forecasting firm, from which I retired two years ago; finally, as the founding Director of the Economics and Ethics Program at the Ethics and Public Policy Center since 2005.

My current thinking is: Thank God it was me. I was diagnosed eight years ago at age 56. If Linda had had MS, I would have wished that it had been me, not for her sake but for ours. Fortunately, she has energy to burn and is simply unable to sit still in a room. We agree that she would have had a much harder time adjusting. So, my prayer was answered in advance.

I do not have a Ph.D. – at least, not yet. When I was an undergraduate, I had no idea that I would make my living and support my family as an economist, and we had three children to educate. I took a sabbatical from the forecasting business as a fellow at Princeton’s James Madison Program, intending in one academic year to write a book outlining what I had learned about economic policy in Washington and on Wall Street. But in the process I made the disconcerting discovery that I had something to say. That discovery was related to the fact that at the same time that I was learning the ropes of economic forecasting I was also recovering from college atheism. I am no great shakes as a mathematician, but I had started as a physics major and am not afraid of numbers. At the same time that I was routinely constructing economic models I was re-reading Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, to try to figure out what I believed and why I believed it. In doing so, I came to admit that atheism is logically untenable. Then, when I sat down to write the book, I realized that I was taking for granted much more economics than is being taught today, that each type of economic theory has a logical and mathematical structure, and that each structure implies a different anthropology and theology. More on that later.

A Brief, Structural History of Economics

Some form of economic theory has been taught continuously at the highest university levels since the mid-thirteenth century when Thomas Aquinas first fully integrated it within the scholastic theory of natural law. But in making this statement, one must also make some qualifications. First, the logical and mathematical structures of scholastic economics differ fundamentally from Adam Smith’s so-called classical economics and today’s “neoclassical” economics. Few economists today are aware of the scholastic version of economics, in large measure because American university economics departments, led by the University of Chicago in 1972, abolished the requirement that students of economics master its history before being granted a degree.¹

¹ This change culminated a long campaign that George J. Stigler had started in 1955. “In 1972, he [Stigler] successfully proposed that the history of thought requirement be dropped at Chicago. Most other economics departments later followed suit.... At the same meeting Stigler unsuccessfully proposed that the economic history requirement also be dropped.” Robert Leeson, “The Chicago Counter-Revolution and the Sociology of Economic Knowledge,” Working Paper 159, Economics Department, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA, Australia (July 1997), n. 62. In his campaign for the change, Stigler

What is economics about? Jesus once noted – apart from any claims about divine revelation, I interpret this as an astute empirical observation – that since the days of Noah and Lot, people have been doing four kinds of things: planting and building, buying and selling, marrying and being given in marriage, and eating and drinking (Luke 17:26-28). In other words, we humans spend most of our time producing, exchanging, giving (or sometimes taking), and using (or consuming) our human and nonhuman goods.

Economics as a Kind of Human Providence

In addition to the order of things in our actions, we should also consider the order in our planning. We need to choose for whom we intend to provide, what to provide,² and how to provide it. As Aristotle noted, in arranging to provide things there is need to consider both production and exchange (how we wish to provide things) as well as distribution (for whom we wish to provide them). Thus, economics is essentially a theory of human providence: it describes how we provide for ourselves and for others, using means that are sometimes scarce and that have alternate uses. Economics mostly concerns human providence, but economic theory inevitably makes certain assumptions about divine providence – a fact to which I will return.

*Scholastic economics*³ benefitted from the way in which Aquinas integrated

rejected Aquinas's view that a scientist is defined by whether he understands his subject rather than having a degree. Stigler claimed instead that every science is continuously defined by a self-governing elite calling themselves scientists. From this sociological definition, Stigler said it was obvious that "one need not read in the history of economics – that is, past economics – to master present economics." Instead, "the young theorist...will assume...that all that is valid in earlier work is present – in purer and more elegant form – in the modern theory" and that "the history of the discipline is best left to those underendowed for fully professional work at the modern level." But as the text indicates, the young economist who assumed this would be underendowed for fully professional work because he would not know his subject. George J. Stigler, *The Economist as Preacher and Other Essays* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 107.

² Among prominent modern economists, only Jacob Viner seems correctly to have identified Augustine's main technical contribution to economic theory when he, distinguished separate scales of preference for persons (love and justice) and non-persons (utility), and distinguished both of them from the absolute metaphysical scale of being. Augustine deals "simultaneously with three scales of value, relating to order of nature, utility, and justice." Jacob Viner, *Religious Thought and Economic Society: Four Chapters of an Unfinished Work*, ed. Jacques Melitz and Donald Winch (Durham, NC: Duke Univ. Press, 1978), 55.

³ In his otherwise magisterial *History of Economics Analysis*, Joseph Schumpeter incorrectly wrote that Augustine "[n]ever went into economic problems." Joseph Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, ed. E. B. Schumpeter (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954), 72. He holds that Aquinas's economics was "strictly Aristotelian" (ibid., 93). As we will see, Aquinas not only integrated Aristotle's contributions but also

the elements of production, exchange, distribution, and consumption by drawing on the thought of Aristotle and Augustine within his natural law moral philosophy.⁴ Where Aristotle had bisected moral philosophy into ethics and politics, Aquinas envisioned a tripartite division under the headings of individual, domestic, and political prudence. The resulting economic theory is comprehensive, logically complete, mathematical, and (if suitably updated) empirically verifiable. It was taught at the highest university levels for more than five centuries by every major Catholic and (after the Reformation) Protestant economic thinker, including the Lutheran jurist Samuel von Pufendorf, whose work was used by Adam Smith's own teacher, Adam Ferguson, to teach Smith economics and whose works were also highly recommended by Alexander Hamilton.⁵

subordinated them to Augustine's in both "positive" (descriptive) and "normative" (prescriptive) theory.

⁴ On Augustine's theory of personal distribution, see his *On Christian Doctrine* and *On Free Choice of the Will*. Aristotle's social distribution (distributive justice) is found in *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.3. For Augustine's theory of utility (consumption), see *City of God* 11.16. For Aristotle's theory of production of people and property see *Politics* 1.4. For Aristotle's idea of justice in exchange (equilibrium), see *Nicomachean Ethics* 5.5. In Aquinas, three of these four elements (the distribution function, the utility function, and the equilibrium conditions) are described (and the production function implied) in Aquinas's *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*. For an account of his idea of personal distribution, see bk. 5, lects. 4-9, pp. 293-318; for social distribution, see p. 294; for equilibrium conditions, see pp. 294-99; for the "utility function" and the analysis of money, see pp. 312-15. The production function is described in his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics* 1.1-3. The same analysis is also scattered throughout his *Summa theologiae*, especially in his commentary on the seventh commandment.

⁵ According to Ian Ross, Adam Smith's teacher Frances Hutcheson taught him from an annotated edition of Samuel Pufendorf's *On the Duty of Man and Citizen according to Natural Law*, trans. M. Silverthorne, ed. J. Tully (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991 [1673]). Ian Ross, *The Life of Adam Smith* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 53-54. As with Aquinas and the earlier scholastics, Pufendorf's Protestant version of the natural law contains all four basic elements of economic theory, organized according to personal, domestic and political economy, and integrating prescriptive with descriptive theory by the Two Great Commandments. For the notion of personal distribution, see Pufendorf, *On the Duty of Man and Citizen according to Natural Law*, 64-67; for social and political distribution, see 32 and 61-63; for utility, see 94-96; for production of and by human and non-human factors, see 84-89; for society organized around family household, see 120-31; for justice in exchange or equilibrium equating product values and factor compensation, see 31 and 94-95; for the two Great Commandments integrating description and prescription, see 11-12. The fact that Pufendorf was a Lutheran who wrote a critical history of the Catholic Church and that his theories were taught at the Calvinist University of Glasgow demonstrates that the scholastic outline of economic theory was broadly known and accepted. Pufendorf was widely read in the American colonies and recommended by Alexander Hamilton. See "The Farmer Refuted" in *The Works of Alexander Hamilton*, vol. 1, ed. H. C. Lodge (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1904). Hamilton penned two-thirds of the *Federalist* papers and as first Treasury Secretary rejected Smith's specific economic

Classical economics took form when Adam Smith cut the four scholastic elements to two by trying to explain specialized production (which he poetically but inaccurately called “the division of labor”) in terms of production and exchange alone. Smith and such followers as David Ricardo undoubtedly advanced the understanding of those two elements. But Smith also dropped Augustine’s notion of utility (which is necessary to describe the value of consumption goods) and replaced the scholastic theory of distribution – comprised by Augustine’s theory of personal distribution (gifts and their opposite, crimes) and by Aristotle’s theory of domestic and political distributive justice – with the mere (often false) assumption that “every individual...intends only his own gain.”⁶ This is part of Smith’s intention in the “invisible hand” passage from *The Wealth of Nations*. He had already replaced the idea of rational benevolence with his account of emotional psychology in his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.

Neoclassical economics began about a century later with the work of three economists who were dissatisfied with the gaps in Smith’s theory: William Stanley Jevons (1871) in England, Carl Menger (1871) in Austria, and Leon Walras (1874) in Switzerland. They independently (but almost simultaneously) re-invented Augustine’s theory of utility and re-integrated it with the theories of production and exchange.⁷ They abandoned Smith’s theory for three related reasons: first, without the theory of utility, classical economists tended to make predictions that turned out to be spectacularly wrong – notably, Ricardo’s supposed “iron law of wages,” which predicted that rising population would prevent the improvement of living standards. Second, Karl Marx adopted Smith’s so-called labor theory of value and took to its thoroughly logical but absurd economic conclusion by claiming that owners of productive property are mere parasites who could be expropriated without harm. Third, they were unable to answer such questions as why it is, if all value comes from labor, that goods like Old Masters paintings, which cannot be reproduced by labor, have any value. Even though the number of neoclassical economic theories has multiplied ever since, all are derived from these three.

advice in the *Wealth of Nations* to the United States. See Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, 2 vols. (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1776), bk. 2, chap. 5 (facsimile, New York: Augustus M. Kelley Publishers, 1966); Alexander Hamilton, *Report on Manufactures in Four Works of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. H. C. Lodge, available at <http://oll.libertyfund.org/Home3/HTML-voice.php?recordID=0249.04>).

⁶ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. 4, chap. 2; 2:35.

⁷ William Stanley Jevons, *The Theory of Political Economy* (London: Macmillan, 1871); Carl Menger, *Principles of Economics* (New York: New York University Press, 1976 [1871]), available at: <http://mises.org/etexts/menger/principles.asp>; Leon Walras, *Elements of Pure Economics, or the Theory of Social Wealth*, trans. W. Jaffe (Homewood, IL: Richard D. Irwin, 1954 [1874]).

Neoscholastic economics. I hold that the recovery of neoscholastic economics would revolutionize economics once again in coming decades, especially by replacing its lost cornerstone, the theory of distribution. My reason is simply that, as with Augustine's theory of utility, which Smith had dropped, the inclusion of this indispensable element does a far better job of empirical description.

Thus, *pace* George Stigler,⁸ the chief significance of Adam Smith's work consists not in what he added to economics but in what he subtracted from it. As Joseph Schumpeter demonstrated, "[t]he fact is that the *Wealth of Nations* does not contain a single *analytic* idea, principle, or method that was entirely new in 1776."⁹ Though he is widely regarded as the founder of economics, the account of his significance that is found in most modern economic textbooks is inaccurate. Each of Smith's original contributions – particularly his so-called labor theory of value – was abandoned when later economists realized that it was untenable.

Now, scholastic economics is essentially a theory of providence. It mostly describes human providence. But, in my view, each of the three basic economic theories mentioned here also entails some notion of divine providence and each of them assumes a different world view.

Scholastic economics presupposes a theory of rational providence when it envisions a cosmos created out of nothing by the transcendent *Logos*. In this worldview we "rational," "conjugal," and "political animals" need to choose specific "ends" as well as the particular means (sometimes scarce) to be used (sometimes consumed) by or for the persons with whom we associate in various relationships of production and exchange.

⁸ Or rather, the later Stigler. Stigler had first built his reputation precisely as a historian of economics, largely based on his doctoral thesis (1941) and a series of historical essays (most reprinted in *Essays in the History of Economics* (1965), and *The Economist as Preacher and Other Essays* (1982)). But Joseph Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis* (1954) not only revolutionized the history of economics by expanding its timeline from two to either seven or twenty-three centuries (depending on whether we consider the first fully integrated economic theory to have begun with Aristotle, as Schumpeter supposed, or Thomas Aquinas, as the thesis of my book suggests), it also slashed Stigler's relative expertise by between seven and nine tenths. This precipitated a reversal of Stigler's attitude to Adam Smith, the nature of science, and the nature of originality in economics. Stigler expressed these views in a review of Schumpeter's *History*. George J. Stigler, "Schumpeter's *History of Economic Analysis*," *Journal of Political Economy* 62, no. 4 (August 1954): 344–45; in an essay the following year entitled "The Nature and Role of Originality in Scientific Progress," *Economica*, New Series 22, no. 88 (November 1955): 293–302; in a famous article advocating abolition of teaching the history of economics to economists-in-training, "Does Economics Have a Useful Past?" *History of Political Economy* 1 (Fall 1969); in his Nobel lecture, "The Process and Progress of Economics," *Journal of Political Economy* 91, no. 4 (August 1983): 529–45; and in his memoirs, *Memoirs of an Unregulated Economist* ([New York: Basic Books, 1988], 191–220.

⁹ Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis*, 184.

Let me be more concrete. When I say, “I love vanilla ice cream,” I really mean that I love myself and provide vanilla ice cream to express that love (in preference, say, to strawberry ice cream or Brussels sprouts). The order of preferences expresses my scale of utility and indicates my preference for a non-personal thing as a means.

By dropping from his theory both the element of distribution (our choice of persons as “ends” or purposes) and the element consumption (our choice of other things as “means”), Smith expressed a worldview akin to Stoic pantheism, which is centered not on the individual human but on the whole universe, taken “to be itself a Divinity, an Animal”¹⁰ whose soul is God. The result is that we “sentimental” humans (to adopt Smith’s terminology from his *Theory of Moral Sentiments*) choose neither our ends nor means rationally; instead, Smith holds that “every individual...intends only his own gain...and is led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention.”¹¹ That is, we are cosmically fated to have no choice other than our own interests.

By restoring Augustine’s idea of utility (which describes our rational choice of means) but not the element of distribution (which describes our rational choice of persons as ends), neoclassical economics adopted the worldview of Epicurean materialism, which claims that we humans somehow evolved in an uncreated universe as clever animals, highly adept at calculating instrumental means but as having no other end than self-gratification since “reason is, and ought only to be, the slave of the passions,” as Hume put it.¹² Epicurean materialism is a totally different worldview from Smith’s Stoic pantheism, and yet it leads to many of the same practical conclusions.

These three basic worldviews differ about such intangible realities as God and the human soul. In my view, the worldview at the basis of scholastic economic theory does the best job of describing the empirical reality of everyday human life. One can show this by focusing on issues about which scholastic theory and neoclassical economics make divergent empirical predictions. Consider, for example, Steven Levitt’s famous claim in *Freakonomics* that legalizing abortion in 1973 would reduce crime 16 to 19 years later.¹³ In fact, legalizing abortion

¹⁰ Adam Smith, *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, in *Works and Correspondence of Adam Smith*, vol 3, ed. W. P. D. Wightman and J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982), par. 274.

¹¹ Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, bk. 4, chap. 2, 35.

¹² David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1740), 2.3.3.

¹³ The Levitt-Donohue paper upon which *Freakonomics* relies depends critically “on the assumption that there will be a fifteen- to-twenty year lag before abortion materially affects crime.” John J. Donohue III and S. D. Levitt, “The Impact of Legalized Abortion on Crime,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116, no. 2 (May 2001): 379-420, at 401. The assumption is often repeated: “There should be no effect of abortion on crime between 1973 and 1985” (*ibid.*, 401).

raised crime rates almost immediately, particularly the most violent of crimes, the homicide rate.¹⁴ While complicated neoclassical theories of fertility do a very poor job at predicting fertility rates,¹⁵ the much simpler scholastic theory explains almost nine-tenths of the variation in fertility rates in all countries for which data are available (comprising about one-third of all countries, but more than three-quarters of world population) by using just four factors – of which the most powerful is the rate of weekly worship (because, like fertility, worship is essentially a kind of gift, not an exchange).¹⁶

Now, in order to teach adequately either sound economic theory or authentic Catholic social doctrine, it is necessary to teach scholastic economics, since Catholic social doctrine is based upon and presupposes the relevance of the very factors that scholastic economic theory features and that are altered or missing in other economic theories. How is it possible for any economist to argue effectively against “autonomous selfishness” (that is, the behavior of the autonomous self) with a theory that simply presupposes the autonomous self? The necessary change in how economics is taught must come from within the profession, and the same is true in other social sciences.

Max Weber the Economist

Since 2017 is the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, I propose to reconsider the thesis of Max Weber’s book *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*.¹⁷ I will consider this work not as a sociologist but as an economist. Though Weber’s degrees were in law, his training had included economics.¹⁸ He accepted the Austrian School’s version of neoclassical marginal utility theory¹⁹ but proposed to explain and transcend the then-contending economic methods.

Weber’s thesis about the Protestant ethic is unsatisfactory as economics. In a careful consideration of Weber’s thesis the economists Sascha O. Becker and

¹⁴ John D. Mueller, *Redeeming Economics: Rediscovering the Missing Element* (Wilmington, DE: ISI Books, 2014), 180.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 234-36.

¹⁶ John D. Mueller, “A Brief Demographic Tour of the World,” World Congress of Families XI (May 26, 2017), available at: <https://eppc.org/publications/a-brief-demographic-tour-of-the-world/>.

¹⁷ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), available at: <https://archive.org/details/protestantethics00webe> and <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~HYPER/WEBER/cover.html>.

¹⁸ Richard Swedberg, “Max Weber as an Economist and as a Sociologist: Towards a Fuller Understanding of Weber’s View of Economics,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 58, no. 4 (October 1999): 561-582, at 563.

¹⁹ Max Weber, “Marginal Utility Analysis and ‘The Fundamental Law of Psychophysics’” (1908), reprinted in Max Weber, *Essays in Economic Sociology*, ed. Richard Swedberg (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 249-260, at 253.

