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The Universal and Inalienable Right of the Child to the Marriage of His Biological Parents

*Patrick F. Fagan and William L. Saunders**

ABSTRACT: At the center of culture lie romance, courtship and marriage, all leading to the child. A family-centered culture, the patrimony that Western (Judeo-Christian) civilization bequeathed to the people of the twentieth century, is not being passed on to the generations of the twenty-first.² As a result, the child, rather than being the object and end of culture, often becomes the victim of the new “culture” – victimized, at levels never experienced by *any group, religion or race* in history. In answer to this crisis we propose the recognition and the promulgation of a right, ever-present but not usually articulated: “The Universal, Inalienable Right of All Children to the Marriage of their Biological Parents and to their Weekly Worship of God.”

THE U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (1948) is the legal embodiment of modern international human rights. The nations of the world, still reeling from the massive victimization of the innocent during World War II, and to prevent its happening again, state in the preamble that the “recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights *of all members of the human family*³ is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world.” The Universal Declaration also says: “Everyone has *duties to the community*⁴ in which alone the free and full development of his personality is

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² To view multiple angles of consideration of this phenomenon, see *The Decomposition of the American Family Over Time*, Marriage and Religion Research Institute (February 14, 2018), <http://marri.us/decomp-family/>.

³ Italics added. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

⁴ *Ibid.*, italics added.

possible” (Article 29-1), while Article 25 states that “Childhood...is entitled to special care and assistance.”

Every culture that endures – that transmits life and thrives – has the child as its centerpiece, but little did the UN-founding nations of 1948 foresee that they themselves, over the next two generations, would victimize their own children at levels far surpassing the victimization of World War II. The average daily death toll during the War – combined military and civilian – was 24,700. Today the average number of babies aborted across the globe is 34,400.¹ And these are only the unborn victims. Other serious and much more numerous forms of victimization bring the totals to mind-numbing levels: out-of-wedlock births with all their attendant deficits,² the divorce of parents with the subsequent weakening of their children,³ the cohabitation of their parents, and, even more debilitating, the separation of their parents joined with their cohabitation with nonparents.⁴ Today only 46 percent of American 17-year-olds have grown up with both their biological parents living together in marriage.⁵ Europe is not far behind: In England and Wales, out-of-wedlock births approach 50 percent.⁶ All children need the marriage of their parents if they are to become the people that they are intended to become.

The universal need for married parents is illustrated in the U.S. federal

¹ T. Jacobson and W. R. Johnson, *Abortion World Wide Report* (2017), xi; retrieved December 9, 2017 at https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/cacd2b_11a9e1b8f0ef422b987ce5c033f36e0b.pdf.

² Patrick F. Fagan, “Rising Illegitimacy Americas Social Catastrophe,” *The Heritage Foundation* (1994), <https://www.heritage.org/report/rising-illegitimacy-americas-social-catastrophe>.

³ Patrick F. Fagan and Aaron Churchill, “The Effects of Divorce on Children,” *The Marriage and Religion Research Institute* (2012), <https://www.frc.org/EF/EF12A22.pdf>.

⁴ Patricia Lee June, “Cohabitation: Effects of Parental Cohabitation,” *American College of Pediatricians* (2014), <https://www.acpedcs.org/the-college-speaks/position-statements/societal-issues/cohabitation-part-2-of-2>.

⁵ P. Fagan and C. Hadford, *The Fifth Annual Index of Belonging and Rejection*. *The Marriage and Religion Research Institute* (2015), <http://marri.us/wp-content/uploads/Fifth-Annual-Index-of-Family-Belonging-and-Rejection.pdf>.

⁶ Contrast this with an early professional experience of Fagan that demonstrated the inextricable linkage between the well-being of the child and the marriage of his parents. By his third year as a therapist, because of growing insights, he would not see the child referred until he could see the whole family including the father. By keeping the focus off the referred child and, instead, on the family, after four or five sessions, when he had a good grasp of what was going on especially between the parents, he would say to them, “Let us leave the children at home next time!” and then work with the parents on the conflicts in their marriage. For 95 percent of the referred children the symptoms disappeared without any direct intervention when the unity of the marriage was restored. The child thrived in the restored soil and sunshine of the unity between his parents.

survey system (and in Britain's also). On every outcome that these surveys measure, adults and children in the always-intact married family do best¹ in education, health, crime, income and savings, employability, happiness, and mental health.

The U.S. federal survey system also shows that those who worship weekly do best on every outcome and those who worship least do worst.² When both family structure and frequency of religious practice are combined, we find that the always-intact-married family that worships God weekly does best on everything. These people are the core strength of the nation. The opposite is also true: adults and children from the nonintact family that never worships fare worst.

These demographic phenomena illustrate the power of the two great loves that Jesus puts at the center of his message: the love of God and love of neighbor (including most directly spouse and children). Those who deserve two great loves yield the greatest benefits to mankind across all 150 outcomes measured so far.³ These data teach in a new way the universal principles by which men and societies need to live in order to thrive.

In the last few decades, discussions of matters sexual have placed a heavy – almost exclusive – emphasis on the rights of the adults, especially of women. But the good of the community and of the polis demands a rebalancing, with special focus on the good of the victimized child. Victimized children, as they become adults, are more likely than not to victimize their own children, and it is critical to devise a means for breaking the cycle in which they are trapped. When parents conceive, be they teenagers or older, their obligation in justice to their child is the same: They owe that child their married love. The society that undermines the married love of biological parents is a victimizing society.⁴

The pattern of injustice to children is writ large in the federal data, which shows that children conceived outside of marriage do not as often reach their potential as those conceived and raised within their parents' marriage.⁵ If newly

¹ There are a few exceptions, but even these are to be expected from purely statistical considerations.