Ludger Wößmann summarized their critique in this way: “Max Weber attributed the higher economic prosperity of Protestant regions to a Protestant work ethic. We provide an alternative theory, where Protestant economies prospered because instruction in reading the Bible generated the human capital crucial to economic prosperity. We find that Protestants’ higher literacy can account for the whole gap in economic prosperity.” Further, they claim: “after controlling for the positive effect of literacy on economic success, there remains no significant difference in economic success between Protestant and Catholic counties. Human capital can account for the whole denominational difference in economic affluence, leaving little scope for any denomination-based work ethic.”²⁰

Aristotle’s definition of man as a “rational animal”²¹ and “political animal”²² is well known. Indeed, these insights remain central to modern social science twenty-three centuries later, as one can see, for instance, in the World Values Survey of 2016. Yet the third aspect of Aristotle’s vision of human nature – that man is also a “conjugal animal” – is not mentioned nor its pertinence to the theory of human capital explained.²³

The reality that man is a conjugal animal explains why wealth takes two forms: people and property,²⁴ or in the words of University of Chicago economist Theodore W. Schultz (1961), “human and non-human capital.”²⁵ Both are “reproducible,” but in different ways. Both require maintenance to remain productive, and both depreciate in use. Labor compensation is the return on previous investment in people, while property compensation is the return on previous investment in productive property. The main advance of the modern economic theory of production over Aristotle’s is to acknowledge that both human and non-human forms of capital may be either tangible or intangible (for example, so-called human capital includes both our bodies and our education, while non-human capital could include a machine and a patent).

Brad S. Gregory’s erudite book *The Unintended Reformation* unfortunately presumes that income is limited by tangible factors rather than something that depends, in the long run, primarily on intangible factors, both human and non-

²⁰ Sascha Becker and Ludger Wößmann, “Was Weber Wrong? A Human Capital Theory of Protestant Economic History,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 124, no. 2 (May 2009): 531-96. Original 2007 paper available at: <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.168.6279&rep=rep1&type=pdf>.

²¹ Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1.1.1355b.

²² Aristotle, *Politics* 1.2.1253a2.

²³ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.12. I quote the more felicitous translation in *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993), 520.

²⁴ Aristotle, *Politics* 1.3-4.

²⁵ Theodore W. Schultz, “Investment in Human Capital,” *American Economic Review* (March 1961): 1-17, at 6.

human – chiefly such intangible human capital as education and such intangible non-human capital as patents. Smartphones, as their name implies, have gotten progressively smarter, not progressively larger. Gregory's economic materialism is ironic, since he rightly identifies the essential fallacy of materialist atheism in what he calls "metaphysical univocity," by which he means treating God as if he were merely the greatest of all beings within creation, as the ancient Greeks conceived of Zeus as dwelling on Mount Olympus rather than as being the transcendent Creator *ex nihilo*. After rereading Aquinas, I recognized that my former atheism is logically untenable.

For Gregory, like many others, economic transactions are essentially zero-sum, so that one person's gain is necessarily someone else's loss. Let me give a concrete example of why this is essentially a misunderstanding. I got to know a man named Charles about ten years ago, who is now in his mid-50s. After getting to know him, I realized that he can't hold a job because he never mastered reading or writing. He can't be employed as a building porter because he doesn't have the skills to accept a package, or as a supermarket stock-boy because that requires reading product labels. So I tried to help him learn to read. At length he has realized that he has to go back to school. But until he masters basic reading and writing, there is no way that my income, even much reduced by multiple sclerosis, can fail to outpace his. The main difference in our incomes has nothing to do with my own greed, as Gregory would have it. The basic economic problem, according to Gregory, is that people like me use our income to satisfy "wants" rather than to satisfy "needs," as Charles does. But such a clear-cut distinction rests on not actually knowing many people in real want, or their reasons. Having a mobile phone might be considered a want for me, but for Charles it is a need. He can't, like me, use a computer at a public library for free. In avoiding a return to grammar school, Charles fears essentially the same thing as I do while pursuing an advanced degree: failure.

Some redistribution may well be necessary, and may even help both of us. I am addicted to diet cola (partly because the caffeine counteracts MS-induced brain fog), and especially during Lent and Advent, I give it up and give the money instead to Charles, and practice my own moderation. But what I can afford to give him as personal charity is dwarfed by what Charles needs, and by what he could earn himself if he functioned at even an elementary- or high-school level. This economic inequality is not caused by greed, and cannot be reversed by redistribution.

Now, combining the theses of M. I. Finley, Max Weber, and Karl Polanyi, Gregory maintains that human economic life was utterly transformed by a sharp ideological shift, not just once or twice but three times. Each shift disembedded the economy. In Finley's view, the first time involved a sharp discontinuity in ancient Greece; following Weber's famous thesis, the next took place at the

Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century; finally, there was a third between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in what Karl Polanyi called the “Great Transformation.” But this combination of theories strikes me as an extravagant reliance on dummy variables to force the data to fit a thesis, rather than vice versa. I would like to suggest a different theory, which explains all the facts much better.

First, the sudden “disembedding” that Finley supposes to have occurred in classical Greece was simply the institution of money. Plato and Aristotle were closer in time to the first coinage of gold and silver money than we are to the American Revolution. Money was certainly an important innovation. But no fundamental change in human nature was involved in the transition from the barter system that had prevailed for earlier millennia, to a monetized economy, which succeeded barter in ancient times and that has persisted for the last two millennia.

Gregory argues, “But unless one had entirely jettisoned any and all teleology linked to human flourishing as understood in medieval Christian terms, a single tulip bulb was not more valuable than a year’s food, clothing, and shelter for twenty working families, no matter what people proved willing to pay for it. To have drawn such a conclusion would have been madness. It would have required an obliteration of any distinction between human needs and human wants in favor of an indiscriminating catch-all category of ‘demand.’”²⁶

Actually, like every financial “bubble” I know of (including the Great Depression, the 2008 financial crisis and recession of 2007-09), the Dutch Tulipmania had a monetary origin. As Doug French noted:

what made this episode unique was that the government policy did not expand the supply of money through fractional reserve banking which is the modern tool. In fact, it was quite the opposite. As kings throughout Europe debased their currencies, through clipping, sweating or by decree, the Dutch provided a sound money policy, which called for money to be backed one hundred per cent by specie. This policy, combined with the occasional seizure of bullion and coin from Spanish ships on the high seas, served to attract coin and bullion from throughout the world.

The end result was a large increase in the supply of coin and bullion in 1630s Amsterdam. Free coinage laws then served to create more money from this increased supply of coin and bullion, than what the market demanded. This acute increase in the supply of money served to foster an atmosphere that was ripe for speculation and malinvestment, which manifested itself in the intense trading of tulips.²⁷

Something similar happened in the United States during World War I, when the United States alone remained on the gold standard while all the belligerent countries practiced debt finance and monetary expansion, and many started using

²⁶ Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 277.

²⁷ David French, “The Truth About Tulipmania” (May 26, 2007), available at: <https://mises.org/library/truth-about-tulipmania>.

both sterling and dollar securities instead of gold as monetary reserves. The U.S. price level still doubled despite its own monetary rectitude, because then as now, the national currency markets are connected.

Thus, I think that we must take a dim view of theories that posit major economic changes as resulting from sudden ideological shifts, including Finley's economic theory about ancient Greece, Weber's thesis about the Protestant ethic, and Polanyi's supposed "Great Transformation" when there are more straightforward explanations available.

Scholastic Economics and Catholic Social Thought

I would like to close with a few thoughts about the relation of scholastic and neoscholastic economic theory to Catholic social thought. George Weigel has argued that launching Catholic social doctrine was only one of several interconnected reforms by which Pope Leo XIII began the transition from Counter-Reformation Catholicism to what Weigel has described as "Evangelical Catholicism."²⁸

In his own magisterial yet concise survey of Catholic social doctrine, Russell Hittinger has noted that Catholic social thought rests on four basic principles: "dignity of the person, solidarity, subsidiarity, and common good." These four principles were outlined in what Hittinger calls "the three great 'social' encyclicals": *Rerum Novarum* (1891), *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931), and *Centesimus Annus* (1991).²⁹

To understand the relation between (neo)scholastic economics and Catholic social thought, it is helpful to distinguish the history of economics (that is, the history of the economic theory used by economic thinkers to describe any economic activity) from economic history, understood as a history of how the economic aspects of society developed. For example, in the United States there was a progressive transition from agriculture to industry to services. Roughly speaking, scholastic economic theory is the analytical toolkit that popes since Leo XIII have used to discuss the new pastoral challenges of economic history as it unfolds. For example, there is discussion of industrialization in *Rerum Novarum* and *Quadragesimo Anno*, decolonialization in *Populorum Progressio*, and the fall of communism in *Centesimus Annus*.

I would like to comment briefly on errors in terminology. For reasons I explain in *Redeeming Economics*, the term "capitalism" has no analytical content

²⁸ George Weigel, *Evangelical Catholicism: Deep Reform in the 21st Century* (New York: Basic Books, 2013).

²⁹ Russell Hittinger, "The Coherence of the Four Basic Principles of Catholic Social Doctrine," in *Pursuing the Common Good: How Solidarity and Subsidiarity Can Work Together* (Vatican City: Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, 2008), 2, available at: <http://www.pass.va/content/dam/scienzesociali/pdf/acta14/acta14-hittinger.pdf>.

apart from Adam Smith's erroneous "labor theory of value" (which, as I mentioned, Karl Marx took to its thoroughly logical but absurd conclusion). Therefore, anyone who uses the term "capitalism," whether to defend *or* attack it, condemns himself to an inconclusive pillow-fight in the dark. Pope John Paul II rightly discouraged use of the term in *Centesimus Annus*.³⁰

2017 is not only the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, but also the 50th anniversary of the Land O' Lakes Declaration, which has been rightly described as a declaration of independence from the Catholic magisterium by the signatory Catholic universities. The gist of the declaration is stated in one sentence in the first paragraph: "To perform its teaching and research functions effectively the Catholic university must have a true autonomy and academic freedom in the face of authority of whatever kind, lay or clerical, external to the academic community itself."³¹ Thomas Aquinas explained why this attitude is faulty. "Other sciences derive their certitude from the natural light of human reason, which can err."³² Further, "the argument from authority based on human reason is the weakest, yet the argument from authority based on divine revelation is the strongest."³³ Thus by claiming that "the Catholic University [is] the critical reflective intelligence of the Church," standing in judgment even on the Catholic bishops appointed in apostolic succession, the Land O' Lakes Declaration had things exactly backward. Moreover, in economics at least, the neoscholastic approach is both necessary to explain Catholic social doctrine and empirically superior to any existing secular neoclassical school.

³⁰ *Centesimus Annus*, 42: "Returning now to the initial question: can it perhaps be said that, after the failure of Communism, capitalism is the victorious social system, and that capitalism should be the goal of the countries now making efforts to rebuild their economy and society? Is this the model which ought to be proposed to the countries of the Third World which are searching for the path to true economic and civil progress?"

"The answer is obviously complex. If by 'capitalism' is meant an economic system which recognizes the fundamental and positive role of business, the market, private property and the resulting responsibility for the means of production, as well as free human creativity in the economic sector, then the answer is certainly in the affirmative, even though it would perhaps be more appropriate to speak of a 'business economy', 'market economy' or simply 'free economy'. But if by 'capitalism' is meant a system in which freedom in the economic sector is not circumscribed within a strong juridical framework which places it at the service of human freedom in its totality, and which sees it as a particular aspect of that freedom, the core of which is ethical and religious, then the reply is certainly negative."

³¹ "Statement on the Nature of the Contemporary Catholic University," <http://archives.nd.edu/episodes/visitors/lol/idea.htm>.

³² *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 5.

³³ *Summa Theologiae* I, q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

Conclusion

I have attempted to cover much ground here. But I hope at least to have explained, first, the origins my field, economics, in the scholastic natural law; second, why Max Weber's famous thesis about a supposed "Protestant ethic" is untenable; and finally, how scholastic moral philosophy provided the analytical toolkit that is necessary to explain the much younger body of Catholic social doctrine, certainly in economics, but, I suggest, possibly for other social sciences as well.

The Sacred Liturgy as a Primary Source for the Artist's Imagination

*Jennifer Donelson**

ABSTRACT: The passage from *Sacrosanctum Concilium* that states: “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows” is of particular importance for the artist. This is because the artist finds in the sacred liturgy both Divine grace for his soul, and exemplars for his work. In order to fulfill the potential of art after the Incarnation, the artist must both worship God in the sacred liturgy and observe how God transforms the material world in the act of worship. The Incarnation and the sacraments, as well as the Church’s liturgical and artistic patrimony, model for the artist the ways in which God draws men to Himself through the material world. They can inspire the artist to create art that likewise brings those who perceive it into contact with God and help him root his work in a solid metaphysical grounding.

DOES MATTER MATTER? The artist is keenly aware that matter does matter, since the artist’s vocation is to shape matter. In the artistic act, the idea in the mind of the artist, by means of finely-honed artistic skills, transforms the accidents of a material medium into a new artistic work. Sounds, paints, marble, gesso, plaster, gestures, words on a page, movements of the tongue, and vibrations of the vocal folds become the servants and bearers of the artist’s idea. Until the execution of the artistic act, the idea was private and discarnate – generated by and abiding in the imagination alone. But in the act of artistic creation, the idea takes unto itself the material world as its bearer, its revelation. The artist is able to delight in the artistic ideas that sprout in his imagination, but while they still remain only ideas, there is a sense in which he feels compelled to make them incarnate in the physical world. Often he is unable to rest until he

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beholds his thoughts take shape in matter. Without matter, the artist's inspiration remains unactualized, incomplete.

Indeed, matter matters even for the artist's imagination. Any artist who spends extraordinary amounts of time with his medium, perfecting his artistic technique for shaping it, grows to know more and more about the possibilities that the medium has, ways in which it can be transformed, and transformations that are impossible because of the limits of the medium. This knowledge of possibilities and impossibilities shapes the artistic idea in the imagination of the artist. Usually the artist continues to grow in knowledge of these physical possibilities and impossibilities even in the artistic act itself. As the medium with which the artist works is gradually shaped into the fullness of its artistic form, it responds to the artist's skill, presenting challenges, obstacles, new possibilities, or unforeseen relationships.

And yet, for all the time that artists spend with matter, it seems that so many artists today have lost a sense of the full potential that matter has to really matter. So many artists have lost contact with God as the source of all reality. In turn, this narrows their understanding of what is real, what is most important. It impoverishes both their artistic ideas and vision about the ability of matter to express metaphysical, divine, and universal truths. This is, of course, what I mean by matter mattering.

There is a reveling in the absurd, the meaningless, the ephemeral, the hopeless, the ugly, the titillating, the hyper-contextualized. Those who still attempt to convey profound meaning in their art settle for the embodiment only of societal, political, faux-cultural, and psychological realities. Much art seems to have given up on beauty, transcendence, and the ability to speak of spiritual realities that are more real than the material world itself, valuing shock tactics and self-referential expressivity instead.

If even the artist loses sight of the potential of matter to be shaped into profoundly meaningful works of art, and looks at the world in a warped, anemic way, what hope is there for others who don't share in the artistic vocation to see that matter matters? If artists give up hope, it becomes easier for non-artists to wallow in the here-and-now, the immanent, the immediately gratifying. They settle for material manifestations and works of art that are banal, kitschy, familiar, worldly, emotionally manipulative, or cheap. Surrounded with shallow art, they become spiritually impoverished. They risk thinking that reality itself is shallow. They have even their most noble, sincere, and diligent intentions weakened, for those works of art fail to be doors into the beyond and reminders of what undergirds all of reality. The artist's despair and delusion translate into the broader culture with the collapse of the sacramental possibility of material into materialism.

Where can the artist go to renew his faith in the potential of matter? What can spark his imagination for seeing the possibility of expressing the inexpressible, the profound, the transcendent through matter? How can he reconnect with and again draw from the source of all reality?

I propose that the sacred liturgy can serve as a primary source for the artist's imagination and vocation. This is because the artist needs both deep contact with reality as well as exemplars of ways in which the physical world open us to the spiritual – the sacred liturgy provides both.

Light from Aquinas

We can begin to look at this proposal by using a question from the *Summa theologiae* that sits at the heart of the relationship between matter and spirit. In II-II, q.81, a.7, Aquinas asks whether the virtue of religion that governs the practice of paying due honor and reverence to God, has an external act. Is there an exterior element to the worship of God, or is it that we ought praise and worship Him in our hearts and minds alone? It is important here to remember that, for Aquinas, religion is the virtue by which one gives God the reverence and worship is justly due to him.

The objections enumerated in this question of the *Summa* focus on the nature of God as spirit, and the inferiority of the material to the spiritual. The considerations might be thought to imply that God, being pure spirit and greater than we who are in the flesh, deserves what is greater – namely, the spiritual interior act of worship – and would be shown dishonor by worship by means of inferior, material things. To these objections Aquinas gives the following answer: “in Divine worship it is necessary to make use of corporeal things, that man's mind may be aroused thereby, as by signs, to the spiritual acts by means of which he is united to God.”

Why is this? We give God worship because of who God is, but not because it benefits Him, who has “no need of our praise.”¹ We worship God so that, as Aquinas says, the “mind is subjected to Him; wherein its perfection consists, since a thing is perfected by being subjected to its superior.”² In giving God the reverence and honor justly due to him, our minds, hearts, and souls become configured to Him. In this wonderfully benevolent economy of salvation, God

¹ Præfatio Communis IV, *Missale Romanum*, editio typica tertia (Rome: Typis Vaticanis Polyglotis, 2002). This preface is based on one found in the Leonine Sacramentary; see *Sacramentarium Leonianum*, ed. Rev. Charles Lett Feltoe, B. D. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896), p. 72, line 14 <<https://books.google.com/books?id=QoFbAAAAMAAJ>> (accessed October 9, 2017).

² Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, second and revised edition, 5 vols., 1920, II-II, a. 81, . a. 7 <<http://www.newadvent.org/summa/3081.htm>> (accessed October 9, 2017).

gains nothing, but we gain our perfection and salvation. In the act of worship, we are ordered to God in a fitting way. It is fitting because we become subject to God, who is greater than we are, and the source of our perfection,³ according to the plan he has for us in Christ Jesus.⁴

According to this principle, we are perfected by subjecting ourselves to God in His greatness and conforming ourselves to Christ, and the material world can likewise be perfected when it is made subject to the superior spiritual world. Our bodies find their perfection in being subject to the mind and will. What is primary in the worship of God is the spiritual, interior act of the heart and mind in worship, but the secondary material acts, the physical expressions of honor and reverence for God, are also necessary. This is because man is composed of body and soul, and God deserves reverence from every aspect of the human person. It is in doing such secondary external acts of worship that we are able to give God the primary interior acts of worship, to worship Him in “Spirit and in truth.”⁵

More than this, though, is the notion that the body is not just an unnecessary tag-along in the reverencing of God, but also an integral part of His fitting worship. The body not only expresses interior worship as the servant of the intellect and will of the one worshipping but also teaches the soul to give due reverence to God by acting as a sensible symbol for the disposition of the heart, by stirring up and giving new strength to the act of spiritual worship. Likewise it is the spiritual worship of God that gives life, meaning, and sincerity to the external acts of religion, by teaching the body likewise to be conformed to Christ, its creator and redeemer. There is a reciprocal relationship here between the interior and exterior, each perfecting the other, each teaching the other, primarily through this ordering of what is lower to what is higher.

This is a point that Pius XII stressed in his wonderful catechesis about worship and active liturgical participation in the encyclical *Mediator Dei*. Article twenty-three begins, “the worship rendered by the Church to God must be, in its entirety, interior as well as exterior. It is exterior because the nature of man as a composite of body and soul requires it to be so. Likewise, because divine Providence has disposed that [here, he quotes the Preface for the Christmas] ‘while we recognize God visibly, we may be drawn by Him to love of things unseen.’ Every impulse of the human heart, besides, expresses itself naturally through the senses.”⁶

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ephesians 1.

⁵ John 4:24.

⁶ Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, encyclical, November 20, 1947, ¶23 <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20111947_mediator-dei.html> (accessed October 9, 2017).

In the same way that faith without works is dead,⁷ so too is worship lifeless if it has no external manifestation. At the same time, just as works lacking faith and charity in the soul can look like “whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear to men beautiful, but within are full of dead men’s bones, and of all filthiness,”⁸ so too are the external actions, gestures, and ceremonial of worship worthless for salvation without the interior act of worship due to God. As Christ says, “first make clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, that the outside may become clean.”⁹ Both interior and exterior are called to be clean, fitting, rightly ordered, but the interior has the priority over the exterior in the order of perfection, because it the interior, the spiritual, the faculties of the soul that make man most like God.

Is it just the body of man at worship that is implied by what St. Thomas is discussing? In what do these exterior acts of worship consist? If, as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says, “the sacred liturgy is above all things the worship of the divine Majesty,”¹⁰ the way in which “public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ,”¹¹ we may answer these questions by asking what characterizes the external elements of the sacred liturgy. Indeed, we can find in liturgical manifestation of worship a blueprint for the ordering of the entire physical world and thus all of creation to the worship of God. In the sacred liturgy, we encounter a sacred place and time in which sound, gesture, word, marble, paint, wood, metal, that which we can smell and taste as well as the body of man become configured to the worship of God, by forming a sort of symphony of symbols that draw the mind and heart to the worship of God. As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* reminds us, “in the earthly liturgy we take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy that is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle.¹² We sing a hymn to the Lord’s glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army; venerating the memory of the saints, we hope for some part and fellowship with them; we eagerly await the Saviour, Our Lord Jesus Christ, until He, our life, shall appear and we too will appear with Him in glory.”¹³

If we can order all that is sensible and spiritual to the worship of God in the sacred liturgy, what does this suggest for the calling of the artist whose task it is to order the material world to the spiritual, the physical to the artistic idea, to

⁷ James 2:17.

⁸ Matthew 23:27.

⁹ Matthew 23:26.

¹⁰ Vatican II, *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, constitution, December 4, 1963, ¶33 <http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19631204_sacrosanctum-concilium_en.html> (accessed October 9, 2017).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, ¶7.

¹² Rev. 21:2; Col. 3:1; Heb. 8:2.

¹³ Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4, as quoted in *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶8.

incarnate the fruits of his imagination in the medium with which he has technical facility? It is from this aspect that we see that the sacred liturgy becomes a primary source for the artist's imagination, serving as both a font of grace for the artist, and offering a model for bringing about the kingdom of God "on earth as it is in heaven."¹⁴

It needs to be clarified at this point that this discussion does not address only those artists who offer their work for use in the sacred liturgy. What is proposed here is that we discover how the material world can be ordered to the spiritual world in the act of worship (specifically in the sacred liturgy), and then see how the models and examples therein can extend into the work of the artist, serving as both an inspiration and guide for those who strive to create works of beauty and depth, no matter the medium or venue.

The artist, like every man, owes God worship and is dependent on the life of grace that flows "as from a font"¹⁵ from the liturgy and "especially from the Eucharist."¹⁶ We know this to be true of every person, whether or not he practices or believes the truths of the Catholic faith. In Christ's great commission to His Apostles, to go make disciples of all nations, we see the call of the Savior of the universe to every human heart, that all be baptized and incorporated into His mystical body, the Church, and thereby attain life everlasting, worshipping God eternally in the heavenly liturgy.

Beyond the life of grace offered by God to each person through the sacred liturgy, there is the witness of the sacred arts to the transforming power of this grace in the material world. Throughout the centuries, the sacred liturgy has shown itself to be the recipient and home of many of the most beautiful works of art ever created. The divine realities present in the sacred liturgy have proven a source of inspiration for artists, believer and non-believer alike. As the land nearest the running water is the most rich in wildlife and vegetation, so the font of divine grace causes the human imagination to sprout rich works of profound depth. In the sacred liturgy, the artist not only encounters God and receives grace according to his openness to it but also sees how matter can bespeak the divine, can provide the human spirit with fitting gestures, words, music, and images for the worship of God. The sacred liturgy serves as a fitting model for shaping the inferior material world to reflect the superior spiritual world, for granting to matter a form that is more noble and splendid than before it took the shape of an artistic idea.

In what follows, some of the modalities by which the sacred liturgy serves as an artistic model will be enumerated and explained. Special emphasis will be placed

¹⁴ Matthew 6:10.

¹⁵ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶10.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

on the ways in which the material world can be transformed into a powerful spiritual sign by the artist's imagination.

The Ennoblement of Matter

One must begin with the Incarnation of the Word of God, for the Incarnation makes possible both the sacred liturgy and the kind of art that can express the depths of reality.

It is the Incarnation that makes possible the sacred liturgy, precisely because the material world has been made fitting for sacrifice in the person of Christ. As God and man, Jesus offers to the Father an unblemished, perfect sacrifice, opening to us the door of salvation. As Aquinas points out, there are three reasons why man makes a sacrifice: for the remission of sin, that he be preserved in grace, and that man might be fully united to God.¹⁷ In the Old Testament, the burnt holocaust was offered. The sacrifices offered in worship to God imperfectly foreshadowed the perfect sacrifice of Christ.¹⁸ But now that God has been made incarnate, all three effects of sacrifice have been “conferred on us through the humanity of Christ,”¹⁹ for he has a human nature that is both material and spiritual.

With such a dignity afforded to matter in the humanity of Christ, we can now create art that more perfectly expresses the divine. Before the Incarnation, graven images of God were forbidden because God had revealed himself only in shadows and pale reflections, speaking by means of symbols, reflections of his glory, and through his prophets to whom he revealed himself in a veiled manner. Jesus, the Word of God made flesh, reveals God to us in a complete act of revelation. He is “the image of the invisible God.”²⁰ Christ, in taking a body to Himself, makes it possible for us to see, touch, hear, follow Him – He who is God! In the hypostatic union, matter is assumed into the Godhead. God who never changes, nevertheless, by taking flesh unto himself, changes the material world forever, ennobling it, and making it a means for His revelation, a dwelling place for the Godhead. Now that we have seen and touched the Lord, it is possible for art to reflect that encounter with the face of God. As St. John Damascene says, “I venture to draw an image of the invisible God, not as invisible, but as having become visible for our sakes through flesh and blood. I paint the visible flesh of God, for it is impossible to represent a spirit.”²¹ The Logos of God enables us to make visual art that depicts God. Music after the Incarnation is able to clothe the words of God Himself, and

¹⁷ Aquinas, *Summa* III, q. 2, q. 2.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *Summa* II-II, q. 102, q. 2.

¹⁹ Aquinas, *Summa* III, q. 2, a. 2.

²⁰ Colossians 1:15.

²¹ St. John Damascene, *Treatise on Images* (London: Thomas Baker, 1898), pp. 5–6.

not only those of His prophets; further, the musical setting of Old Testament texts like the Psalms finds its fulfillment in the person of Christ.

Sacrifice at the one temple in Jerusalem is fulfilled by the one sacrifice of Christ who, as the temple of God in His flesh, makes Himself present on all the altars of the world. It is around all these altars that stone, wood, metal, gold, jewels, tiles, and plaster can come together to form the *domus Dei* and the *porta caeli*, the place where God comes to dwell in the midst of His Church, and the door through which we can gaze upon our promised future glory in Christ. And beyond the sacred arts, since Christ now calls us friends because He has revealed to us what He is doing, our knowledge of who God is will be greater than before the Incarnation. While we will never know God perfectly, we do know Him more now than before the Incarnation, and knowing Him better enables us to create art that speaks of divine realities with greater specificity and intellectual precision. We are able to more clearly see God's plan of salvation in all the events, people, and matter around us, thereby enabling us to create art that expresses a redeemed universe in which good triumphs over evil, life over death, faith and hope over despair.

In the Incarnation, matter has been elevated to be able to convey the depths of reality, the most meaningful and important things, things that are far beyond its nature as matter. With so ennobled a material, the artist's ability to communicate what is most profound is likewise made possible.

The Sacramental Power of Material

Through the eyes of one who has faith in God, the creator and redeemer of the universe, one can see all of creation as a sign that points to God. This so-called "sacramental worldview" comforts the searching heart, enabling it to see everything in the material world as meaningful and as part of a larger picture. Gazing through these eyes allows a vision of the world in which even sin and suffering find meaning in the plan of God. Reality and the revelation of Christ in the flesh beckon us to a sacramental worldview – to seeing the meaning present in the physical world – to experiencing God proclaim His love, providence, and salvation for us by means of tangible, sensible realities.

Though God is one, he gives us a multitude of signs that reveal different aspects of Himself. Through the rising of the sun and the movement of the heavenly bodies in space we learn of the constancy and immensity of God. Through diverse characteristics of all manner of living creatures we learn of God's intelligence and providence. Through rainfall we learn of the dependence of all life on that which sustains it, that the contingency of creation hinges on the one who sustains its existence. That the intelligence can perceive metaphysical meaning in the created order reminds the artist that the material world around him is a thing

of wonder, enchantment, and delight – matter has tremendous potential to point beyond itself to the ground and source of being, meaning, and relation.

While a sacramental worldview enables us to see all of creation as a sign, we know through the teaching of Christ in His Church that there are certain signs that are greater than others by virtue of God having granted them the power not only to signify but also to effect what they signify. By virtue of the Incarnation and through the power of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection, the Church gives to us seven particular sacraments that, as we have learned in the Catechism, are "outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace." Since Christ effected our salvation through taking matter unto himself, it makes sense that He should continue the work of salvation through the end of time by means of the physical world. Though we no longer see Him, abiding as He does at the right hand of the Father, He has sent His Spirit to us and offers us the divine life of grace by means of the seven sacraments of the Church, many of which are (or at least can be) celebrated in the context of the sacred liturgy.

For our discussion here, an analogy can be drawn between the sacraments and works of art. Each sacrament has *res* and *verba*, that is, matter and form, by analogy to the artist's medium and idea, respectively.

Any analogy, of course, implies similarities and differences. Let us begin with the similarities. The matter of the sacrament is the physical material used in the sacrament – the water of baptism; the sins committed, grieved, and confessed on the lips in penance; the chrism of confirmation, etc. Our first similarity in the analogical comparison of sacrament and art lies in the nature of the matter used in each. As in the artistic medium used by the artist, the matter of the sacrament, ontologically speaking, already has matter and form. It is not some sort of primordial matter. The particular water used in baptism already has matter and form. The particular piece of wood used in a sculpture already has matter and form. If the matter did not already have matter and form, it would not be real, let alone usable in a sacrament or work of art. Neither the priest nor the artist creates the matter *ex nihilo*.

A second similarity in this analogy is the conveyance of meaning by the physical matter in the sacrament or work of art. In each of the seven sacraments, the matter signifies the grace that is conveyed in the sacrament. The water of baptism, for example, symbolizes the washing away of sins, the cleansing power of the sacrament; it likewise symbolizes a drowning and death to oneself so that one lives no longer for oneself but for Christ who lives within him.²² In this way, the matter itself speaks wordlessly about the spiritual remedy of the sacrament. St. Augustine even goes so far as to say, "What else is a corporeal sacrament but a

²² Galatians 2:20.

kind of visible word?”²³ The physical characteristics of the matter are meaningful, glorified through God’s power in the sacrament, teaching us by means of symbolism, thereby showing us that simple materials, “daily and domestic things,”²⁴ can be exalted beyond our wildest imagination simply through God’s willing that they be so exalted. Certainly in art there are greater and lesser degrees of symbolism in the physical material used – depending on the style, medium, or artistic idea – but the meaning of the matter is never totally sublimated in the work of art. For example, an icon of Our Lord uses gold because gold symbolizes the infinite value of Jesus, and the luminescence of the metal reminds us of the radiance of Christ’s glory. A church uses marble because marble is sturdy and enduring, just like the promise Christ gave to His Church that the gates of the netherworld should not prevail against it. Both sacrament and work of art demonstrate the pedagogical, symbolic, and communicative power of the physical material. That matter can mean something else means that both art and sacrament have the power to instruct and express, to go beyond itself to touch on something else.

As an extension of this second similarity, we note in both sacrament and art that the matter accords with the meaning conveyed. The matter of each sacrament is not haphazard in its semiological position in the sacrament; not just any matter can fittingly signify the grace conveyed in a sacrament. The matter fittingly (to quote Aquinas’s oft-used term) expresses the reality and needs little explanation to convey its meaning. Water is a more fitting symbol in baptism than would be milk because of its cleansing and refreshing powers in everyday life. Likewise, the artist must understand and use fitting matter, an appropriate medium for the artistic idea, unless, of course, he is intending something to be farcical. There is a search for the ideal timbre, the right piece of marble, the correct grain in the wood, the most expressive harmony, the right brush and consistency of the paint for the perfect brushstroke. An artist knows that when the medium is fitting, the artistic idea will more splendidly exude from the work of art. The less fitting the material used, the more his ability to communicate the artistic idea suffers.

A third similarity lies in the *verbum*, or form of the sacrament and artistic work. To the matter of the sacrament come the words of the sacrament. They give form and effect the sacrament through its minister—“Ego te baptizo in nomine Patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Sancti” [I baptize you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit]; “Ego te absolvo” [I absolve you]; “signo te signo crucis + et confirmo te chrismate salutis” [I sign you with the sign of the cross and confirm you with the chrism of salvation].

²³ Aquinas, *Summa* III, q. 60, a. 6.

²⁴ David N. Power, *Unsearchable Riches* (New York: Pueblo, 1984), p. 96.

Why is it that these words are needed? Isn't the matter of the sacrament sufficient? In addressing this question, Aquinas notes that Our Lord used determinate words in issuing the sacraments: "go baptize all nations," "this is my body," "do this in remembrance of me," etc. This is because the words orient the matter towards its end, and provide the means by which the intention to confect the sacrament is actualized.²⁵ When this intention of the proper minister to confect is met with proper matter and form, the power Our Lord gave to the sacrament is unleashed, transfiguring the material into a divine force that transforms the one who receives it, sometimes indelibly.

In the sacred liturgy, Jesus pours out the divine power of His abiding love for us in an ultimate expression of self-donation. When the words of the ordained minister are spoken with the intention of confecting the sacrament, the matter of the sacrament (bread and wine) are completely transformed into His body, blood, soul, and divinity, maintaining only the physical appearance of the substances offered in sacrifice. This is the greatest of all sacraments because, as Aquinas points out, "it contains Christ Himself substantially: whereas the other sacraments contain a certain instrumental power that is a share of Christ's power."²⁶ Here we see the dazzling heights to which God has elevated matter – through His sacramental power in the Eucharist God saves us from death and grants us life everlasting. The matter in the Eucharist has been so transformed as to veil in a humble appearance and finite space Him whom the heavens and earth cannot contain.

In the artistic act, the form that abides in the imagination of the artist determines the matter of the medium as the artist uses his skill to incarnate the idea. Likewise in the artistic act, the meeting of form and fitting matter produces a powerful effect.

Here, however, there is a difference in our analogy. The power effected by sacraments is different from that power effected by great works of art, for the works of art do not effect the reality they signify vis-à-vis sanctifying grace. But can we not say that a work of art has the power and capacity to serve as a means of actual grace? Cannot a great work of art dramatically affect the life, outlook, perception, emotions, memory, and will of the one who perceives it? I assume that most of you have had this experience. For my own part, I'll never forget the first time I heard the Brahms piano concerti, walked into the Sainte-Chapelle, inspected the garments in a Van Eyck up close and in-person, was enraptured by the story and acting style of the film "Life is Beautiful," read a Willa Cather novel, saw a vestment with stunning needlework, or sang the Bach *Magnificat* or Tract for the first Sunday of Lent. These works of art shaped me, my imagination, my outlook,

²⁵ Aquinas, *Summa* III, q. 60, a. 7.

²⁶ Aquinas, *Summa* III, q. 65, a. 3.

my memory. They transported me outside of myself into contact with the perfection and beauty of God.

Artists know well the power of influence that lies in their works. But to what end is this power applied? In our time it often manifests itself as emotional manipulation, titillation, barbarity, the arousal of unfounded fanaticism, or shock tactics; there is so much art that warps our perception of truth, entices us to glorify evil, feeds on vanity, satisfies shallow curiosity, incites us to condemn politically correct vices in society but never invites us to look more deeply at the sins within our own hearts.

Eucharist as Artistic Exemplar

In the passage from the *Summa* quoted above, Aquinas says that the corporeal things necessary for worship function as “signs” that rouse the spirit to the worship of God. I propose that the artist who does not know God in the Eucharist settles for too little in the effect that he expects his artwork to have. Knowing that the Eucharist exists and has the power to instantly change the eternal course of a life, the ability to instill the life of God within the soul of a person means that we ought aim to have our art to participate in extending that power throughout the entirety of creation and into every human heart. Certainly, art can never do what a sacrament does. But we ought strive to configure the physical world to the heavenly kingdom as much as human talent and artistic endeavor allow. To aim at anything less is a degradation of what Christ has shown us in the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. As *Sacrosanctum Concilium* says, “the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows.”²⁷ Our words, acts of charity, efforts to grow in holiness, development of artistic technique – all of this fails to produce real, lasting, substantial fruit if it is not grounded in the sacred liturgy, which is a foretaste of our ultimate destiny, and a font of Divine life for all who drink from it.

We see this extension of the power of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, in the Catholic notion of a sacramental. Aquinas distinguishes between sacrament and sacramental primarily by distinguishing between the ends and completeness of the two. While a sacrament actually effects the grace it signifies, a sacramental only disposes a person to receive grace. Further, a sacramental in the narrow sense is some material thing that is specially designated by the Church as a means for disposing oneself to grace. But this is not to say that unless the Church specifically designates something to be a sacramental that it cannot function in a broader sense as a “sacramental.” Should it not be that the artist configures his work to this model? That he fashions his work so as to draw the mind, heart, will,

²⁷ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶10.

and soul of the one who perceives it to God? Should not all that is properly called art serve as a conduit to dispose the one who perceives it to grace?