² For a sample of such outcomes see *Mapping America: Education*, The Marriage and Religion Research Institute, <http://marri.us/wp-content/uploads/Education-Mapping-America-Booklet.pdf>.

³ See <http://marri.us/research/mapping-america/>.

⁴ It is very clear that Europe is well on its way to debilitation and near-extinction as a place for European peoples and their cultures. It will well into its second generation of below-replacement birth rates, with its third such generation emerging. If the average continental birth rate is 1.4 within four generations, European peoples will have been reduced by 80 percent. Europe is creating its own demographic vacuum. The U.S. is not far behind.

⁵ For extensive overviews of the literature see www.marripedia.org and search by variable.

conceived children were able to speak, they would readily be imagined to say to their new parents:

*You have just called me into existence and I am totally dependent on you. Because you have called me into existence, I call on you to give me your life-long marriage, which I need if I am to grow to my potential. If you love each other I will thrive. Even if each of you, individually, were to love me well, yet not sacrifice for each other, I would not thrive as I should. You are duty bound to give me your marriage. Or else I am your victim. You know this in your bones, for I am flesh of your flesh; every cell in my body will always be imprinted with your chromosomes. For eternity I will be of both of you. From here on, all three of us are dependent on this marriage, which is my due.*¹

The dependence of one-cell children on their parents springs from the actions of each father and each mother. The God-given human nature that is present in each life that parents bring about is the basis of the rights of all children.

Proper consideration of these rights is what is needed to reframe the sexual revolution and everything that has come from it, especially abortion, out-of-wedlock births, divorce, and cohabitation.

The rights that are under discussion here are truly basic. As soon as a male and a female even begin to think of sexual intercourse, these rights of any children who would be conceived are immediately in play,² which is why strong families, communities, and cultures confine sexual intercourse to marriage. Respect for these rights is for the good of the community as much as for the good of the child.³

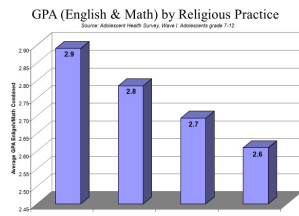
The same holds for the child's right to a religious upbringing. Without weekly worship, children will not become the persons they are meant to be. For good reason the obligation of weekly worship is one of the Ten Commandments. Humans need it. Adults and children who worship weekly do best, and those who worship not at all do worst, as the following graph illustrates:⁴

¹ A good poet would do much better, and we hope one will soon, for this is a universal fact, and its articulation today is universally urgent.

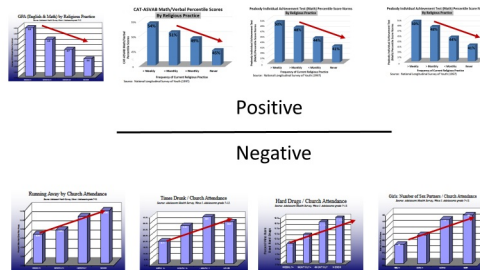
² The use of contraceptives does not put this to the side because 9 percent of all births are conceived while the mother is contracepting. See "Effectiveness of Family Planning Methods," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014), <https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/unintendedpregnancy/pdf/family-planning-methods-2014.pdf>.

³ Thus, the Supreme Court ruling in *Eisenstadt v. Baird* (1972) was the major political upheaval event in modern American history.

⁴ From the Add Health Survey (Waves I and II), the largest national sample (16,000) of American students from grades 7 through 12. See *Mapping America: Education*, <http://marri.us/wp-content/uploads/Education-Mapping-America-Booklet.pdf>.

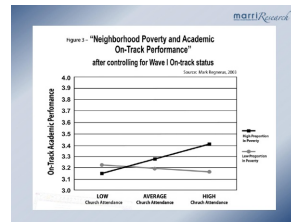


Adolescents who worshiped weekly did best in this particular measure, and this sort of correlation is recurrent in many other such measures. Those who worshiped a few times per month did next best, followed by those who worshiped a couple of times a year; the worst were those who never worshiped. This is a snapshot of American *teenagers!* The more that social scientists analyze the data on religious practice the more powerful it reveals itself to be.¹



Religious practice has more impact for good than any other factor that can be measured by the social sciences. Although marriage is a one-time event, religious worship is totally different, for it can be engaged in with various sorts of frequency. Some parents, such as aggrieved parents in divorce, may find themselves having no choice about being in a nonintact family, but every parent can choose to worship God weekly or not. When parents do worship, the impact on all in the family is profound.

¹ For two syntheses of the extant major studies, see Patrick F. Fagan, *Why Religion Matters: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability*, The Heritage Foundation (1996), <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/why-religion-matters-the-impact-religious-practice-social-stability>; Patrick F. Fagan, *Why Religion Matters Even More: The Impact of Religious Practice on Social Stability*, The Heritage Foundation (2006), <https://www.heritage.org/civil-society/report/why-religion-matters-even-more-the-impact-religious-practice-social-stability>.



Single, black, inner-city welfare mothers who bring their children to church each week give them much the same benefits as if they lived in a middle-class neighborhood and sent them to middle-class schools.¹ By contrast, the recent major Congressional initiative called “No Child Left Behind” poured billions of dollars into public schools but achieved extraordinarily little.² On the other hand, attendance at weekly religious worship, which is totally free, has massive benefits, with the poor benefiting most.³ Weekly worship improves virtually every other outcome measured in the U.S. federal survey system. The only interesting question for the social scientist is not “if” but “how much” benefit weekly worship delivers.