Pope St. Pius X explores the notion that art functions as a sacramental in his 1903 *motu proprio* on sacred music, *Tra le Sollecitudini*. There he states that sacred music's "principal office is to clothe with suitable melody the liturgical text proposed for the understanding of the faithful, its proper aim is to add greater efficacy to the text, in order that through it the faithful may be the more easily moved to devotion and better disposed for the reception of the fruits of grace belonging to the celebration of the most holy mysteries." This is because, as he says, sacred music "participates in the general scope of the liturgy, which is the glory of God and the sanctification and edification of the faithful."²⁸

While it is easy to apply Pius X's reasoning to the other sacred arts, it is my contention that, in a world that is in desperate need of God, all art that touches upon all manner of things good and true can have this powerful effect. It is even possible, particularly in an age that rejects the notion of objective truth and goodness, that the effect of art on disposing the people's hearts to grace is even more powerful than a direct appeal to the intellect or will on behalf of the true and the good.

Three Ways the Sacred Liturgy Serves as an Artistic Model

There are three remaining ways in which I would like to discuss how the sacred liturgy serves as a model to the artist.

First, Aquinas discusses the liturgical arts most specifically in terms of the Old Testament. In his question on "Whether sufficient reason can be assigned for the ceremonies pertaining to holy things?" St. Thomas discusses whether it was fitting for a tabernacle and temple to be set up for the worship of God since, as St. Paul says, "God Who made the world and all things therein; He being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made by hands."²⁹ To worship God – who is omnipresent – in one particular place seems odd. In his reply to this objection, Aquinas again points out that matter matters. It was for the sake of man, who has a body, that a tabernacle and temple were established. In the setting apart of these sacred, specific places, man learns greater reverence towards God. The setting apart of something as sacred, holy, to be used only for the worship of God teaches us the fear of the Lord. Something that is abundant and common does not capture the attention of man in the way that something rare and out of the ordinary does. The setting apart of a sacred object allows the mind to clear away all distractions in the worship of God. As the Cherubic hymn of the Eastern rite

²⁸ Pius X, *Tra le Sollecitudini*, motu proprio, November 22, 1903, ¶1 <<https://adoremus.org/1903/11/22/tra-le-sollecitudini/>> (accessed October 9, 2017).

²⁹ Aquinas, *Summa* II-II, a. 102, a. 4.

exhorts, “let us now lay aside all earthly cares that we may receive the King of all.” This is why Pope Pius X says that an essential criterion for the music that is to be used in the sacred liturgy is that it “must be holy, and must, therefore, exclude all profanity not only in itself, but in the manner in which it is presented by those who execute it.”³⁰

This is why the artist cannot feed his imagination only with profane works of the canon of his craft. Certainly these are important. Any pianist should know the works of Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Chopin, Liszt, Debussy, and De Falla; the playing of Horowitz, Cziffra, Brendel, Michelangeli, Berman, Argerich, and Trifonov. These things are true food for the pianist’s imagination. But the pianist must also know the source of all art, the source of all matter, the source of all existence, and this knowledge is obtained by frequenting sacred places, dwelling in sacred time, sensing sacred objects, receiving the life of grace in the sacraments, and praying. Anyone who has hope of his art achieving great things has need of this grounding, lest his art dwell in some imaginary plain that runs parallel to the sacred, never crossing paths with the foundation of reality. Without the sacred liturgy, how can the artist aspire to the great heights to which the material world can extend? Without the model of the Eucharist and the life of grace in the soul in mind, the artistic endeavor is stunted, ephemeral, a caricature of reality.

Secondly, and related to this idea of setting something apart so as to teach man to worship God, is the idea of bedecking, bejeweling, and adorning that which is most important. Aquinas points out how material excellence and splendor draws the mind of man to reverence, and thus it was fitting for the tabernacle and temple of the old covenant to be lavishly decorated. He draws this analogy: “it is customary among men for kings and princes, who ought to be revered by their subjects, to be clothed in more precious garments, and to possess vaster and more beautiful abodes. And for this reason it behooved special times, a special abode, special vessels, and special ministers to be appointed for the divine worship, so that thereby the soul of man might be brought to greater reverence for God.”³¹ If we do such things for men who bear only political power, how much more ought we offer to show forth the power of the king and creator of the universe? And if such worship was offered to God under the old law, how much more ought we offer God our riches when He has lavished His grace upon us so abundantly according to the new covenant in his precious blood?

Indeed, St. John orients our imagination in this regard in his vision of heaven in the book of Revelation: “And he who sat there appeared like jasper and carnelian, and round the throne was a rainbow that looked like an emerald. Round

³⁰ *Tra le Sollecitudini*, ¶ 2.

³¹ Aquinas, *Summa* II-II, q. 102, a. 4.

the throne were twenty-four thrones, and seated on the thrones were twenty-four elders, clad in white garments, with golden crowns upon their heads.... The twenty-four elders fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives for ever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, ‘Worthy art thou, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for thou didst create all things, and by thy will they existed and were created.’”³² The liturgical worship of heaven is no exercise in functionality or minimalism; it is the act of putting all that is most treasured, most valuable, most excellent at the feet of God, for it is He who owns the earth and all that is in it, and He who is worthy to receive the most excellent things we have to offer Him.

There is no skimping in so important a matter as the worship of God. Does the lover look for what is cheapest and easiest in finding something to offer to the beloved? No, he looks for that which is most precious, most splendid so that it serves as a fitting symbol of his love. St. John Vianney understood this well. While wearing a threadbare cassock and eating meager scraps, he sought to draw his lukewarm parishioners back to Mass by beautifying the sacred liturgy with precious “new vestments and altar vessels,”³³ all the while also seeing to the material needs of the poor. Certainly the best that each one brings to the worship of God does depend on his means; the worship of God in a church in a poor inner-city neighborhood with few resources may not look like that offered in a wealthy suburb. Regardless of means, the best that one has to offer is brought.

Another example of this is the lavish decoration we find in Franciscan churches throughout Europe, a principle that finds its roots in the life of St. Francis himself. As a Franciscan friar noted in a 2010 interview:

St. Francis also had a great love toward the Blessed Sacrament and wanted his followers to provide the best for our dear Lord. ‘He wished at one time to send his brothers through the world with precious pyxes, so that wherever they should see the price of our redemption kept in an unbecoming manner, they should place It in the very best place...’³⁴

We need to realize that the fitting worship of God in the manner I describe is not inimical to the “preferential option for the poor.” In the aftermath of rationalism, secular humanism, and modern materialistic utilitarianism, the Church has largely

³² Rev. 4:3-4, 10-11.

³³ Anonymous, *The Life of Saint John Vianney, The Curé of Ars* (New York: Joseph Schaefer, 1911) <<http://www.ecatholic2000.com/vianney/cure.shtml>> (accessed October 9, 2017).

³⁴ Thomas Celano, *Second Life* ¶201, as quoted in Shawn Tribe, “Reform of the Reform/*In Utroque Usu* Communities: Interview with the *Missionarii Franciscani Verbi Aeterni*,” *New Liturgical Movement* blog, March 20, 2010 <<http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org/2010/03/reform-of-reformin-utroque-usu.html#.WEsQ9neZPVo>> (accessed October 9, 2017).

abandoned its patronage of great art and artists in the sacred liturgy, focusing instead on the corporal works of mercy. Likewise, artists have abandoned the Church, finding refuge and offering their work to the state, academy, and social causes. But just as the Church has both contemplative and active religious orders, so must the Church engage in both the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It must act, but it must also pray and adore God. It must see to the material welfare of others, as well as to the immaterial longings of their hearts.

There is the principle of preferential option for the poor in social justice, but that does not mean we are to be ignorant of or not be concerned with the liturgy because the poor attend the liturgy as well (the poor in spirit and the poor in fact). They deserve to be fed with the riches of the Church. If we don't provide them with a beautiful liturgy, then we are robbing the poor of what Jesus wants to enrich them with through the liturgy of the Church; instead, they would become more impoverished. In the old days, it was very typical that the poor themselves were the ones who built the church. They are the ones who sacrificed their time, materials, money, etc. The beauty of some of the older churches was because of the devotion of the poor whose faith was not dead.³⁵

It should not be that only the wealthy can regularly experience great works of art. Instead, if the Church serves as a patron of great art, poor and rich alike can worship at a fittingly beautiful altar, bedecked with fitting ornament, the air surrounding it filled with the fitting praise of God in beautiful sacred music.

It is in this context that I would like to issue a challenge to artists, priests, bishops, lay patrons, and faithful Catholics alike. Let's take up the project of making truly great art for the sacred liturgy – masterpieces of human creativity set aside for the worship of God. Let's write and sing beautiful works of sacred music in the liturgy, new and old pieces that put excellent melodies and orthodox texts on the lips of congregations and choirs. Let's build churches that offer God the finest that we have for His glory and the edification of all who see the architecture. Let's support the training of children and artists in the sacred arts, pursuing excellence in offering our talents and time to Christ's bride, the Church. Artists, bishops, priests, and seminarians, let's immerse ourselves in and be formed by the rich treasury of sacred music, the architecture of the great churches of the world, the most stunning painting and sculpture that has adorned the walls of these churches, the great poetry of the sacred liturgy, the skilled metalwork and woodwork of the great craftsmen, the rich symbolism of the Church's liturgical tradition. Let's learn how to pray with art that takes excellence and beauty seriously. Let's stop feeding our imagination exclusively with those ephemeral artifacts of the internet culture. Let's linger with artistic treasures that find their inspiration in the sacred liturgy and that demand our attention and repeated pondering, rather than satisfy our curiosity through an endless stream of novelty.

³⁵ Ibid.

Let's stop using lackluster music that covers up the rich sacred silence possible within the liturgy. Let's not use jaded, dull music that substitutes for works that are more dignified and challenge us to build up programs of musical excellence. Let's stop settling for a notion of noble simplicity that is more akin to minimalistic brutalism than nobility. Let's be insightfully discerning in what we admit from the surrounding cultures into the sacred liturgy and learn to draw in and baptize from different cultures the truly genius ideas and practices that are true foundations for the growth of the Gospel and that have real spiritual depth. Let's eschew those unbaptizable and impoverished elements of American popular culture that arose from atheistic materialism or hedonism and that find no true home in the grammar of the sacred liturgy. Let's stop relying on the secular culture to set a high bar of artistic excellence, settling for the inferior imitations of that culture within our liturgies. We should write and sing excellent sacred music, both simple and complex, in the context of the sacred liturgy and not just in the concert halls. We should create the most excellent paintings, sculptures, and architectural ornaments in our churches rather than relegating them to the museum. We should provide the finest artistic training of children, especially those of less fortunate means, so that their talents may be directed to the worship of God, not relying on secular institutions to provide and benefit from the fruits of this education. To artists who work in secular venues, let's again drink from the rich fountain of Catholic liturgical tradition and symbolism, frequenting the sacraments and cultivating a fitting home for the indwelling of the Holy Trinity in our souls, learning to pray at the foot of the Church, our mother, bedecked in the finest she has to offer, drawn from the treasury of the Church throughout time.

Finally, the sacred liturgy offers to the artist a metaphysical understanding of beauty – a beauty that means something, a beauty that matters. Certainly an exposition of this beauty takes a lifetime to understand and articulate so I will not try to do so in just a few words. What is clear, and what can be said succinctly, is that beauty is befitting of the worship of God, and that the artist must seriously grapple with the central place of beauty in his vocation. But is it not in the face of Christ that we behold in the Incarnation, in the Most Holy Eucharist, in the rich liturgical traditions of the Church that we can search for this beauty and the means by which to extend the marvelous Gospel of the redemption of the material world into our art? Let us return to the sacred liturgy, as *Sacrosanctum Concilium* beckons us, as “the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; [. . . and] the font from which all her power flows.”³⁶ It is there that we will drink from the stream by the wayside, lifting our heads³⁷ to behold the beautiful face of the incarnate God who calls us to such a marvelous vocation.

³⁶ *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, ¶10.

³⁷ Psalm 110:7.

The “Simplex Priest”: Ministry with a Past, Ministry with a Future?

*Edward Peters**

BLESSED SOLANUS CASEY, a Capuchin priest deeply in love with God,¹ was a “simplex priest.” Although ordained to priesthood, Casey had no canonical authorization (“faculties”) to preach homilies or to hear confessions.² How such a priest, unable to engage in two of the most quintessentially priestly services we know, managed nevertheless to be raised to the altar of sanctity, sparks curiosity about his situation. Here I will explore what a “simplex priest” was under the canon law of Casey’s day, whether we still have simplex priests, and (if not) what ever happened to them? Finally, I will ask whether the concept of simplex priest might somehow come back into pastoral view.

For contemporary Catholics, the idea that a priest would not have the authority to hear confessions or that he would not be trusted enough to be allowed to preach a homily at Mass is virtually unthinkable. Nowadays we imagine such severe restrictions on ordained ministry as almost exclusively limited to situations where there is suspicion, if not proof, of some clerical misconduct or at least of serious and pervasive incompetence.³

But in thinking that way we show ourselves to be creatures of our times. It would help us to recognize that the conditions under which clerical ministry is exercised today did not always obtain in the Church. In fact, the present

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¹ For biographical details of Casey’s life see, e.g., Michael Crosby, *Thank God Ahead of Time: The Life and Spirituality of Solanus Casey* (St. Anthony Messenger, 2009), hereafter “Crosby.”

² Crosby 44-45 and 209.

³ From the *Johanno-Pauline Code of Canon Law*, see, e.g., 1983 CIC 764-765 on *restricting* faculties for preaching, 1983 CIC 974 on *revocation* of faculties for confessions, and 1983 CIC 1722 on *limitations* in ministry upon the initiation of a formal penal process.

widespread assumption that ordination itself suffices as evidence of a cleric's suitability to preach and of a priest's suitability to hear confessions is a novelty in the Church – a novelty in the sense of its being *new*, not *trivial*. To be sure, even in his day, the fact that Casey did not have faculties to preach at Mass or to hear confessions was unusual, and it was a cross for him, however graciously he accepted it.⁴ But the point is that these two restrictions on Casey's ministry should not be seen so much as some slight inherited stain on his ministry but rather, first, as the default setting for every man ordained to priesthood in those days and second, perhaps, as a manner of ministering that could be worth re-investigating in our day, given that we are facing some urgent ministerial needs.⁵

Transporting ourselves back to the decades before the Second Vatican Council, we could describe the authority of a newly ordained priest in regard to preaching (especially preaching homilies) and for celebrating the sacrament of confession in this way: there was no such automatic authority, neither for preaching nor for hearing confessions that was associated with priestly ordination itself.⁶ In other words, what Father Casey apparently experienced throughout his whole ordained life as a "simplex priest" (admittedly, the term did not appear in the old law) was the way in which every cleric began ordained ministry back then.

In Casey's day (and for some centuries prior to that) in order to obtain faculties (authorization) to preach or to hear confessions, priests had to pass a post-ordination examination (usually written), and sometimes two (one to gain preaching faculties and another for confessional faculties), whereupon the diocesan bishop could grant him faculties for public preaching and/or the hearing of confessions.⁷ Even after having bestowed such faculties, however, the bishop could revoke either one of them or both if he became concerned that a given priest was deficient in his public preaching or his confessional ministry.

Of course, a number of factors having little to do with learning and even less to do with holiness could have a negative impact on a priest's ability to pass either or both of these examinations. In Casey's situation, the irregular and interrupted education he received as a youth may have left him far enough behind on the learning curve that he simply could not make up the difference, or at least could

⁴ Crosby 209.

⁵ The recently announced Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region (the "Synod of the Amazon" set for 2019) will certainly address the clergy shortage in that area of the world and, as part of their examination of pastoral responses to that shortage, might wish to consider the potential role of simplex priests.

⁶ Note that all priests, even simplex priests, generally enjoy certain emergency faculties for confession such as in "danger of death" circumstances. See 1917 CIC 882 and 1983 CIC 976.

⁷ This restrictive Pio-Benedictine discipline was set out in 1917 CIC 1340 regarding faculties for preaching and in 1917 CIC 877 regarding faculties for confession. Diaconal faculties for preaching, while possible under the 1917 Code, seemed to have been rare.

not in an academically cognizable way articulate such learning as he had acquired. It is also possible that Casey might have suffered from an un-diagnosed learning disability,⁸ a theory that I have long suspected as a factor in the great St. John Vianney's dismal academic performance as a seminarian. Yet his poor performance did not obstruct Vianney's pursuit of holiness or interfere with his ability to bring others to Christ, such that he is now the patron of parish priests! Even Casey's moderate speech impediment could have affected his testing performance. But, whatever the explanation, Casey remained for his whole ministerial life what every priest in those days started off as: a simple ("simplex") priest.

But if Casey's lack of faculties for preaching and confession was not *quite* as noteworthy in his day as it would be in ours, that very point raises the question: Why not? What has changed in regard to approaches toward priestly ministry such that faculties for preaching and confession are almost (not quite completely, but almost) taken for granted upon the fact of ordination? What happened, I suggest, was Vatican II. In short, the conciliar Fathers deepened the Church's appreciation of the dignity and abilities associated with priestly ordination itself, whereupon canon law, which gives pastoral structure to the doctrines of Church, was changed to reflect this new understanding.

Presbyterorum ordinis, the Second Vatican Council's decree on priests (§4) states: "Priests are *debtors*, [so] that the truth of the Gospel which they have, may be given to others.... Whether by entering into profitable dialogue they bring people to the worship of God, [or] by openly preaching they proclaim the mystery of Christ..., *they are relying not on their own wisdom*, for it is the word of Christ they teach."⁹ Such language suggests that something "in virtue of sacred ordination"¹⁰ – and not something acquired in the course of studies – was crucial to a priest's ability to preach. Hence, high marks on a post-ordination academic exam would seem to be of less importance than before.

In its final form, and in a notable shift from the approach of Pio-Benedictine law (1917 CIC 1340) but presaged, I think, by *Presbyterorum ordinis*, Canon 764 of the 1983 Code now confers on all priests and deacons "the faculty of preaching

⁸ Crosby at 172 quotes an associate of Casey's commenting on Casey's pastoral notes to various people that "the spelling was bad, pure fifth-grade stuff, but the contents simply amazed me."

⁹ Second Vatican Council, Decree on Priestly Ministry and Life *Presbyterorum ordinis* (7 dec 1965), *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 58 (1966) 991-1024, Eng. trans. A. Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (Catholic Book Publishing, 1975) 863-902, emphasis added. See also Friedrich Wulf commenting on PO 4 in H. Vorgrimler, ed., *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, in 5 vols., (Herder and Herder, 1967-1969) IV esp. at pp. 228-31 on the partly frustrated desire of the Council to treat the sacramental source of a priest's preaching power more thoroughly than it did.

¹⁰ *Communicationes* 29: 33 ("vi sacrae ordinationis"). Recall, too, 1983 CIC 762 stating the preaching is among the principal duties of sacred ministers.

everywhere,” including the giving of homilies – in effect shifting the canonical burden of proof from the individual cleric to show his suitability to preach to the bishop’s now needing to show why the cleric in question is *un*-suitable.