Thus, all newly conceived children could say to their parents: “*To reach my potential I need your worship of God, for without it I will not become the person I am capable of becoming. The choice is yours. The result is mine.*”

We are confident that the focus on the universal and inalienable rights of children to the marriage of their parents will reshape the future of nations. Our purpose is to reverse the massive victimization of children. Though the disastrous numbers of out-of-wedlock births across the globe are treated as if they were neutral or even benign, they are in fact malignant for children and for society. Even though the future of mankind is by way of the family, that future will be very troubled if it is founded on families in which father and mother deprive their children of their marriage and their worship of God. The data show it.

To repeat, the Universal Declaration notes that “Everyone has *duties to the community*⁴ in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.”⁵ It is a great gift to grow up in a stable community. But that gift depends on another gift that needs to be assured: the gift to the next generation of

¹ Mark D. Regnerus, “Shaping Schooling Success: Religious Socialization and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Public Schools,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 39, no. 3 (2000): 363–70.

² It also is a great example of the violation of the principle of subsidiarity – with the predictable effects of such a violation.

³ Mark D. Regnerus, “Shaping Schooling Success.”

⁴ Italics added.

⁵ Article 29-1.

the marriage of their parents and their worship of God. All other choices are forms of victimization of children. The abandonment of marriage and worship ensures the collapse of nations.

Peace and prosperity require the end of the victimization of children through the recognition, promulgation, and practice of respect for the universal, inalienable rights of children to the marriage of their parents and their weekly worship of God.

A Bad Catholic's Guide to Good Politics: Looking at the Benedict Option through American Eyes

*Susan Orr Traffas**

ABSTRACT: Rather than taking our cue from Rod Dreher's *The Benedict Option*, American Catholics would do well to look to Walker Percy, who thought that we ought to engage in civic life. Far from being called to withdraw from political life, we must engage at every level with our fellow citizens. It is a task required by charity and needed for the common good. I argue that a misunderstanding of political life in general and of the American polity in particular has led to a misunderstanding of what we are required as citizens to do.

ROD DREHER'S BOOK *The Benedict Option* touched a certain nerve within Catholic circles. As the title of my paper suggests, I would like to consider it in light of Walker Percy's 1971 novel *Love in the Ruins*, whose subtitle is "The Adventures of a Bad Catholic at a Time near the End of the World." It is not an accident that the novel begins on our nation's birthday, July 4th. Percy can suggest to us that it might be our Catholic calling here and now to recognize that even those of us who are bad Catholics are called to help rescue our grand old USA from where it has fallen, not to withdraw from it. Without our participation, things could get even crazier.

I do not have a Qualitative-Quantitative Ontological Lapsometer, the stethoscope of the spirit invented by Dr. Tom More, the novel's protagonist, but I am a student of politics. And, political life, at least in my lifetime, *always* seems to be on the brink of disaster, always at a time near the end of the world. It has probably always been so. But, as I tell my students, thinking that the present is as bad as it could get is a failure of the imagination! Like Walker Percy, I think that America is not utterly awful. In fact, I think the Founding was quite good. And I think that American Catholics are called to make it better.

Dreher's point of departure is that infamous sentence in Alasdair MacIntyre's *After Virtue* that suggested that we were entering a new dark age and that, because

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of this, it was time for men and women of good will to withdraw from political life. MacIntyre's exasperation boils down to this: men of principle see that the modern political world is irredeemably corrupt because it is irredeemably modern. America, having been founded in the age of Enlightenment, must be left behind. Having withdrawn, we can say: "We are waiting not for a Godot, but for another – doubtless very different – St. Benedict."

This call to "opt out" of political life is more popular now in light of recent erosions in American culture with respect to morality and marriage. Yet, to do so would be wrong in at least three ways. First, it goes against Christ's call to go out into the world. We are not called to be as the Amish, withdrawn from the world. We are to be a proselytizing people. This is a function that we cannot perform if we are in a community only of those who already agree with us. Wouldn't that at least be a failure of charity? Aren't those who live in spiritual poverty today to be included in the "least of these" as much as the physically poor?

More fundamentally, withdrawal goes against the nature of what it means to be human, since human nature is almost always formed and sustained within a political community. We know that grace has to build on nature. It is the architectonic art of politics that allows all the natural virtues to be exercised. One cannot be generous when alone; one can be generous only to others. Only rarely is a regime so awful that it is better to try and leave it. As the great Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn has shown us in his masterful *Gulag Archipelago*, it was the zeks – the political prisoners who lived the bleakest existence out in the Taiga – who were the only ones in the Soviet Union with a political community, precisely because they were the only ones who were free. Thankfully, we are not yet zeks. And thank God we are not, because we are not yet tough enough to withstand the Gulag. It may come to that, so we had better work on the virtue of courage. We should remember that Solzhenitsyn had to be booted out of Russia; he did not go willingly. Surely, we are not yet as bad as the USSR in the 1970s.

Finally, withdrawing in the manner of the Benedict Option is at least provisionally historicist in that this call to wait for someone to save us from ourselves implies that history acts apart from the agency of individual human beings. To follow this option, we would have to await the new Benedict to reveal himself.