Something similar happened in regard to priestly faculties for confession under the new law. While confessional faculties are still strictly required (and probably always will be for reasons that go beyond what we can discuss here, per Canon 966), today (per Canon 968) all parish pastors (along with several other priestly diocesan officers) automatically have faculties for confession as part of their holding office.

Meanwhile, however, other diocesan priests (such as parochial vicars and priests serving in, say, educational or administrative roles) still need faculties from their bishop for confession (per Canon 969). To be sure, Canon 970 indicates that “examination” is one way those priests can demonstrate to their bishops that they are qualified for such faculties. But now faculties for confession can also be granted to priests “whose suitability is otherwise evident” and that option, quiescent under the old law (recall 1917 CIC 877 § 1), has become the norm under the new. In the United States “it is usual that all priests [are] conceded the faculty [for Confession] upon ordination without restriction as to the persons to be absolved or as to the occasions for the celebration of the sacrament....”¹¹ As McManus points out this is not an unreasonable position for law or bishops to take, especially given that under Canons 1050-1052 bishops are required to verify and re-verify a wide range of suitability issues regarding every man approaching holy Orders.

So, considering that pastors with automatic faculties for confession represent a high percentage of diocesan priests these days and that most other priests will receive the faculties for confession upon ordination itself, these post-conciliar changes in canon law have made the possession of confessional and preaching faculties much more common, practically to the point of their being automatic, in contrast to the way things were in Casey’s day. Hence, Casey’s lack of faculties stands out more to us than it would have to his contemporaries. But can we say which of these two approaches is better, whether it makes better sacramental and pastoral sense to confer faculties upon clerics virtually simultaneously with ordination or to delay them pending the outcome of one or two examinations or for at least an observable period of probation?

On the one hand, the strict examination requirements set out the old law served as a way for bishops to verify that the special skills associated with preaching and confession were indeed possessed by individual clerics who, though they had graduated from the seminary, might not be ready to be, as it were, turned

¹¹ Frederick McManus, commenting on Canon 970 in J. Beal, et al., eds., *New Commentary on the Code of Canon Law*, (Paulist Press, 2000) 1157.

loose on the faithful – in rather the same way that bar exams make sure that law school graduates are able to perform their roles in real life and not just in the classroom. Physicians, nurses, accountants, engineers, and members of many professions and trades besides, must pass examinations administered independently of academe as a requirement for their licensing and public service, a “quality control check” that we do not have for ministry, ordained or otherwise.

On the other hand, we do believe that ordination, not simply because it currently comes at the end of a long graduate program of studies but as a function of the sacrament itself, confers certain graces and charisms meant to enable men to minister in, among other settings, the pulpit and the confessional, such that a canonical “suspicion” of incompetence regarding these basic priestly roles seems out of place theologically. There are, in short, good arguments for and against the current practice of effectively granting faculties for preaching and confession to nearly all clerics upon their ordination – arguments that we will not try to resolve here. But the example of Father Casey ministering for some fifty years without faculties for either preaching or confession suggests that such canonical enablements are not required for heroic service as a priest, which observation brings me to my final point.

First, recalling that a “simplex priest,” despite his ministerial limitations, could still profoundly witness to Jesus,¹² evangelize those around him, engage in several sacramental and spiritual services (such as solemnly baptizing, officiating at weddings, anointing the sick – though I do not know whether Casey performed such functions, given his status as a religious in monastery life)¹³ and, most of all, recalling that a simplex priest could still offer the holy sacrifice of the Mass (which Casey did often), and second, appreciating that the clergy shortage today is severe and shows little sign of abating in the foreseeable future, the example of Casey, a priest able to perform many, though not all, of the clerical works performed by his brothers, suggests the usefulness of our taking a closer look at the simplex priest model as a way toward activating, for limited priestly ministry, a potentially significant number of men with spiritual maturity and servant hearts but with less theological erudition than that possessed by men going through seminaries and with, therefore, more restricted faculties for ministry.

I am not talking now about ordaining married men *per se* (and for reasons

¹² “While his life as a Capuchin Franciscan had been lived without the faculties to formally preach or hear confessions [Casey’s] way of embracing its evangelical witness probably reached more people than had any other friar in the one hundred-plus years of the Capuchins’ presence in the United States.” Crosby 209.

¹³ Casey did offer “ferverinos,” that is, spontaneous, semi-formal, exhortations to groups that, while not homilies, achieved much the same good effect. Indeed, on a few occasions (apparently, occasions special to his religious or personal family) Casey even preached a homily at Mass. See Crosby 60, 64, and 66. Also Casey as a priest made frequent use of sacramentals in his ministry. Crosby 56, 78.

unrelated to our topic, I think most such modern “simplex priests” should be single men, albeit perhaps widowers) and I can well imagine a number of practical and even canonical issues to be considered before moving forward with such an idea.¹⁴ But the example of Solanus Casey, working out his salvation in fear and trembling, while bringing uncounted others closer to Christ by his priestly, though notably restricted, ministry, should suggest at least some basis for our looking at the simplex priest as a possible but partial response to the clergy shortage. This shortage not only deprives the faithful of many opportunities for spiritual growth but also unduly stresses the full-faculty men ordained to serve them.

¹⁴ For example, Canon 250 requires a six-year program of philosophy and theological studies prior to ordination. Such a demanding course of studies, however, assumes that priests upon ordination will be equipped with all faculties for normal ministry, precisely the point in question regarding “simplex priests.” For a longer discussion of the notion of simplex priest in a modern setting, see Brian Van Hove, “Recovering Simplex Priests,” *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* (June/July 2011): 24-27.

Book Reviews

Blaine Burkley, O.F.M. Cap. *In Secret Service of the Sacred Heart: The Life and Virtues of Julia Greeley*. Denver, CO: Julia Greeley Guild, 2015. Pp. 143.

Reviewed by Steven C. Abell, University of Detroit Mercy

In this work, Fr. Burkley does not attempt to write a narrative account of the life of Julia Greeley (now Servant of God) somehow to convince the reader of her holiness or the worthiness of the recently opened cause for her canonization. Instead, and perhaps more effectively, Fr. Burkley uses his skills as historian and archivist to present the reader with a collection of carefully documented evidence about the life of this heroic woman, along with detailed references and background information. In a non-narrative fashion the book presents the reader with newspaper accounts, personal interviews, historic photos, and even court records about her life.

What is fascinating about this book is that, despite the archival nature of Burkley's approach, the life story of Julia Greeley emerges clearly from its pages. Greeley was born into slavery in Hannibal, Missouri, sometime between 1833 and 1844 (her exact age was unknown to those who knew her and undocumented given her status as a slave). When she was a young child, a slave master was viciously beating her mother while young Julia was very close by. Tragically the whip caught Julia's right eye and destroyed it. She lost all vision in the eye, and her face was permanently disfigured. Julia continued in slavery until she was freed by the Missouri Emancipation Act of 1865. She later found her way to Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado, where she became well known to the citizens of Denver. Greeley never married or had children (though all who knew her reported that she dearly loved children), and she spent almost her entire adult (post-emancipation) life working as a domestic servant for affluent white families, primarily in Denver. At one point she worked in the household of William Gilpin, who had served as the first Governor of the Territory of Colorado before statehood. It was Gilpin's wife who gave Greeley her initial introduction to the Catholic faith and some preliminary instruction. She was baptized in 1880, and in 1901 became a Third Order Franciscan. Upon her conversion to Catholicism, she became a daily communicant and maintained a powerful devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus for the remainder of her life.

It is remarkable enough that such a powerful life of faith could grow in a person who suffered the incredible cruelty that Julia endured as a slave. This faith persisted despite the relentless prejudice and racism from which she suffered her entire life. What is perhaps even more amazing, however, is the tremendous joy

and satisfaction that Julia experienced by serving others, regardless of their race or background. Burkley provides considerable evidence of Julia's acts of charity and kindness. Despite her considerable humility, she eventually became well known in the young city of Denver. Julia often begged for food and other desperately needed supplies for the poor, such as firewood or coal, and gave considerable amounts of her own humble earnings to families in need. For years, Julia would walk the streets of Denver pulling a little red wagon full of provisions for the poor. She would often walk back alleys during the dark of night, so that she could leave her much needed donations for indigent families without causing shame or embarrassment, especially since many of the families that she assisted were white. Julia was sensitive to the social humiliation that even desperately poor white families might have experienced if it became known that their benefactress was an African American woman.

By the time of her death, the former slave and domestic servant was such a beloved figure that she became the first layperson ever to lie in state in a Catholic church in Colorado. Newspaper accounts report that well over a thousand residents of Denver, of all social classes and races, filed by to pay their respects. It was a remarkable tribute for a poor woman with almost no worldly possessions, no family, and very little status in the social hierarchy.

Burkley's book reveals clearly how Julia was ahead of her time in many ways. She lived in a young city where African Americans were a comparatively small part of the population and often misunderstood. Racial discrimination was so deeply entrenched at the time of Julia's life that even some of the white people who befriended her and admired her piety said things that today seem shockingly offensive. For example, Burkley reports how Mother Pancratia Bonfils, S.L., a leading Catholic sister in Denver at that time and a close friend of Julia, tried in a grossly misguided way to comfort Julia by telling her that she would be white in heaven. Yet Julia's love for others and her desire to spread the Gospel of Christ transcended the social prejudice of the world around her. It allowed her to overcome the cruelty and extreme physical abuse that she suffered during her years as a slave. She was a model of racial reconciliation and forgiveness, and the archival accounts of her life in Burkley's book make clear that as a lay person she was a model of the universal call of holiness.

While studying the considerable evidence that Greeley led a life of heroic virtue, one can only wish that her story will eventually become much more widely disseminated. It seems likely that a narrative biography of her fascinating life will eventually be written. In the meantime, Burkley's book deserves wider attention, particularly among scholars and teachers involved in Catholic higher education. This book would be an ideal supplemental text for an American history or an African American Studies course at a Catholic university. The archival evidence in the book gives a rich portrayal of Julia's profound sense of faith and her love

of humanity. It can also illuminate a part of the history of race relations and prejudice in the United States.

Derya Little. *From Islam to Christ: One Woman's Path through the Riddles of God*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 204 pp.

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

The subtitle to Derya Little's autobiography speaks of "the riddles of God." Indeed, any spiritual journey faces its share of the enigmas that surround the mysterious ways of the loving Creator. Augustine, Ignatius of Loyola, Newman, and many others struggled with restless hearts as they sought truth and rest. Little's story, however, offers something special to contemporary readers since her path to Catholicism included stops in some of the most prominent responses to "the riddles of God": Islam, atheism, and evangelical Christianity. That she finally found her answers in the Catholic Church becomes a powerful testimony to the unseen hook and invisible line with which God draws each soul to himself.

Little grew up as a Muslim in Eregli, Turkey. She received a formation in Islam that included prayer and the basic study of the Koran. She notes, however, that Turkey promoted a "watered-down version of Islam" with an "Islam-lite" culture, and so she was spared such customs as the wearing of the hijab. In short, "You were not supposed to be too Muslim, but you were not supposed to be anything else either."

Two things, however, shattered her practice of Islam. The first came from tragic circumstances in her home life. Her unfaithful father abandoned the family when she was a girl, and her mother became increasingly bitter and even distant. The pain of her broken home would tear at her belief in Allah. In a period when she sought comfort and guidance, her faith felt empty. God was distant and oppressive. When "one's starting point is fear, not love, mercy, or grace, this fear becomes the heavy hand that constantly presses down instead of lifting up." Financial difficulties only exacerbated this sense of despair before a God who seemed to demand only obedience and offered little consolation in a time of suffering.

The second influence that undermined her adherence to Islam was secularism. Modern Turkish culture had long sought a strict separation between religion and the state, and it therefore allowed for a more pronounced dissemination of radical secular ideas. Little, a naturally gifted student, found solace in her reading, which included Marx, Nietzsche, and other masters of suspicion. These studies, combined with solid doses of Western popular culture and instances of adolescent acting out, led her to her complete abandonment of theism. Drinking, drugs, premarital sex, and abortions would scar her deeply in the years ahead – all symptoms of a loss

of direction and meaning.

The next stop on the journey, however, was the discovery of Christ. Even though she achieved opportunities to study in Turkey's top universities, the collapse of her family meant that she had to make her own way financially. Having answered an ad seeking a tutor in the Turkish language, she discovered that her new employer was an American Christian missionary. This woman and her family became part of Little's life, and they challenged her to rethink not only her atheism but also her negative stance toward Christianity. Suddenly, she found that she was hungry for something more: "As I tutored Therese, my quest for the truth intensified." Further employment and friendships with Christians, conversations and debates, and a powerful vision brought her to the decisive moment of accepting Christ. The treasures of her new faith – the Scriptures, the community, and the saving waters of baptism – brought new joy and hope to her life.

The final stage for her was Catholicism. From the beginning of her Christian journey, certain questions nagged her, such as creationism, *sola scriptura*, and the divisions among Christians. How could a fragmented Christianity preach a truth that was one? Or, to put it more starkly: "If Christ were not able to establish a Church that was invincible, then after all, maybe the Muslim claim that the [Christian] faith had been corrupted was true." Fortunately, she discovered two solid guides through these doubts: the writings of Cardinal Josef Ratzinger and the personal care offered by a saintly French Jesuit missionary who gave her intellectual and spiritual sustenance. In the end, the Eucharist and teaching authority of the Catholic Church were decisive in her decision to become Catholic during her doctoral studies in Durham. "Slowly the Catholic Church became the home I never knew I had lost."

There is more to her story, including an unexpected twist involving a Catholic dating service and a trip to the United States. Yet, Little found her true home and rest in the Church, which she now shares with her husband and children. This book tells a story that will inspire both Christians and searchers. She concludes the tale with an appropriate scriptural echo: "It occurs to me that I was lost, but now I am found."

Francis Bethel, O.S.B. *John Senior and the Restoration of Realism*. Merrimack, NH: Thomas More College Press, 2016.

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

A couplet from Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Each and All" reads: "Nor knowest thou what argument / Thy life to thy neighbor's creed has lent." Most of us are unaware how and to what extent our lives have influenced the lives of others, for better or worse, and perhaps such ignorance is merciful in the event that "for worse"

outweighs “for better.” John Senior was certainly aware of the influence he was having on others, especially his students. The purpose of teaching, after all, is to influence for the good those who are being taught. Given his personality, however, it is hard to imagine that he ever gave the matter much concentrated thought. As a teacher, his mind and his energies were focused not on himself but on the truths he was attempting to convey.

Who was John Senior? He was, to put it plainly, an altogether remarkable individual. Specifically, he was a man of letters and a man of faith. The two were finely mixed in him, though not to the same degree. He read and interpreted literature as a man of faith, which made him all the more sensitive to its contents. He well knew how deeply the Western canon, to which he was devoted, was impregnated with the spirit of Christianity. Some of us, though admirers of the man, knew John Senior only indirectly – mainly through his writings – but not only in that way, for we had the good fortune of having lived and worked with people who had once been his students, and through them we were able to get a more immediate sense of the man and his ways.

Our knowledge of the master was enhanced by knowing the disciples. Even so, our knowledge of the man remained unsatisfactorily limited. One wanted to know more about John Senior, more about the specifics of his biography, more about what it was that made him the remarkable teacher that he was. That want has now been met and well satisfied by Father Francis Bethel’s *John Senior and the Restoration of Realism*, a nicely structured and compellingly written book that gives us a comprehensive and balanced account of the man and his work. Its author is a monk of the Abbey of Our Lady of Clear Creek in Oklahoma, where (besides serving as prior and master of novices) he teaches dogmatic theology.

The book is founded on impressively thorough research, but the fact that Father Bethel – himself once a student of John Senior – kept in contact with him after college gives him a privileged perspective. The book can be accurately called a biography, but because his principal purpose is to explore Senior’s thoughts on education and culture, the work might be more precisely described as an intellectual biography.

It is laid out in such a way as to give the reader something like a running account of the development of Senior’s thought, tracing it from its sources, following it through various twists and turns, and culminating at the point where it took on its mature and settled form. Along the way Father Bethel offers illuminating interpretation and commentary. Though obviously admiring his former teacher’s thought, he does not refrain from offering thoughtful criticism from time to time. In the spirit of the book itself, this review will also focus on the thought of John Senior, but first a brief biographical sketch of the man would be in order.

John Senior was born in Stamford, Connecticut on February 21, 1923, into

a stable, middle-class, nominally Protestant but essentially non-religious family. He was the youngest of three children. When John was still very young the family moved to Long Island, which was then still predominantly rural. The familial atmosphere he experienced there put much emphasis on reading and music. All of the children were avid readers, but John especially so. He tells us that as a boy he was much given to reading books about cowboys. It would seem that the cowboy represented for him a kind of “natural man,” someone who was in close touch with the basic realities of the world around him.

Perhaps his youthful reading habits had something to do with a rather dramatic event in his early life. At age thirteen he ran away from home and headed West with the intention of taking up the life of a cowboy. As he was to explain later, this escapade was in good part motivated by his chagrin over the gradual urbanization of Long Island. “Having had from childhood an urge for good times lost, I satisfied it with poetry and with cowboy stories....and at thirteen ran away from home and the encroaching city, which in the 1930s had metastasized suburban cells in our rural fields” (18). The runaway ended up on a ranch in western North Dakota, and there his parents eventually caught up with him. They promised him that, if he were obediently to return home and finish his formal schooling, they would allow him to spend his summers in the West. And so a pattern was set, with the result that the young man became more than a mere dude, mastering the cow-punching trade he so much admired.

Senior was a serious student from his earliest years. If there was one constant in his life, it was a burning desire to know the truth, to come to grips with the real. After completing high school he matriculated at Hofstra University, where he had received a scholarship. His college career was interrupted by World War Two and military service. When the war ended, he married Priscilla Woods, whom he had met at Hofstra. This proved to be a very happy match. Instead of returning to Hofstra, he decided to resume his undergraduate education at Columbia. In the following years he was to earn B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. in English literature from that institution. There he was a student of Mark Van Doren, by whom he was much influenced, and who became a life-long friend. Senior taught for a time at Bard College, then at Hofstra, and in 1957 he became a faculty member at Cornell University. According to the criteria by which the typical American academic judges the world and reality, Senior would be regarded as having secured one of the choicest positions his profession had to offer. He was in academic heaven.

The most significant event for him and his family during his tenure at Cornell took place in Holy Week of 1960 when he, his wife, and their three children were received into the Catholic Church. He was thirty-seven years old at the time. He tells us that a very important instrumental cause of his conversion was reading Cardinal Newman, whose *An Essay on the Development of Doctrine* he found especially valuable. Senior resigned his position at Cornell after only five years,

disapproving the way the intellectual atmosphere of the place was being polluted by a variety of aberrant ideas. He explained: "I found myself in one of the top ten American universities, led by an intellectual elite that had been perverted by Existentialism and Phenomenology.... In the 1960s the new intelligentsia of the Left made thought subservient to power by rejecting the existence of reality. I responded by fleeing to the American West, where people's minds were not as corrupted" (83).

His second flight to the American West brought him to Wyoming, where he settled his family on a ranch. He joined the faculty at the University of Wyoming from 1960 to 1967. His next and final stop was at the University of Kansas, which turned out to be as congenial an academic home as he could ever have expected to find. He was always an outstanding teacher wherever he taught, but it was Kansas that saw the full flowering of his pedagogic prowess. There his native abilities and genius were brilliantly realized. He had a deep influence on students wherever he had taught, but in this too what happened at Kansas surpassed anything that had gone before.

Much of his special talent as a teacher is to be accounted for simply by the "givens" of his nature. But there was also conscious theory behind his practice. Over the years he had thought long and hard about his role, his vocation, as a teacher, and he had formulated a number of principles that guided his behavior in the classroom. Teaching is an art, and Senior had perfected it. But that did not come about by accident. Burdened by uncertain health, he retired from teaching in 1983. For the following sixteen years, even though out of the classroom, he remained fruitfully active in many ways. He died quite suddenly on April 8, 1999 while praying the rosary with his wife – a beautiful way to leave this world and one especially apt for him, it seems, because it bears the mark of poetry.

Senior tells us that one of the most valuable things he learned at Columbia was the seminal significance of ends. Every agent, as the Scholastics remind us, acts for the sake of an end. Ends define action. They render it intelligible. Human agency is directed to any number of specific ends, but human action – the multiple ends that human beings pursue and seek to achieve – derive their meaning and can qualify as fully and genuinely human only if all those multiple ends are ordered to man's final end, which is union with God Himself. Our proper end is thus one with our beginning. This is the foundational truth at which Senior eventually arrived during the course of his intellectual and spiritual journeyings.

Over several years he traveled down a number of different roads, only to realize in time that they were not leading him to the reality he craved. There was a brief flirtation with Marxism. He got into occultism to an extent as a result of the close analytic study that he gave to the Symbolist school of poetry, on which he wrote his doctoral dissertation. And there was his more than superficial engagements with Oriental religion, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism. It

would seem to have been his serious encounter with Eastern religion that led him, paradoxically, to a renewed respect for and appreciation of Western culture, chiefly because he saw it as firmly founded in reality. He saw Western culture, particularly as manifested in its greatest art and literature, as simply inexplicable without Christianity. Eastern culture, while not without its arresting beauty, consistently showed itself to be debilitatingly uncomfortable with reality. Because of that it could, in some of its more extreme forms, lead the carelessly detached devotee into the lifeless depths of nihilism. He likened Oriental doctrine to a garden that had gone to seed, where there is but decay and dissolution. There can be a stark beauty even in that, but for Senior it is a beauty that is situated on the wrong side of reality.

While Senior recognized that the philosophy of Western culture was a potent vehicle for articulating and reinforcing realism, he nonetheless felt that it was limited in its capacity to reach present-day students – those whom Russell Kirk once described as “this Lonely Crowd of young people, bewildered and bored and purposeless.” Nurtured as they have been in a shallow, escapist culture, they needed the immediacy of poetry – that is, creative literature in general – to address their jaded emotions as well as their flaccid minds, and thereby roust them out of their idealist-induced slumber and re-acquaint them with reality. So, a serious and fully engaged encounter with the great literature of the Western tradition was to be a critical part of their educational program.

But that was not the whole of it. Gymnastic had also to be taken into account. By that term Senior referred to all those activities in which he felt students should engage (gazing at the night sky, hiking through the woods, learning to waltz and to sing, trying their hand at calligraphy) whose collective purpose was to sharpen all their senses and thereby make them aware of the importance and value of sense knowledge. In sum, the whole idea behind gymnastic was to teach young people not just to look but also to see, not just to hear but also to listen.

John Senior’s deferential regard of Western culture and its philosophical and literary riches did not blind him to the present state of that culture. Far from it. He was acutely aware of the decadent state into which Western culture had sunk. He saw – and recorded in his writings – its descent into the moral quagmire in which we now find ourselves. Since the waning of the Middle Ages we have witnessed the gradual diminishment of the influence of Christianity within Western culture, a process that was accelerated during the period of the Enlightenment and that was effectively finalized by the materialistic nineteenth century. Today the Christian spirit is all but absent from popular culture and the mass media, but it is still present and indelibly inscribed in the traditional literature of the West, its great books, and that is why students must come to know them.

Senior’s commitment to Western culture was based on what he saw, correctly, as its pronounced realist orientation. However, he was well aware that there was

a significant strain of idealism in Western culture that was traceable to the very beginnings of Western philosophy. Over against the arch-realist Aristotle there is the arch-idealist Plato, and both of these giants have had, and continue to have, a profound influence on the shaping of Western culture. Senior was also aware of the pervasive influence of modern philosophy, fathered by René Descartes, and saw that it was dominantly idealist in orientation. Descartes, like Plato before him, was skeptical of sense knowledge. He distrusted the deliverances of the senses and therefore fostered just the sort of attitude that Senior thought had to be vigorously countered – thus the importance he attached to gymnastic.

Some think that Senior went too far in the attitude that he took toward technology. It would not be amiss to describe him as being, in a general sense, anti-technology. In fact, his position here was a reasoned one, and all of a piece with his governing world view. He was anything but a wild-eyed Luddite, but simply had developed a thoughtfully critical view of technology, giving special emphasis to its minuses, but not denying its pluses. The basic problem that he saw with technology, as a key aspect of the larger phenomenon of modernity, is that it serves to narcotize our sense of reality by the way it distances us from the natural order of things. The artificial has become so pervasively present in our lives that the very concept of nature is grasped only imperfectly by the modern mind. Senior's views on technology are not to be taken as merely cranky. There is a growing body of literature that is beginning to voice serious second thoughts about the new world wrought by our technical ingenuity. Are the mind and the heart of man being aided or atrophied by our almost hypnotic relation to artifacts? The professor from Kansas might be shown one day to have been prophetic for the misgivings he had about technology.

Senior's first published book, *The Way Down and Out: The Occult in Symbolist Literature* (1959) was based on the doctoral dissertation that he wrote at Columbia. It reveals the general state of his thought at the time. It is penetrating in many respects but as yet not properly focused, for this was before he had arrived at the life-transforming realization that reality is real, that *being* is not simply a phantom that the mind can choose to meditate into inconsequence.

His two major books, *The Death of Christian Culture* (1978) and *The Restoration of Christian Culture* (1985), together provide a fairly complete survey of his principal thoughts on culture and education. A yet unpublished book, *The Restoration of Innocence: An Idea of a School*, contains his more fully developed ideas on education, particularly as it applies to adolescent boys. He thought that a companion volume should be written, describing the proper education for girls, but that he was not the one to do it.

Senior was not only a lifelong devotee of poetry, with a commanding knowledge of that genre, but a poet in his own right, and one of no small merit, as is evidenced by his book, *Pale Horse, Easy Rider*, a collection of his poems that

was published in 1992. In this slim but weighty volume we get a pronounced sense of Senior as a critic of contemporary culture, simply because here he expresses his thought through the powerful medium of poetry. There is a distinctly melancholy tone to many of the poems, revealing one side of the poet's personality, but puckish wit comes in here and there to temper the melancholy. So, while the *lacrimae rerum* are honestly acknowledged, the reader is left with the notion that those tears will one day be wiped away.

Particularly interesting are the chapters that Father Bethel devotes to telling the story of the Integrated Humanities Program (IHP) at the University of Kansas, a program that figured large in the life and professional career of John Senior. He was able, through that program, to practice the art of teaching in an extraordinarily successful way. The Integrated Humanities Program was established by the university administration in 1970 and was intended to function somewhat as a college within a college, after the Oxford model. It had a faculty of three members, who together represented a formidable professorial trio. They were, besides Senior, Frank Nelick and Dennis Quinn (the program's director). From every report we have, it would be hard to imagine three men who were so completely of one mind and heart regarding all things educational, not to speak of all the things beyond the strictly educational on which they saw eye to eye. They were truly kindred spirits. They were given free rein by the administration to set up the program as they saw fit, and this they did, carefully designing the entire curriculum in accordance with the educational goals that they intended to achieve.

It was a two-year program that would serve to fulfill most of the university's liberal arts requirements. Built around the classic works, the "great books," of the Western tradition, the students who enrolled in the program could expect, through those books, to be engaged in a serious encounter with the philosophy, literature, and history of Western culture, beginning in ancient Greece and ending in the nineteenth century. One-third of the texts chosen represented poetry and poetic fiction, one-third history, and one-third philosophy. The method followed by the three professors was more intensive than extensive; the idea was to focus narrowly and dig deeply rather than to attempt a comprehensive knowledge that would likely turn out to be superficial. At its height, there were some 300 students enrolled in the program.

Given the quality of the works, plus the quality of the teaching, the results were almost magical. In any event, all the students were aware that they were involved in, and benefitting from, a unique educational experience. The three professors were highly gifted teachers, but John Senior, most would have agreed, was exceptionally so. There were no formal lectures. The three professors team-taught every course, sitting in a line and facing some 150 students, carrying on something like a sustained conversation, without benefit of notes, that revolved around the particular work then under discussion. Each session lasted eighty

minutes.

The conversations were probing, a collective thinking out loud by three singularly thoughtful and learned men, designed to teach the students how to think seriously, meditatively, about the ideas embodied in the literature they were reading. To say that the program's three professors were totally dedicated to their tasks easily qualifies as understatement. Senior himself, as he wrote to a friend, was regularly putting forty hours a week into his teaching. Besides his involvement in the regular courses of the program, he decided to take on the additional task of teaching a course in Latin, simply because he thought the students should have it available to them.

The operative presence of the "poetic mode" as one of the guiding principles of the program was concretely manifested by the fact that all of the students were required to memorize ten poems during the course of each semester. This was doing them a rather special favor, for with that requirement met, at the end of the course each student had ready access to forty poems. By the recall of one or another of these poems, they could, for the rest of their lives, be made mindful of the reality of the real.

John Senior, it can be said, really came into his own as a teacher through his involvement with the Integrated Humanities Program. The environment it provided was excellently suited to his temperament. It gave full and untrammelled scope to the exercise of his talents. What he accomplished during his time with the program, the telling influence he had on his students, represented a high point in his career as a teacher, a career that had already been anything but prosaic. The kind and the extent of the influence that he was capable of exercising as a teacher was truly remarkable. He touched many lives, but in so singular a manner that in some cases the courses of lives were changed.

One measure of the success of IHP, the kind that is calculated to impress many an academic, is the number of its alumni who went on to establish themselves in the professions and who pursued further studies in a variety of fields. Professor Quinn, in 1978, noted that "among former students twenty were studying law, twelve in medicine, nine in nursing, and fourteen in theology; thirty-three were in other graduate studies" (327).

Of the many noteworthy outcomes of the Integrated Humanities Program, and surely one that could not have been anticipated beforehand, is the fact that a large number of its students, an estimated 200 in all, representing between ten and fifteen percent of those graduating from the program, converted to the Catholic faith. This included nearly all of the program's graduate assistants. Moreover, many Catholic students, who had strayed from the Church, returned to the practice of their faith. Several priestly and religious vocations can trace their origins to the program. Some alumni became monks, entering the ancient abbey of Fontgombault in France. In 1999 that abbey sent a band of thirteen monks, among

whom was Father Bethel, to make a new Benedictine foundation in America, which is today the Abbey of Our Lady of Clear Creek in Oklahoma.

There was never anything like overt proselytizing on the part of the three professors, but doubtless the exemplary character of their lives had a lasting effect on their students. Then there was a total commitment to truth that informed everything they taught and that, we might surmise, had the beneficial effect of fostering in the minds and hearts of their students an orientation to Truth Itself. It might be mentioned, apropos of those monastic vocations, that Senior himself did not hide the high regard he had for monasticism, and in that respect Father Bethel refers to him as “a veritable apostle of monasticism” (267).

Many graduates of IHP distinguished themselves in a wide variety of fields. I quote Father Bethel where he is citing only those who serve within the Church: “Among IHP graduates, as of 2012, there is an archbishop, a bishop, an abbot, a prior and prioress; two have been religious superiors, another a rector of a seminary; three have been novice masters; one served the Holy See’s Congregation of Catholic Bishops for ten years” (2).

According to whatever reputable and sound educational standards by which it could be judged, the Integrated Humanities Program at the University of Kansas was a stunning success. Compared to any other experimental academic venture of which I am aware, it was truly *sui generis*, a unique chapter in the annals of higher education in this country in the twentieth century. But, ironically enough, it would seem to have been just the success of the program, given the atmosphere of the larger academic environment in which it was born and for a time flourished, that eventually spelled its doom.

It was not much over a decade after its founding that IHP was definitively disestablished, after having been gradually reduced in size and effectiveness by a series of administrative decisions that were prompted by the urgings of a majority of the faculty who, once it had become aware of the success of the program, became actively hostile toward it. In all, it was a sad ending of a truly superior program and provides us with yet another example of how our intelligentsia can sometimes show themselves to be embarrassingly short of intelligence.

What was it that turned most of the University of Kansas faculty against IHP? It is best explained by the fact that, because they were so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of relativism, they could not abide a program that stood for truth. In the intellectual climate that prevails in today’s academy, to stand for truth is tantamount to committing an unforgivable sin.

While the suppression of the Integrated Humanities Program was naturally deeply disappointing to Senior, it perhaps did not unduly surprise him. He had written, in *The Death of Christian Culture*: “The currently established academic religion has as its first principle the axiom that no proposition may be held with such certitude as to exclude its contradictory” (329). In the immediate aftermath

of the program's dismantling, Senior wrote to a friend: "In a university where the teaching of relatively trivial and even bizarre matters is tolerated under an inflated idea of academic freedom, it is stupid and indecent to suggest that the teaching of a magnificent, venerable, intellectually brilliant and spiritually splendid body of thought should be suppressed" (313).

John Senior's commitment to truth, once he had found it, was unqualified; this was especially the case with regard to the truth of the Catholic faith, which he embraced with an earnestness of purpose that was entirely consonant with the character of the man. Accordingly, he was, as were many Catholics, deeply disturbed and shocked by what was happening in the Church in the turbulent wake of the Second Vatican Council. In his reaction to this disconcerting state of affairs, he did not keep his thoughts or feelings to himself but spoke out with an intensity that was peculiarly his own. He took a decidedly dark view of things. At one point he wrote: "Once I had embarked safe and sound on the ship of the Church, I was dismayed to see her headed towards the shipwreck that I had just escaped. A worldly Church and a world without the Church on the edges of the abyss" (369). In another place he had written: "Anyone can see the Church is steering straight into the looming ice of unbelief" (374).

Senior was especially affected by the disarray and disorder to be found in the liturgy. A stanza from his "The Sacrifice of Fools," a poem whose theme is the liturgy, found in *Pale Horse, Easy Rider*, reflects the bitterness he felt toward what was taking place in the sanctuaries of Catholic churches: "God is everywhere we seek,/ save this Hour every week,/ when all that's crackpot, cruel and crass/ celebrates *itself* at Mass—" (369). It all eventually proved more than he was willing to put up with, and he began regularly to attend Mass at a chapel of the Society of St. Pius X, a community that continued to abide by the liturgical norms that were in place prior to the Second Vatican Council. Some of his admirers were troubled by this, but, given the circumstances, his action in this regard was understandable, even defensible. It is interesting to note that no less a theologian than Father John Hardon not only refrained from rebuking Catholics who attended Mass at Society of St. Pius X chapels, but argued, in an hour-long lecture he had given around this time, that they were justified in doing so.

If John Senior could not properly be called a man for all seasons, he nonetheless was definitely a man for this season, that is to say, a man who accurately measured and consequently measured up to the times in which he actually lived. In the decades following Vatican Two there was much talk about reading the signs of the times, but few could match the perspicacity of John Senior in doing so. He read most of the signs as being quite ominous, and he was not shy about saying as much. This was a reflection, not of pessimism, but of his sure-footed realism.

As an astute student of contemporary culture, he saw the deep flaws by which

it was being crippled, flaws that, if not remedied, could very well lead to the collapse of Western culture. He was very sensitive to the dynamic, self-destructive tendencies at work in contemporary culture, as if that culture was being driven toward the abyss in a frenzy of collective self-hatred. This madcap rush to mass destruction was explained, basically, by the fact that Western culture was repudiating the Christianity that had nourished it and to which it owed its greatest attainments. Western culture was turning its back on Christ. That being the case, if Western culture was to avoid utter disaster, it would only be by recovering its Christian roots, by turning once again to the Lord of the World. If such a crucial re-orientation is ever going to happen, what it will require, among other things, but this very importantly, is a veritable revolution in education, so that a critical mass of people will be re-awakened to the Western tradition, and thus come to know and appreciate the riches of the classic works in philosophy and literature, in which they will discover the deep, indelible imprint of the Christian spirit.

There is so much more in *John Senior and the Restoration of Realism* that I was not able to deal with in this review. So the book must be read in order to get a fully fleshed-out account of the man as well as of the ideas and ideals that guided his life and his teaching and that inspired those whom he taught. The reading having been done, the reader easily concludes: Here was no ordinary man.

Robert R. Reilly with Jens F. Laurson. *Surprised by Beauty: A Listener's Guide to the Recovery of Modern Music*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2016.

Reviewed by D.Q. McNerny, Our Lady of Guadalupe Seminary

Our hold on beauty, as with truth and goodness, tends to be uncertain. If we loosen our grip it may get away from us, and once that happens recovering it can involve much struggle. The principal purpose of art, rightly understood, its very *raison d'être*, is the realizing of beauty, and of all the arts, music can be said to be the most adept in fulfilling that elevated purpose. Music has been called the most spiritual of the arts, and if that appellation is warranted, it is to the degree that music can somehow give voice to the beauty that we identify as one of the transcendental attributes of being.

But the corruption of the best, the ancients tell us, ends up as the worst. When music becomes disoriented and loses its way, when it abandons its vocational obligation toward beauty, it can become, as both Plato and Aristotle rightly saw, a positive menace to those who are exposed to it. Should it degenerate to the point where it ceases to be music and becomes no more than noise, it has effectively sold its soul to the demon Ugliness, and a situation such as that calls for something like exorcism.

In *Surprised by Beauty*, Robert R. Reilly, in collaboration with Jens F.