Opting out seems to me a failure on many levels: first, on the prudential level. Does anyone really think that we are going to be able to withdraw into some confined territory that could not be invaded? Hobbes was wrong about many things, but he was correct that life outside of the political community is nasty, brutish, and short.¹ In this, he half-echoed Aristotle's remark in the *Politics* that

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, pt. 1, chap. 13, p. 76 of the Edwin Curley edition of

man outside the political community is either a beast or a god.¹ It is not an accident that when Aristotle is talking about men living only with their families he quotes Homer and, more specifically that part of the *Odyssey* where Odysseus is talking about the race of Cyclops.² The Cyclops were monstrous and lacking perspective, for they were only one-eyed. They were bad precisely because they lived only with their family members and did not talk in public about what they should do together or about what they should have praised and blamed.

Under the Christian dispensation, there are many options, but it is nonsense to pretend that we can all go be hermits. Even if I exaggerate slightly here to make a point, I want to be clear: the tyrannical administrative state is never going to leave us in peace. If we think that implausible, consider Baronelle Stutzman, a florist in Washington State who was sued by the state for failing to provide her services for a customer's gay wedding. That is what modern tyrannies do: they come for those who oppose them. They do not – they cannot – let anyone leave.

Yes, whatever the similarities, there is a huge difference between the Roman Imperium and our day. As Pierre Manent makes clear in his masterful *Metamorphosis of the City* through his discussion of figures like Cicero. Despite the vast reach of Roman government, Cicero did have a private life. It allowed him respite from the struggles against the forces that were bringing about the death of the republic. But the new imperium wants to have everything; it cannot abide dissent.

We do well to remember the recent attempt to change the guarantee of religious *freedom* into a guarantee merely of religious *worship*. It was the start of an effort to take away what Madison called the fundamental right of religious liberty – fundamental because it is what allows us to do what we owe to the Creator and thus is a right that is never alienable. The first step of the new imperium is to limit us to our houses of worship. The sphere of liberty will then ever continue to shrink.

But, be not afraid, as John Paul the Great said. He was one who lived through two ideological tyrannies. The good old/bad old USA, in Walker Percy's words, is not an ideological tyranny. It is filled with knotheds and progressives, to be sure. But the modernist strain within it is a new thing. It came at the beginning of the last century with the abandonment of the principles of limited government as outlined in the Declaration of Independence and with the elite's embrace of progressivism.

Fundamentally, it is our task to live life politically: to speak out with charity

Leviathan, with selected variants from the Latin edition of 1668 (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

¹ Aristotle, *Politics* I.2.1253a26-29.

² *Ibid.*, 1252b23-25.

to the people with whom we disagree. It is a mistake to think that our civic duty ends with going to the voting booth every two or four years. One of the problems with Dreher's proposal is his insufficiently developed sense of the political. The principle of subsidiarity was built into the original Founding, as we can see in texts like number 46 of the *Federalist Papers*. Only a certain number of questions belong to the sphere of national affairs. Most things, the everyday matters that affect how most people live, need to be addressed at the local and state levels, that is, the places where people know us. We have civic obligations to be present – in a special way at the local level, at the street level.

Lay Catholics have an immediate, twofold duty. First, we must participate in political life fully in order to protect and defend the common good for ourselves, our families, and our fellow citizens. But we must also act politically to protect those who are called to withdraw from the world, those who really should embrace the Benedict Option – those who are supposed to withdraw and be contemplative. They especially need our protection if they are to do exactly that. Fr. James V. Schall, S.J. loves to make the point that only with monastic life after the coming of Christ is the life of pure contemplation possible – something so desired by the ancient philosophers. Our work as citizens needs to support both the common political good and the highest good: the contemplative good. Political life, after all, is a good thing, but it is not the highest thing, as Aristotle argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹ But for abbeys and monasteries to exist, we lay folk have to defend them. If we ever need to cast ourselves upon their shores, we cannot expect to find a place where we can be safe if we have put forth no effort to make them so. We need to do our part and avoid that error of the 1970s, when some laypeople wanted to be ministers and some priests and nuns wanted to act like the laity, including being elected to political office. For it is precisely the laity who must participate in the active life of politics at every level: that is the lay vocation, to be out in the world. We need to be citizens in our neighborhoods, cities, states and at the national level. As Dante puts it in *Paradiso*:

If all the world down there would set their minds
To follow the foundation nature brings,
They'd have a populace that's good and strong.
But you wrench someone to religious things
Who has been born to strap the sheath and sword,
And of the sermon givers you make kings
And that is why your strides go off the roads.²

¹ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* X.7-8.1177a10-1179a30.

² Dante, *Paradise*, Canto 8, lines 142-48, trans. and ed. Anthony Esolen (New York: Modern Library Classics, 2004).

One who lives outside of the political community, Aristotle said, is either a beast or a god.¹ Either way, one would not be human. We see many people today who may be living like beasts, but we do not see any gods. Those who are vocationally called to the contemplative life need a well-ordered political regime to sustain the social conditions that makes such a life of withdrawal possible.

It also seems to me that the Benedict Option – or any form of massive retreat, however envisioned – fails on a theological level as well. It fails in the sense that it assumes that nothing will ever change, or, if it does, that it will change only for the worse. Isn't such a judgment a failure of the virtue of hope? Wouldn't we be assuming that God wants us to abandon hope and simply condemn America to the punishments of the *Inferno*? Is that warranted? I do not think that we may ever abandon our calling to political life. The cardinal virtues need to be exercised within the political community.