Laurson, tell us, in an entirely engaging manner, the story of modern (i.e., twentieth century) classical music. It is a dramatic story, and a complex one. It involves, as the most prominent negative aspect of the narrative, the radical falling away from beauty on the part of music. But the music that represented that falling away and that dominated the musical scene for decades – the 12-tone atonal music that was the brainchild of Arnold Schönberg – was not the only music that was then being composed. There was all the while something like a musical underground assiduously at work, made up of composers who did not buy into the program being promoted by the atonal school. These composers refused to jettison melody, harmony, and rhythm, and kept faith with the rich, variegated tonal tradition of Western music. Then there was the subplot provided by the “prodigal sons,” those composers who were at first enamored of the 12-tone technique, who for a time dutifully dedicated themselves to writing music in accordance with its rigid dictates, but then came eventually to realize that it had led them into an aesthetic wasteland. They saw that they had rashly committed themselves to a music of aridity. They came back to beauty, breaking off the dizzying dance with dissonance. Taking it all in all, this is a fascinating story, and an instructive one as well, for one of its implicit lessons is that the care of beauty is not something that can be taken for granted. The story ends well, for the forces that engaged in what was tantamount to a war against beauty failed to carry off the flag of victory. Today the Schönbergian way of looking at the world and making music is pretty much a thing of the past; composers once again are inspired by a vitalizing sense of the critical importance of beauty – of that toward which all art should be ordered.

The greater part of this book is made up of a collection of critical reviews of a generous number of modern composers, sixty-four in all. The names of many of these artists will be familiar to aficionados of classical music: Samuel Barber, Benjamin Britten, Edgar Elgar, Morton Gould, Dimitri Shostakovich, Jean Sibelius, Ralph Vaughan Williams, to list a few. The names of several others may not be so familiar, not because they are to be counted as composers of lesser rank, but because they were, quite deliberately, not part of what became, by mid-century, the musical mainstream; they were those, in other words, who did not kowtow to the 12-tone program. As a result, the critics, the majority of whom were dedicated to the promotion of that program, either ignored their work or gave it unfriendly reviews, regarding these composers as benighted souls who were inexcusably unprogressive, stubbornly continuing in a tradition whose day was done. Given this state of affairs, these dissenting composers found it very difficult, if not impossible, to have their works selected for performance. It is only in recent decades that their music has become more widely known, and its high quality given due recognition.

Coming before the collection of sixty-four reviews there is a Foreword to the

First Edition, written by the music critic Ted Libbey, followed by a Preface to the Second Edition by Robert Reilly, which in turn is followed by his essay, "Is Music Sacred?" A second essay by Reilly, "Recovering the Sacred in Music," precedes the book's second section, which is devoted to the interviews of six modern composers: Robert Craft, David Diamond, Gian Carlo Menotti, Einojuhani Rautavaara, George Rochberg, and Carlo Rütti. The book contains an appendix, "A Note on Record Recommendations," and a list of abbreviations.

There is no mistaking the point of view from which *Surprised by Beauty* is written. It gives to the book a particularly refreshing quality. Robert Reilly makes it abundantly clear that he regards the 12-tone atonal system, introduced by Arnold Schönberg, as an unmitigated disaster. In relatively short order it came to dominate modern music, developing into something like a movement and drawing many composers to its ranks. Theory-driven, deliberately fostering an aesthetic amnesia that was naively supposed to give room to new sources of inspiration, it broke ties with and cavalierly dismissed the whole tradition of Western music. The salient identifying feature of the system – its fatal flaw and the underlying explanation for all its specific deficiencies – is simply that it chose to turn its back on beauty.

There were two basic reasons behind the decision on the part of Arnold Schönberg and those who followed him to dispense with the three mainstays of music – melody, harmony, and rhythm – and devote themselves to the 12-tone method of musical composition, which involved a commitment to atonality and dissonance. The first reason had to do with how they shallowly regarded the current status of Western music; the second had to do with how they thought music should relate to the world. They had convinced themselves that Western music had exhausted its tonal resources; it simply had no more to offer by way of tonality; therefore the only logical and aesthetically appropriate way to respond to this situation was to write atonal music. As to how music should relate to the world, they felt that it should faithfully reflect the current condition of the world. That principle is not, at face value, unreasonable, but they gave it an unbalanced interpretation, believing that the only properly artistic way to reflect a dissonant world was through dissonance. Atonal music was commonly described, by those who did not take to it, as being painful to listen to because it was harsh, dissonant, even chaotic. The composers who produced that music, and the critics who defended it, might very likely take that reaction in a positive way. The music was being properly understood! Yes, they would explain, the music was painful to listen to, harsh, dissonant, chaotic, but in that respect it was simply doing what it is the business of music to do, namely, to reflect the world as it actually is, which right now is chaotic, full of pain, harshness, and dissonance. Here we have a rather novel slant to the venerable notion that art imitates nature.

To a degree, one can sympathize with the attitude of the 12-tone people regarding how music should relate to the world, but they were missing an

important principle that pertains to art in general, and to music in particular. There is no gainsaying the fact that the twentieth century offered up an abundance of harshness, pain, dissonance, and chaos, but as the Polish composer Henryk Górecki powerfully demonstrated, all that can be communicated, and in the most effective manner, by remaining entirely within the realm of music. Chaotic music, or noise, does not communicate anything beyond itself; in order to make the reality of chaos intelligible, the means by which one attempts to do so must be intelligible. If a writer wants to convey to readers the particulars of a confused situation, he must write about it clearly, not confusedly, otherwise he defeats his purpose.

What the 12-tone movement amounted to, Reilly writes, was “the 20th century assault of noise” (13). Music had been replaced by noise, had, in effect, been drowned out by noise. Reilly makes a very important point when he calls our attention to the fact that there was a decidedly moral dimension to what happened to twentieth-century music. “The single clearest crisis of the 20th century was the loss of faith” (14). That, it seems to me, goes to the heart of the matter. The loss of faith was the root explanation for music’s turning its back upon beauty, for the mind-set of godlessness is such that to it beauty, the essence of beauty, becomes unintelligible. The noise that was accepted as music was a manifestation of profound spiritual confusion; in that respect, ironically, the music can be said to have spoken clearly. The recovery of music, accordingly, would be a manifestation of spiritual recovery. It is the recovery of modern music, Reilly wants to emphasize, that is the guiding theme of the book.

In “Is Music Sacred?” Reilly answers in the affirmative the question posed by the title of the essay, explaining how music, as has been shown again and again, can indeed be the artistic means through which the sense of the sacred is effectively, even powerfully, communicated. He argues that music has a hieratic role to play in our lives, a sacerdotal role of sorts, in that it can serve as a mediator between the mundane and the transcendent. Music can make the transcendent perceptible. What the twentieth century bore witness to was the desacralizing of music. Eschewing the vertical, it gave itself over completely to the horizontal. The dismissal of the past, regarded as being of no consequence for its musical interests or endeavors, stood as one of the hallmark features of the 12-tone movement. Schönberg himself had once confidently declared, as one who felt he had accomplished something of real moment: “I am conscious of having removed all traces of a past aesthetic” (23). The movement’s explicit repudiation of beauty was logically bound up with the attitude it took toward the past. Schönberg wanted the world to know that he was “cured of the delusion that the artist’s aim is to create beauty.” With that, art is assassinated (23). Ideas have consequences. In this case, as Reilly specifies, the father of the 12-tone technique “unleashed the forces of disintegration in music” (22). Giving to music, in atonality, “the language of

irresolution” (23). The end result of the project to which Schönberg and his disciples dedicated themselves was “the replacement of art by an ideology of organized noise” (24). The ideological aspect of the 12-tone movement is not to be downplayed.

Of the sixty-four critical articles devoted to the discussion of the lives and works of specific composers, fifty-nine of them were written by Robert Reilly, five by Jens Laurson, and they co-authored the article on Dimitri Shostakovich. All of the articles, written in a spirited, captivating style, are uniformly interesting and informative. They are replete with the kind of insightful observations and illuminating interpretations that one would expect from professional critics who are totally conversant with their field and whose love of music is written between the lines of every page of the book. Reilly and Laurson show themselves to have a masterful familiarity with the composers on whom they chose to write. A particularly valuable feature of these articles, for readers who want not only to read about a composer but to be able to listen to what he has composed, is that each has appended to it a list of recommended recordings. Our authors are very much au courant with regard to what is available in recorded music.

There is only one way to benefit from everything that these articles have to offer, and that is by settling into your favorite chair with book in hand and read them through. Here I will provide only a sampling of quotations from the articles, in the hope that they will give a fuller sense of the general gist of the book, in terms of its governing emphases and arguments, than what I have written so far.

The American composer John Adams, one of those who broke ranks with the 12-tone movement after being involved in it for a time, remarked, discussing his work *Harmonielehre*, and apropos of the attitude that the movement took toward the past: “I’ve never received any powerful creative energy from turning my back on the past” (29). That attitude toward the past was expressed with eccentric emphasis by the French composer Pierre Boulez, one of the more fervent devotees of the 12-tone system, in the following terms: “Once the past has been gotten out of the way,” he proclaimed, “one need think only of oneself” (24). So, there it is; apparently, according to this strained line of reasoning, ignoring the past clears the way for an untrammelled narcissism.

Another American composer, Stephen Albert, also reacted negatively to the anti-past position and characterizes it tellingly: “The past has no meaning. What was going on was the massive denial of memory. No one can *remember* a 12-tone row. The very method obliterates memory’s function in art” (37). For Albert, the recovery was “a matter of trying to find beauty in art again” because “art is about our desire for spiritual connection” (39). In his article on the Danish composer Vagn Holmboe entitled “The Music of Metaphysics,” Reilly proposes that “music is the ‘sound’ of metaphysics, as it is always based on the composer’s conception of what constitutes reality” (156). This seems quite right. A music that departs

from reality, as would be the case with music that does not embody the foundational rhythms of the world all around us, could reasonably be said to have alienated itself from metaphysical wisdom. Those who would make dissonance the foundation of their music, are not, as they claim, faithfully reflecting the times in which they live, for the foundational rhythms of nature that are consequent upon divine creation are true and invariable for the twentieth century and for all times. Music, at its best, echoes the constants of divine creation and does not allow itself to be so radically distracted by how fallen man chooses to blind himself to those constants that it ends up impairing its own vision and damaging itself as music.

Even the most dedicated advocates of 12-tone music would be prepared to concede that it does not rate high marks for accessibility but, chances are, they would not necessarily chalk that up as a fault. It would seem that much of that music was deliberately written so as to be inaccessible, as if the idea was to keep the uninitiated, those who had not subscribed to the ideology, at arm's length. We might remind ourselves here of some aesthetic common sense expressed by Molière, who maintained that all art, if nothing else, ought to be pleasurable, by which I think he meant that art should be inviting; it should draw us to itself rather than repulse us.

Music should be pleasurable in that sense. Listening to 12-tone music is like stoically bearing the pain of sitting through a boring, incoherent lecture for reasons extraneous to the lecture itself, say, because you want to pass a certain college course. It is no surprise that critics and composers who were committed to the 12-tone ideology immediately suspected music that they judged to be accessible, as if it were an aesthetic sin for an audience to respond in an affectively positive way to what they were hearing from the stage.

Accessible music is simply intelligible music; it can be understood. In his article on the Welsh composer William Matthias, Reilly notes that if Matthias's music "has been neglected, it is likely because of its fundamental optimism and accessibility" (233). The optimism of the composer's music is explained by the fact that it has to do with the deepest religious truths. "Music," Matthias contends, "is the most completely placed to express the triumph of Christ's victory over death – since it is concerned in essence with the destruction of time" (235). The Finnish composer Jean Sibelius would seem to be essentially of the same mind as Matthias. "The essence of man's being," he has said, "is his striving after God" (346). Granting that a composer's artistic labors can be taken as an aspect of his "striving after God," could he not then be said to be consciously endeavoring to make the transcendent perceptible?

Even though most of what Reilly and Laurson have to say about the various composers whom they discuss is dominantly positive, they do not hesitate to call attention to what they see as limitations and deficiencies in the works of some of these artists. For example, in writing about the Czech composer Bohuslav Martinů,

for several of whose works Reilly has considerably praise, he nonetheless feels obliged to call attention to his “lesser works,” which “take on a kind of mechanical hum that can be wearisome” (227). The music “sounds motoric, repetitive and rushed” (227). Reilly’s estimate of the American composer John Cage is clearly indicated by the title he gives to the article he devotes to him: “Apostle of Noise.” In referring to his various compositions, Cage has said, “I strive toward the nonmental” (83). Cage’s explanation for his exuberant admiration of rock music is that in it “the traditions are drowned in sound. Everything becomes confused – it’s wonderful!” Cage is not so much a composer as a de-composer, someone who is given over to systematic and obsessive unraveling. Like certain other twentieth-century artists who were fawned over by cultural elites, what Cage fostered was in effect a kind of aesthetic nihilism, and for that reason it might be suggested that the world would have been better off if all of his productions had the same sonic value as his *4’ 33”*.

Reilly has a number of complimentary things to say about the works of the American composer Peter Schickele, but he takes vigorous exception to his “preposterous proposition” that “all musics are created equal” (314). *Surprised by Beauty* can be taken as an extended counterargument to that proposition. In the final article in the collection Reilly writes: “So much music was ignored or suppressed for aesthetic or political reasons during the 20th century that it will take some time for it to surface and receive a fair hearing” (418). That is the more somber side of the story; the sunnier side, which this book is emphasizing, is that there is now underway a recovery of beauty in music. “Contemporary composers are increasingly unafraid to write attractive, even beautiful music.” (390)

In his essay, “Recovering the Sacred in Music,” Reilly reflects on the music of three composers, Henryk Górecki from Poland, Arvo Pärt from Estonia, and John Tavener from England, music that explicitly concerns itself with the sacred. The first sentence of the essay reflects the positive emphasis of the book: “The attempted suicide of Western classical music has failed” (430). The music of Henryk Górecki, while it can be heard as a poignant response to the horrors delivered up by the twentieth century, especially those experienced in his native Poland, nonetheless stands in marked contrast to what we hear in 12-tone music. Górecki’s music is “never hysterical,” and that is because it was written from “the perspective of faith” (434). “He could look at suffering unblinkingly,” Reilly appositely notes, “because Christianity does not reject or deny suffering but subsumes it under the cross” (434).

Arvo Pärt is not “an easy listen,” the reason being that his music “emerges from deep spiritual discipline and experience, and demands (and gives) as much in return” (435). As a result, “Pärt’s is music for meditation; it is the sound of prayer” (437). It is the kind of music, we might say, to which we must give our complete attention. John Tavener began his composing career as one who was

swept up in the 12-tone movement, dedicating himself to writing works that were highly complex and convoluted. He eventually gave this up, having come to see, as he put it, that “complexity is the language of evil” (438). The works that he was to compose after abandoning the 12-tone technique he referred to as musical icons. Clearly here was a composer who was attempting to make the transcendent perceptible; his music was meant to echo the otherworldly. “In everything I do,” he said, “I aspire to the sacred.... Music is a form of prayer, a mystery” (438).

From the second section of the book, containing interviews with six modern composers, I will limit myself to citing a few pertinent quotations. The composer David Diamond, speaking of 12-tone music, bluntly describes it as “all wrong. They [the composers of that music] don’t write out of love. They write out of the brain. It’s all intellectually geared music” (438). On the subject of dissonance, the Italian composer Gian Carlo Menotti had this to say: “I think 12-tone and most modern music has killed the importance of dissonance, because if you don’t have consonance, how can you have dissonance” (467). Commonly, music introduces dissonance by way of establishing aesthetic contrast, and as something that subsequently will be resolved. We readily recognize that dissonance, understood broadly as that which jars our sensibilities, is part of life; it is something that we attempt to avoid or, if we are in a position to do so, actively strive to resolve into consonance. Menotti’s point is well taken: if dissonance takes over in music, it loses its proper aesthetic function precisely as dissonance. From a philosophical point of view, we can say that dissonance, if not coupled with consonance, is drained of its meaning, the fundamental principle here being that negation is only intelligible in terms of affirmation. Without plus, minus makes no sense. What debilitates 12-tone music is that it fairly wallows in dissonance, oblivious to beauty. What does Menotti mean by beauty? “I say, at least in music, that beauty is a search for the inevitable, that great music is music that can only be that way and no other way. And only God can give you the inevitable” (407).

In the interview with the American composer George Rochberg, which is entitled “The Recovery of Modern Music,” Reilly describes him as “the pivot point around which American music took a decisive turn away from Arnold Schönberg’s systematized dissonance, known as 12-tone serial music, back toward tonality” (483). Rochberg’s aesthetic re-orientation had everything to do with his compelling realization that beauty is central to music. As a consequence, he “re-embraced the art of beauty.” The embracing of beauty, he maintains, should be “the only reason to want to write music” (491). Reilly reiterates in this article a point he made in the Preface, that “the collapse of music in the early part of the 20th century was the result of the spiritual devastation of Europe, not an exhaustion of tonal resources. Equally, the recovery of tonality in music is a spiritual recovery” (491). Rochberg totally agrees with this assessment. In responding to the attitude taken toward the past by the devotees of atonality, Rochberg pointedly

remarks: "There is no virtue in starting all over again. The past refuses to be erased. Unlike Pierre Boulez, I will not praise amnesia" (492).

In the Foreword to *Surprised by Beauty*, the music critic Ted Libbey remarks that "Robert Reilly redraws the map of modern music." (12) This is an apt image for what has been done here. The redrawing process on the part of the author can be compared to corrections that a cartographer might make to a map to ensure that it faithfully reflects geographical reality. A map of modern music that informed us that the most prominent and important and positive feature of the musical landscape of the twentieth century was the 12-tone phenomenon would be a decidedly unreliable map. Such a musical map would be like a map of the United States that was so drawn that it made the states of Rhode Island and Delaware larger than any of the other states, so large in fact that they took up almost the entire map. What would be the standard by which such a map is to be judged as totally unreliable and by which it could be corrected? It would of course be nothing else than geographical reality, which tells how, in fact, Rhode Island and Delaware relate to the other states in terms of their respective sizes. And what was the standard by which Robert Reilly redrew the musical map of the twentieth century? To what, fundamentally, did he appeal to put the picture straight? It was simply beauty. The map of twentieth-century classical music could be confidently redrawn and corrected according to that standard because beauty, like geography, is a fixed and enduring reality. A composer can choose to ignore beauty, pretend that it is irrelevant to art, but all he does by that is ensure the failure of his art.

Among the many valuable truths communicated to us in the pages of this book, one of the most important, in my view, is the association that Robert Reilly draws between the realm of art and the realm of morality. Despite the vacuous claim that is made from time to time, usually by artists, that the two realms have nothing to do with one another, the truth is that they are inseparable. The reason for this is simply the fact, precisely put by Jacques Maritain, that the artist is a man, a moral agent, before he is an artist. If art goes wrong, it is because antecedently there has been some nontrivial moral/spiritual dislocations that have taken place in the lives and thinking of the moral agents who are responsible for the art. The result of these dislocations, if extreme, is that beauty loses its primacy of place in the mind of the artist, and the art thereby becomes, to one degree or another, a vehicle for ugliness. In sum, we may say that moral ugliness precedes aesthetic ugliness. The problem of preserving beauty in art becomes, then, foundationally, though not exclusively, a moral problem. Beauty never stands alone, but is always accompanied by goodness and truth.