We need to toughen up a bit, not retreat. Retreat got us into this position in the first place by thinking that we could just get along without saying anything. It will not help to say, "Oh, couldn't we please just have a carve-out from evil so that we can practice our faith in peace?" That strategy is not working so well. So, we must speak – we must deliberate – with our fellow citizens, even if that means having abuses hurled at us or going to jail. Going to jail precisely over the principles upheld by our Founding Fathers is something that we can talk about with people who are not fellow travelers. Are we prepared to write this century's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*? As the Reverend Martin Luther King wrote to his fellow Baptist ministers when they thought that he was making too much of a fuss over segregation,

I am cognizant of the interrelatedness of all communities and states. I cannot sit idly by in Atlanta and not be concerned about what happens in Birmingham. Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny.... [There is] the strangely irrational notion that there is something in the very flow of time that will inevitably cure all ills. Actually time is neutral. It can be used either destructively or constructively. I am coming to feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than the people of good will.... We must come to see that human progress never rolls in on wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and persistent work of men willing to be co-workers with God.²

We can take heart from his words. It is not inevitable that things will continue on a bad trajectory. Just think of what has happened in the last fifty years because he

¹ Aristotle, *Politics* I.2.1253a1.

² Martin Luther King, Jr., "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," April 16, 1963, in Martin Luther King, Jr., *I Have a Dream, Writings & Speeches*, ed. James M. Washington (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 85-92.

stood firm.

What would those who are thinking about pulling out of politics have done in 1973? *Roe v. Wade* and the companion cases that followed it not only were horrendous attacks on the Catholic understanding of morality but also went against the very foundation of the Founding, and in a way that is much worse than slavery or segregation. They allowed some to choose who would live and who would die, thereby violating the principle of the Declaration that “all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”

Think back to that time forty-five years ago. Many people thought that the Supreme Court had settled the debate. Public opinion would follow the Court, and the laws would definitively allow abortion everywhere and anywhere for any reason. For the most part, our fellow citizens did not want to think about the topic of abortion because they found it so unpleasant. If they thought about it much, they thought that it was a great way to deal with those folks they did not particularly like. Yet our prolife forebears did not despair; they plowed ahead. They went about building a consensus for life, and doing so has taken several decades. Without the persistence and dedication of the prolife movement – a political group if there ever was one – we would not be where we are now, which is at the tipping point of victory. Moreover, they worked across all fronts – federal, state, and local – to protect life bit by bit. I was a child then, and I labored in my mother’s vineyard of prolife activities, for she was active in that movement even before *Roe*. I understood from an early age that people could be barbaric and that there was a hole in the American soul that needed repairing. I was not shielded from such awareness, and it made me stronger. I expect no less from children and young people today.

But let’s pause for a moment. How was it that so many could choose death over life so quickly? How could we account for this strange reversal, one that showed us that what we took to be the strong fabric of American life was not so strong? So, too, with gay marriage and transgenderism, and whatever is coming next. These changed understandings of fundamental human realities did not begin to take hold from out of the blue. First came the abandonment of marriage. It took a couple of generations for young people to begin feeling that marriage commitments were not permanent and that one should grasp happiness where one could.

It is our task to help repair America’s soul. It is going to be hard. We will have to work to show people what true love is, and that might best be done on an individual level.

Withdrawing from political life, however, goes against the way that men have been called to work out their salvation. There is need to participate in the political

world in a more ancient, more fundamental sense. As Aristotle noted, “man by nature is a political animal.”¹ It is a fundamental misreading of the American polity. Rather than being irretrievably modern, our Founding is really rooted in natural law and natural rights. Dr. King saw that, and we should see it too.

I am not at all suggesting that the American polity is doing well. Indeed, I would argue that it is deeply sick to the extent that America has abandoned its roots and has chosen the progressive model of the administrative state.

I do not hold that America is irretrievably modern, despite its Lockean roots. The Founding used the thought of Locke, but not Locke alone. Now, Locke (as read by the American Founders) was not all bad. With a few exceptions, Jefferson preeminent among them, the Founders were Christians. Further, those who voted to ratify the Constitution in the first thirteen states were overwhelmingly Christian. The Founding generation understood that limited government requires a people who do not think that they are the creators of themselves. None of the Founders thought that Christianity should be done away with.

We have abandoned the roots laid down in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution to the extent that we have chosen the progressive and administrative state over the Founding principles of limited government. And that is the real problem with the whole discussion of the Benedict Option: it is based on a misunderstanding of America and its roots. We are not Europe. We were built, as the *Federalist Papers* say, on a model that is partly federal, partly national. The Constitution requires citizens to work mostly at the local level.

As Alexis de Tocqueville noted in his reflection on his journey to America, we were a people with a religion and a set of mores in common. Unlike the French, who had been radicalized, we Americans had had a revolution in understanding that worked precisely because it was based on the laws of nature and of nature’s God. Tocqueville came here, he says in *Democracy in America*, to discover how democracy – a form of government that had previously been understood by political philosophy to be the worst regime – could serve the good. He thought that for some reason Providence had ordained him to live in a democratic age. He had seen it go badly in France (he lost many relatives to the guillotine) and wanted to see why democracy was going well in America. As he notes, “Christianity, which has rendered all men equal before God, will not be loath to see all citizens equal before the law.”² And as he observes in his beautiful introduction, “I confess that in America I saw more than America; I sought there an image of democracy itself.” This was a regime that was partly drawn from religious roots in Puritanism and partly from republicanism. Tocqueville saw

¹ Aristotle, *Politics* I.2.1253a1.

² Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, trans. Harvey C. Mansfield and Delba Winthrop (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 11.

much to praise in America. He saw how Americans flourished as their towns spread across the frontiers. We had not, like France, chosen to invest all in central government. He knew that our liberty would be threatened if we went from the administrative decentralization embraced early in our history to bureaucratic centralization. Precisely that step is the one that we have taken over the past hundred years. It is this essential error that makes us think citizenship ends with a vote and consists of nothing more. We need to take citizenship seriously again and at all levels. This means reintroducing ourselves to the task of doing more at the local level. What Catholics need is to re-acquaint themselves with their heritage, with the roots of our Founding, enthused as it was with the spirit of religion and of liberty.

The political world is always in flux. But movement affords the opportunity of return. We cannot abandon the public square at any level. We cannot settle for carve-outs that protect us but abandon others to unjust treatment. We might adapt a saying of Jefferson: the tree of liberty is watered principally, not by the blood of patriots, but by the continuous exercise of political prudence. I want to call to mind here a statesman in a dark time who was not really a Christian but who did what he could to save us. At the death of Winston Churchill, Leo Strauss, the teacher of my teacher, wrote a memorial that gives a hint of what statesmanship and political philosophy should point to:

The death of Churchill reminds us of the limitations of our craft, and therewith of our duty. We have no higher duty, and no more pressing duty, than to remind ourselves and our students, of political greatness, human greatness, of the peaks of human excellence. For we are supposed to train ourselves and others in seeing things as they are, and this means above all in seeing their greatness and their misery, their excellence and their vileness, their nobility and their triumphs, and therefore never to mistake mediocrity, however brilliant, for true greatness.¹

Catholics should not find Strauss's admonition to be altogether alien. After all, in its "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," the Second Vatican Council urged:

Great care must be taken about civic and political formation, which is of the utmost necessity today for the population as a whole, and especially for youth, so that all citizens can play their part in the life of the political community. Those who are suited or can become suited should prepare themselves for the difficult, but at the same time, the very noble art of politics.²

¹ Leo Strauss on the death of Winston Churchill, January 25, 1965, to his students at the University of Chicago, available at: <https://www.weeklystandard.com/leo-strauss/churchills-greatness>.

² *Gaudium et spes*, 75.

We Catholics should hear an echo of what Socrates heard the Laws of Athens to be saying to him when Crito urged him to flee the city to avoid death. Socrates heard the Laws of the city remind him and Crito: “we begat, nourished, and educated you, and gave you and all the other citizens a share in all the noble things we could.”¹ Socrates readily chose to remain in Athens and to fight in its wars. The Laws remind him: “So vehemently were you choosing us and agreeing to be governed in accordance with us that among other things you also had children in it, as though the city was satisfactory to you.”² We American Catholics would do well to learn Socrates’s piety toward the true founding principles of our country so that we might exercise “the difficult...but...very noble art of politics.”

If I had my Qualitative-Quantitative Ontological Lapsometer with me, I would not say that we are too afraid, but that we are not afraid of the right things. We ought, as Cardinal Chaput warns us, fear going to hell for failing to help the poor.³ Right now, the poor are many of our fellow Americans. We do well to remember Mother Teresa’s remark that the *spiritual* poverty that she found in the United States was far worse than the *physical* poverty she saw around her in Calcutta. Some of the darkness in which our fellow citizens walk today is *political* darkness. We should bring back from the peripheries of our own historical memory the riches of our Founding principles for our fellow citizens who have languished on a diet of ideological gruel. The Lord shamed Jonah for not looking mercifully on the Ninevites, who did not know their right hand from their left. We are well placed to teach our fellow Americans that there is more to political life than left and right.

¹ *Crito* 51c10-d1, in *Four Texts on Socrates*, trans. Thomas G. West, Grace Starry West (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 110.

² *Crito* 52c1-3; *ibid.*, 111.

³ Charles J. Chaput, *Strangers in a Strange Land* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2017), 170-72.

The Forgotten Virtues of the Theology Manuals

*Christopher M. Carr**

ABSTRACT: For more than a century before the Second Vatican Council, Catholic theological education at the undergraduate level was grounded in the theology manuals. A theological curriculum derived from these manuals shared in their virtues. Students at Catholic colleges and universities during the mid-twentieth century were given a broad, adult understanding of the Church's doctrine, and the method employed to achieve this goal also introduced students to the skills used in history, systematics, and apologetics. But after the Council, theology manuals were quickly replaced with a thematic-elective approach. Now students need only take the usual minimum of two classes in random subjects from theology or religious studies. Without bringing back the manuals themselves, restoring the virtues of the manual tradition could go a long way toward helping students become intellectually conversant in their faith while at the same time strengthening the Catholic identity of the Church's universities.

IN 1835, THE FIRST VOLUME of Giovanni Perrone's *Praelectiones theologicae* was published in Rome; the ninth and last volume of this work appeared seven years later, in 1842. The *Praelectiones* remained in use at Catholic universities and seminaries until the beginning of the twentieth century and still remains on the shelves in many research libraries. Perrone's work enjoys a reputation of being the archetype¹ for the manuals in Catholic dogmatic theology. These manuals

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¹ Cf. *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (hereafter, NCE), *Volume I*, 1st ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), 669-674, s.v. "Apologetics"; Avery Dulles, S.J., *A History of Apologetics* (1971; reprint, New York: Corpus Instrumentorum, 1971) 182-83; *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* (hereafter, DFT), ed. René Latourelle (New York: Crossroad, 1994), 33, s.v. "Apologetics I: History," and, 1103, "Theologies VII: Manualistic Theology."