Paul M. Quay, S.J., *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality*, revised and expanded edition (San Francisco, CA: Ignatius Press, 2017). 233 pp.

Review by Edward N. Peters, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, Detroit, MI

Fr. Paul Quay's slim volume *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality* first appeared in 1985 and quickly established itself as a minor classic in the field. Unlike many other texts that attempted to explain Church teaching on human sexuality to an disbelieving or at best skeptical world, Quay's quiet monograph responded to those who already believed but wished to be fed by the rich theological insights possessed by the Church in this matter, insights that took for granted but transcended the philosophical and apologetic arguments typically but necessarily brought to bear in this matter by others. The image of Mary, who had chosen the better part and would not be denied, comes to mind. Quay wrote for Mary.

But in this new and expanded edition, Ignatius Press provides a double treasure, not only re-releasing *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality* but also publishing for the first time a book-length essay by Quay on the spiritual foundations for natural family planning. This essay ("The Meaning of Fertility Awareness") is rich with spiritual and psychological insights every bit as profound as those found in the main title. Only one who has a library of learning within him can write short but compelling books on complex matters, and only one who has long grappled with those complexities can explain them to others simply and clearly. Quay, with laureates in theology and physics, brings these strengths to bear in both of these works.

A splendid introductory essay by Jesuit philosopher Joseph Koterski ably orients readers to both works. Given how simultaneously subtle and startling are Quay's numerous insights into the divine plan for human sexuality and into the use that the Lord makes of cycles in the physical universe, Koterski's introduction should be consulted by all of those coming to Quay's works for the first time and re-read by most of those completing them.

Rather than summarizing Koterski's introduction, let alone Quay's two works, let me instead make a suggestion directly to readers that they approach these two-works-in-one, and perhaps especially the second on fertility awareness, with conscious deliberation, not because they are densely written or heavily footnoted (for they are not), but because Quay's manner of writing on matters such as sexuality and human fertility is so rare these days that the study-techniques one might have developed for other kinds of reading might not serve well here.

Time and again (despite my knowing Quay well during the years that he was composing these two works and hearing him speak of these matters with the graduate students and young academics blessed to be under his spiritual direction at the time), I found myself being able to read no more than a paragraph or two at

a sitting, whereupon I simply had to stop, ponder, pray, and try to talk about the short passage I had just read, if only to appreciate how powerfully Quay had broken open a spiritual or even psychological aspect of human sexuality and fertility that I had scarcely known to have existed, or had explained in simple language yet another wonder of the providence of the Lord. I might even go so far as to say that Quay's works need to be read and simultaneously discussed in a group.

Finally – if I may be permitted another personal observation – I first read *The Christian Meaning of Human Sexuality* early in married life, and so I read it again now, after more than three decades in that vocation. The new material in this volume, “The Meaning of Fertility Awareness,” is something that I have come to for the first time, of course, and thus, after our child-bearing and even most of our child-rearing years are behind us. Angela and I accepted, as did most of our friends, the Church's teaching against conjugal contraception largely because we believed that God, who can neither deceive nor be deceived, willed it so and had led his Church to proclaim that truth against all worldly voices to the contrary. But now, after a long-overdue second reading of Quay's work on sexuality and a first reading of his great essay on fertility, we experienced – how exactly to put this? – an elation at seeing more deeply how incredibly wondrous indeed is the life that God offers to his sons and daughters in Christian marriage.

If only they had eyes to see it.

Memorial Notices

† Germain Grisez (1929–2018)

February 1, 2018 marked the passing of Germain Gabriel Grisez, a man of the Church and a great thinker. I first met him in 1999 during my sophomore year at Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg. John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* had recently been promulgated. At the time I was seeking answers to various life-orienting questions, some of which were still only inchoately formed in my mind. I had learnt of Germain Grisez from the discussion of miracles in Bill Portier's *Tradition and Incarnation*, and I was impressed by the copies of *The Way of the Lord Jesus* that I had seen on display in the college bookstore. Each morning I saw Grisez and his wife, Jeannette, faithfully take their usual seats at daily Mass in the college chapel. When enrollment opened for his course on Vatican II documents, I signed up. Though I could not have imagined it then, the professor about whom I had read and whom I encountered in the chapel and the classroom would become a friend who changed my life forever.

Grisez's courses were electrifying. His manner of presentation was neither dynamic nor theatrical, but it didn't need to be. The depth and clarity of the content he related were enough to rivet my attention for the two-and-a-half hours of each class. Grisez well understood that knowledge is according to the mode of the knower. He was able to see things through your eyes, come right to where you were, and lead you from that place to the more remote and difficult position from which he was working.

Though he was not effusive, it occasionally became apparent how deeply moved he was by some point of Church teaching. He harbored a profound love for Jesus, the Church, her great thinkers (especially St. Thomas Aquinas), and the human person as created in God's image and likeness (especially the weak and marginalized). He had an equally intense response when the Church, her liturgy, or her teaching were violated in any way.

Grisez was generous with his time, despite the never-ending stream of his own projects. I often took him up on his offer to answer questions outside of class. Grisez would invariably stop whatever he was doing to answer my questions, and frequently our discussion would last an hour or two, if not more.

The Way of the Lord Jesus is Grisez's multi-volume magnum opus of nearly 4,000 pages. His project here was to respond to the Second Vatican Council's call for renewal in moral theology. These volumes freshly elaborate the Church's moral theology in a way that is deeply informed by scripture. Though developed in response to the perceived legalism of the neoscholastic manuals, Grisez's moral

theology is solidly committed to the truths of the faith, firm in its affirmation of moral absolutes, and normatively robust. But Grisez's greatest concern is to demonstrate the centrality to Christian life of the Incarnation and the universal call to holiness. He is intent upon explaining how the theological virtues, prayer, and the sacraments are the organizing principles of Christian living. *The Way of the Lord Jesus* is a truly *theological* account of morality. I was inspired by its rich account of personal vocation when I first encountered it in college, and I believe that Grisez's teaching on this topic will prove to be one of his most significant and lasting contributions to the Church.

Through his many works Grisez contributed greatly to our understanding of practical reason, human action, and the ultimate end of the human person. He also reflected on numerous issues in applied ethics. A metaphysician at heart, Grisez made significant contributions to such cognate fields as the philosophy of God, anthropology, dogmatic theology, and spirituality that remain to be fully appreciated.

Grisez is perhaps best known for his collaborative and original development of the "Basic Human Goods Theory." Formulated to transcend the various forms of consequentialism that had gained traction in the wake of the Second World War, Grisez's theory had the capacity to respond to questions of the day, especially on issues in sexual ethics and beginning- and end-of-life issues. Grisez's basic position in ethics was first set forth in his 1965 article, "The First Principle of Practical Reason." It was further elaborated in "Practical Principles, Moral Truth and Ultimate Ends" (1987), "Natural Law, God, Religion and Human Fulfillment" (2001), and "The True Ultimate End of Human Beings" (2008). This series of essays, spanning Grisez's career, remains perhaps the best introduction to the Basic Human Goods Theory.

Germain Grisez was a man of true grit. He grew up during the Great Depression in a large family of modest means. He worked for years to put himself through school and support his family, often working odd jobs full-time on the night shift. While he was in graduate school at the University of Chicago, he and Jeannette lived in one of the city's first desegregated housing projects. He lived simply and kept a special place in his heart for the poor. His compassion was born of personal experience as well as the Gospel. He did whatever good he could for those around him, even at great personal cost, such as when he was physically assaulted by a homeless man whom he tried to feed one night in the nearby housing projects.

Grisez was thick-skinned and demanding of himself and others. Sparing with praise, he could also be encouraging. Though bracingly frank and sometimes unrelenting in argument, he was always respectful and never dismissive. He treated his opponents with a seriousness and equanimity that was not always returned. His guileless criticism, if sometimes painful, was invaluable. He was

intellectually agile and would not criticize a position without first owning it. He would follow an argument wherever it led, even if doing so entailed the loneliness that discouraged others from drawing the same conclusion. Grisez valued truth more than his own opinion, and he taught others to do so as well. He was for me a living example of a scholar profoundly detached from his own ideas.

Grisez did not generally like to discuss matters other than philosophy and theology, aside from occasional talk about family. With allowance for prayer and modest recreation, thinking was the occupation he liked best. His mental focus was laserlike. I recall one evening, after Jeannette had died, sitting in his living room talking shop. The sun went down, and Grisez went on talking even after the room darkened and gradually became pitch black. Jeannette would never have let that happen. In the weeks leading up to his death, Grisez's life became extremely painful as a result of the cancer that had metastasized to his bones. In our last conversation, Grisez indicated that it was consoling for him, almost therapeutic, to talk shop with his friends. As he became absorbed in a question, such focused thought would allow him to disregard the pain of his cancer. Grisez understood the consolation of philosophy, down to his bones.

Grisez was a man of enormous speculative capacity, with an ability to strip away conventional presuppositions and to propose solutions that were logically consistent, profound in explanatory power, and yet elegant in their simplicity. It was a marvel to watch him at work. He was a rigorous thinker, whose attention to detail was sometimes mistaken for idiosyncrasy. His mind would not readily close gaps, and he pressed contrasts and distinctions that others would elide. Acutely perceptive, he could spot implications miles down the road. He would not let you get away with anything.

All this translated into an unsurpassed level of quality in his work. Grisez was a methodical writer whose notes and detailed outlines were virtual drafts, and whose drafted chapters were sometimes so expansive as to be virtual monographs. He was famous among those who knew him for his iterative process of self-initiated peer review and revision *prior* to submitting his work to a publisher. A single essay was often years in the making. Despite his impressive record of publication, Grisez was not hasty and never self-promoting. Everything he published was substantive, held back until it was ready, and published for the sake of truth and the good of the Church.

Grisez's work will take years – even generations – for the Church to evaluate and appropriate. He defied classification. He was neither a liberal nor a conservative; a systematic thinker yet not given to love of system; formed in neoscholasticism yet unbound by any traditional school; a maverick who was loyal to the Church and whose foundational theoretical work was heavily collaborative; a speculative mind driven by a practical concern for the evangelical mission of the Church; an intellectual genius with a simple, childlike faith. Above all, Germain

Grisez was a Catholic theologian.

Grisez was not optimistic about the going getting any easier between now and the coming of the Kingdom, but he was a hopeful realist. Reflecting on his life's work in light of this, I think that he would enjoin us today to remain connected to Jesus through living faith, ecclesial communion, and the sacraments, and to abide in Christ's love by seeking first the Kingdom, striving in hope to integrate every aspect of our lives with the faith that we hold, keep, and hand on.

I recall one winter morning when Grisez unexpectedly went up to the ambo after the end of daily Mass. It was January 28th, the memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas, and Grisez had come to an insight on the antiphon from Lauds that he felt moved to share. This caught by surprise the seminarians and collegians who were present, since they were still making their thanksgiving and the microphone was even inadvertently cut while Germain spoke. The antiphon read: "Blessed be the Lord; for love of him, St. Thomas Aquinas spent long hours in prayer, study, and writing." The antiphon is, of course, true so far as it goes. But Grisez was moved to make explicit that it was also for love of *neighbor* that St. Thomas spent long hours in prayer, study, and writing. And this insight is surely reflective of Grisez's own experience. Over the span of seven decades, Grisez prayed, studied, and wrote, tirelessly, for love of God *and of us*.

Thank you, Dr. Grisez.

*R. J. Matava**

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† Rev. Matthew Lamb (1937-2018)

At his death this spring, Father Matthew Lamb held the Cardinal Maida Chair of Theology at Ave Maria University. He was born in Washington, D.C. in 1937 and entered the Trappist Monastery of the Holy Spirit in May 1952. Ordained a priest in 1962 in the Abbey Church, he later became a priest of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Father Lamb earned a licentiate in sacred theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome in 1966, and in 1974, completed a doctorate in theology at the Westfälische Wilhelms University in Munster, Germany.

During his studies in Germany, he was formed by such influential philosophers and theologians as Josef Pieper, Bernard Lonergan, and Josef Ratzinger, who later became Pope Benedict XVI. Lamb taught at Marquette University, and later Boston College. While teaching in Boston, he was a co-founder of an influential academic study group on the work of St. Thomas Aquinas, which drew scholars from Boston College, Harvard University, Providence College and other institutions. He co-founded the Society for Catholic Liturgy in 1995, and the Academy for Catholic Theology in 2007. He served as a board member of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, the American Academy of Religion, the Catholic Theological Society of America, the Archdiocese of Denver Theological Institute, the John XXIII National Seminary, and a member of the editorial board of *Communio*.

Father Lamb was the author or editor of 12 books and hundreds of scholarly articles and papers, including a translation with introduction for *Thomas Aquinas's Commentary on Ephesians* (1966), *History, Method and Theology: A Dialectical Comparison of Wilhelm Dilthey's Critique of Historical Reason and Bernard Lonergan's Meta-Methodology* (1978), *Creativity and Method: Essays in Honor of Bernard Lonergan* (1981), *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation* (1982), *Eternity, Time and the Life of Wisdom* (2007), *Vatican II: Renewal within Tradition* (2008), *Catholicism and America: Challenges and Prospects* (2012), and *Theology Needs Philosophy: Essays in Honor of Ralph McInerney*.

† Don J. Briel (1947 – 2018)

At his death Prof. Don Briel held the Blessed John Henry Newman Chair of Liberal Arts at the University of Mary in Bismarck, North Dakota. He was the founder of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, where he held the Koch Chair of Catholic Studies and served as Director from 1993 to 2014. He began his service at the University of St. Thomas in 1981 and was chair of its Theology Department from 1990 to 1999.

A native of Ventura, California, Don completed a Bachelor of Arts in History at the University of Notre Dame in 1969. He then studied literature at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland, and earned a licentiate in 1976). He took his doctorate in Catholic Theology in 1980 from the University of Strasbourg in France. Much of his scholarly work centered on the work of Cardinal John Henry Newman, including his dissertation, “Isaac Williams and Newman: The Oxford Movement Controversy of 1838-1841.”

As part of an initiative for the renewal of Catholic higher education and a re-engagement of the Catholic intellectual tradition, Briel and a few of his colleagues founded the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas in 1993. It was the first such program in the country. Over the course of the next twenty years, it grew to a department within the College of Arts and Sciences that had some three hundred undergraduate majors and minors and seventy-five Master’s students.

Briel also founded *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* and established three institutes connected to the Center for Catholic Studies: the John A Ryan Institute for Catholic Social Thought, the Murphy Institute for Law and Public Policy, and the Habiger Institute for Catholic Leadership.

Requiescat in pace.

Books Received

James Chappel. *Catholic Modern: The Challenge of Totalitarianism and the Remaking of the Church*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. 342 pp.

Brian Clayton and Douglas Kries. *Two Wings: Integrating Faith and Reason*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 281 pp.

Obianuju Ekeocha. *Target Africa: Ideological Neocolonialism in the Twenty-First Century*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 219 pp.

Dawn Eden Goldstein, ed. *Fun Is Not Enough: The Complete Catholic Eye Columns of Francis Canavan, S.J.* New York: The National Committee of Catholic Laymen, Inc., 2017. 381 pp.

Kate Greasley and Christopher Kaczor. *Abortion Rights: For and Against*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018.

Michael Hickey. *Catholic Social Teaching and Distributism: Toward a New Economy*. Lanham, MD: Hamilton Books, 2018. 155 pp.

Stewart E. Kelly with James K. Dew, Jr. *Understanding Postmodernism: A Christian Perspective*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. 283 pp.

Dale S. Recinella. *When We Visit Jesus in Prison: A Guide for Catholic Ministry*. Chicago: ACTA Publications, 2016. 545 pp.

Rev. Michael Schmitz. *Made for Love: Same-Sex Attractions and the Catholic Church*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press/Augustine Institute, 2017. 171 pp.

Leo Severino. *Going Deeper: A Reasoned Exploration of God and Truth*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 133 pp.

Edward Short. *Newman and History*. Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2017. 359 pp.

William J. Slattery. *Heroism and Genius: How Catholic Priests Helped Build – and Can Help Rebuild – Western Civilization*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 272 pp.

Edward Sri. *Into His Likeness: Be Transformed as a Disciple of Christ*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 150 pp.

John M. Travaline and Louis A. Mitchell, eds. *Catholic Witness in Health Care: Practicing Medicine in Truth & Love*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017. 513 pp.

Dietrich von Hildebrand. *In Defense of Purity: An Analysis of the Catholic Ideals of Purity and Virginity*. Steubenville, OH: Hildebrand Press, 2017. 148 pp.

John R. Wood, *The Light Entrusted to You: Keeping the Flame of Faith Alive*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 297 pp.

Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, Statement of Purpose

We Catholic scholars in various disciplines join in fellowship in order to serve Jesus Christ better by helping one another in our work and by putting our abilities more fully at the service of the Catholic faith. We wish to form a fellowship of scholars who see their intellectual work as expressing the service they owe to God. To Him we give thanks for our Catholic faith and for every opportunity He gives us to serve that faith. We wish to form a fellowship of Catholic scholars open to the work of the Holy Spirit within the Church. Thus we wholeheartedly accept and support the renewal of the Church of Christ undertaken by Pope John XXIII, shaped by Vatican II, and carried on by succeeding pontiffs.

We accept as the rule of our life and thought the entire faith of the Catholic Church. This we see not merely in solemn definitions but in the ordinary teaching of the Pope and those bishops in union with him, and also embodied in those modes of worship and ways of Christian life, present and past, which have been in harmony with the teaching of St. Peter's successors in the See of Rome.

The questions raised by contemporary thought must be considered with courage and dealt with in honesty. We will seek to do this, faithful to the truth always guarded in the Church by the Holy Spirit and sensitive to the needs of the family of faith. We wish to accept a responsibility which a Catholic scholar may not evade: to assist everyone, so far as we are able, to personal assent to the mystery of Christ as made manifest through the lived faith of the Church, His Body, and through the active charity without which faith is dead.

To contribute to this sacred work, our fellowship will strive to:

- come to know and welcome all who share our purpose;
- make known to one another our various competencies and interests;
- share our abilities with one another unstintingly in our efforts directed to our common purpose;
- cooperate in clarifying the challenges which must be met;
- help one another to evaluate critically the variety of responses which are proposed to these challenges;
- communicate our suggestions and evaluations to members of the Church who might find them helpful;
- respond to requests to help the Church in its task of guarding the faith as inviolable and defending it with fidelity;
- help one another to work through, in scholarly and prayerful fashion and without public dissent, any problem which may arise from magisterial teaching.

With the grace of God for which we pray, we hope to assist the whole Church to understand its own identity more clearly, to proclaim the joyous Gospel of Jesus more confidently, and to carry out its redemptive mission of all humankind more effectively.

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