Other titles published between 1814 and the *Praelectiones* of Perrone: Daniel Tobenz (19 December 1743–20 August 1819), *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* (in *operum*, Vienna, 1814-20); György Fejér (23 April 1766–2 July 1851), *Institutiones theologiae dogmaticae* (Vienna, 1819-20); Jean-Baptiste Bouvier (16 January 1783–29 December 1854), *Institutiones theologiae* (13 vols., Le Mans, 1818-33); Franciscus Javarone (d.

dominated theological education in the Church for a century until their “wholesale repudiation after Vatican II.”¹ Within five years of the Council’s end, Catholic theology professors no longer assigned reading from the manuals, and whenever an established Catholic theologian had occasion to mention these textbooks, they were usually objects of derision. Yet these texts deserve a closer and more charitable assessment. The manuals could not have served as the backbone of theological instruction in Catholic seminaries and universities for a hundred years had they lacked all virtue. Their primary contribution to the Church’s intellectual life certainly was not the training of professional theologians; instead, they helped to pass on the faith to undergraduates by affirming that an intelligent person could be a Christian. Furthermore, when the approach to undergraduate theological education changed from one based on the manuals to the thematic-elective approach used today, students may have escaped exposure to the manuals’ weaknesses, but the benefits of a manual’s positive characteristics have also been forfeited. The purpose in recalling the virtues of the manual tradition is both to restore the manuals’ reputation and to shed light on what the theology curricula at Catholic colleges and universities currently lack.

The manual tradition in theological education emerged as the result of three converging innovations. First, the bishops who met at the Council of Trent called for the creation of educational institutions called seminaries designed specifically for training priests. The second resulted from the invention of the printing press; the venerable practice of dictation, whereby university students would simply transcribe the materials that a professor would read in class, was gradually abandoned in favor of printed textbooks. The third was the development of the textbooks in dogmatic theology that followed a customary order of topics (that is, the nature and existence of God, the Trinity, creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, the sacraments, and the last things). Within the context of seminary training, the advantages of these early manuals were numerous. A manual “provided a general textbook geared to imparting the basic theology necessary for the priest’s pastoral activity and on a level accessible to the average seminarian”² and helped to

1855), *Theologiae dogmaticae constitutiones* (Naples, 1824); Bened. Hippolytus Vieusse (d. 21 August 1857), *Institutiones theologicas* (Tolosae, 1826); Alois Buchner (20 April 1783–29 August 1869), *Summam theologiae dogmaticae is usum praelectionum* (Münich, 1828); Isidore Ladislav Guzmics, OSB (7 April 1786–1 September 1839), *Theologiam christianam fundamentalem* (Győr, 1828); *Theologiam dogmaticae* (Győr, 1828, 1829); Matthias Kovács (d. 4 June 1861), *De nexu fundamentorum religionis christianae* (Buda, 1830); and Jos. Archangelus a Fracta Majori Min. (d. 1831), *Theologiae dogmatico-scholasticae cursum ad usum clericorum ordinis* (Naples, 1831).

¹ DFT, s.v. “Theologies VII: Manualistic Theology,” 1104.

² Joseph M. White, *The Diocesan Seminary in the United States: A History from the 1780s to the Present* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 247.

communicate “a sound knowledge of church doctrine, which priests would be responsible for passing on to the Catholic faithful.”¹ Written in an organized, concise way that allowed some room for an instructor’s personal teaching style, the manuals also provided a maximum amount of content in the least amount of time. Lastly, unlike the notebooks produced by dictation, a printed class text was suitable to keep for future reference.² Such qualities thereby aided those “responsible to church authority for the doctrine taught by its members.”³ Over time, the manuals in use at seminaries were either adopted or adapted for use by the laity at Catholic colleges. Relying on a manual, whether a direct translation from Latin into the vernacular or as a supplemental reference work, gave university-level, Catholic theological education a number of strengths. Courses in Catholicism were taken during all four years of undergraduate study, and the method in these courses endeavored to integrate history, systematics, and apologetics.

A theology or religion curriculum that used, or was inspired by, the manuals usually entailed courses in the Christian faith to be taken by a student every semester, a method that allowed students to be exposed to every aspect of Catholicism. Regarding the four-year distribution of classes, Misericordia University can serve as a typical example.⁴ The curriculum from 1924 to 1937 was as follows: freshmen were to study the foundations of the Christian religion (that is, Revelation, the Church, Scripture, and Tradition), the existence and nature of God, the doctrine of the Trinity, and the Old Testament; sophomores examined creation, the Fall, Jesus Christ, redemption, the sacraments of initiation, and the New Testament; and juniors were taught the remaining sacraments, the principles of Christian morality, various forms of worship and prayer, and the first part of Church history. Seniors continued reading about the history of the Church until the present. Although the order of topics changed between 1937 and 1951, the four-year plan did not. Freshmen took survey classes in doctrine and scripture;

¹ *Ibid.*, 363.

² “The requirements of elementary instruction [in the seminary] point to the undesirability of relying on the instructor’s lectures. The student might misunderstand lecture material and take incorrect notes. In later years, the priest would also be less likely to consult old lecture notes, but a comprehensive textbook could be more easily consulted.” *Ibid.*, 363.

³ *Ibid.* “[Sulpician Anthony] Vieban wondered how the superior general could fill this responsibility if Sulpician instructors gave their own lectures. He believed the correct approach to seminary instruction was to have a textbook that set down the entire body of theology to be taught.” *Ibid.*, 363-64.

⁴ Data taken from Christopher M. Carr, “Department Curricula and Course History: Religious Studied Department, Misericordia University, Dallas, Pennsylvania” (internal report for the Department of Religious Studies, Misericordia University, Dallas, PA, December 2012), 1-6.

sophomores, sacraments and Christ; juniors, morality and Church history; and seniors, apologetics. After three additional curriculum revisions, Misericordia dropped its four-year program beginning in 1967. However, as the data from the university's catalogs show, the order and comprehensive scope of the subject matter did mirror that of the manuals, and courses were to be taken every semester until graduation.

The historical dimension of the manuals focused on tracing a given doctrine's heritage from authoritative sources to the present, thus simultaneously illustrating the principle of doctrinal development. Manualists described this effort as "positive theology," insofar as current Catholic belief was analyzed in terms of how it was originally "posited" in revelation and other ecclesiastically approved authorities. In positive theology, a manualist set out to demonstrate "the existence of the various truths of the faith by collecting and organizing the various statements of Sacred Scripture and the documents of Tradition."¹ The Bible, being inspired, held pride of place; within Tradition, diverse resources, such as creeds, the doctrinal judgments of popes and ecumenical councils, or the testimony of theologians, were assigned varying degrees of authority. The basic objective of positive theology was to illustrate "the conformity of the actual teaching of the Church with the biblical or patristic testimonies of the ancient Apostolic faith."² Data amassed from Scripture and Tradition then could be used as evidence to show how the Holy Spirit continues to work in the Church as she labors to bring her teaching to ever greater maturity. Ideally, authoritative citations about a particular doctrine would be arranged "in chronological order, so that the progress of revelation may be apparent."³ This method was described by the manualist Adolphe Tanquerey as "the *descending* way, that is, by showing the evidences or testimony from the first centuries up until the time at which the subject was defined by the Church."⁴ There was also "*the way of regression or of going back*, also called *the way of prescription*, that is, by going back from the definition to former ages."⁵ Regardless of the direction a manualist chose, "The intended result ... [was] an account of the harmonious development by sages down to what is

¹ Gerardus Cornelius van Noort, *Dogmatic Theology, Volume I: The True Religion*, 5th ed., ed J. P. Verhaar, trans. John J. Castelot and William R. Murphy (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1955), xxv.

² Yves M.-J. Congar, *A History of Theology*, trans. Hunter Guthrie, S.J. (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1968), 174-75.

³ Adolphe Tanquerey, *A Manual of Dogmatic Theology, Volume 1*, trans. John J. Byrnes (New York: Desclee, 1959), 245.

⁴ *Ibid.*; author's italics.

⁵ *Ibid.*; author's italics. However, the *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology* asserts that, as a rule, the manualists "practice the 'regressive' method in their argumentation and exposition." DFT, s.v. "Theologies VII: Manualistic Theology," 1104.

explicit in present-day teaching.”¹

Examining the continuity over time between authoritative sources and a doctrine’s current state of development could then be used to introduce the systematic character of the Church’s teaching, to the extent that articles of faith can be more deeply understood and are consistent with each other. The manualists preferred to call this project “scholastic,”² instead of systematic, for they did not see themselves as having constructed theological systems of their own. Nevertheless, as a response to Pope Leo XIII’s call to draw from the method of St. Thomas Aquinas,³ a manualist’s first goal was to use an approved manner of thinking for theological reflection to deepen a student’s understanding of doctrine and introduce the framework for an overall synthesis. Further exploration of what a doctrine means as currently defined could be done in one of three ways. The doctrine’s meaning could be ascertained through “the laws of criticism and of hermeneutics.”⁴ Analogies taken from the physical world then improved a student’s grasp of that meaning through illustration.⁵ A further advance in understanding might be obtained by pairing the article of faith with a naturally known proposition to produce a new theological conclusion.⁶ The second systematic goal, which was to set forth the harmony of all truth,⁷ flowed from achieving the first. Once the articles of faith were shown to be in accord with sound reasoning, associated natural realities, and philosophical doctrines,⁸ a manualist next endeavored “to arrange the various conclusions and also the truths of faith so logically that they constitute *one body of doctrine*.”⁹ Presenting

¹ DFT, s.v. “Theologies VII: Manualistic Theology,” 1104.

² Scholastic theology can be variously defined. In general, it designates that branch of theology which “seeks to understand revealed truth by applying human intelligence” (NCE, s.v. “Scholastic Theology”). However, while this encyclopedia article states that scholastic theology “combines positive and speculative theology” (*ibid.*), van Noort keeps positive theology distinct and then equates speculative with scholastic. van Noort, *The True Religion*, xxv-xxvi.

³ Tanquerey, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, 240. However, this endorsement of St. Thomas did not mean he was the only thinker to be followed; the Fathers and other important theologians were also to be studied. See *ibid.*, 246.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 239.

⁵ *Ibid.*; and van Noort, *The True Religion*, xxv-xxvi.

⁶ Tanquerey, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, 247.

⁷ “[The] major religious value of Scholastic theology resides, not in its particular speculations, but in the synthesis of all revealed truth, and of revealed truth and philosophic truth, that it is designed to fashion.” John Courtney Murray, S.J., “Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Problem of Its Finality,” *Theological Studies* 5, no. 1 (March 1944): 57.

⁸ See Tanquerey, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, 239; and van Noort, *The True Religion*, xxv-xxvi.

⁹ Tanquerey, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, 247; author’s italics; cf. van Noort, *The True Religion*, xxvi.

Catholic belief as an integrated whole not only establishes that faith and critical thought are compatible but also enables students to see “how far *Catholic truth* extends, also what is certain, what is controversial,”¹ thereby identifying conjectural points about which a Christian enjoys liberty.

However, when a doctrinal controversy had been resolved by the magisterium, thereby ending the liberty to hold alternative positions, the manualists adopted an approach that one might now call apologetic, which had good theoretical and practical results. It is to be noted that the authors of the manuals did not think that the word “apologetics,” as a technical term, applied to defending orthodox doctrines. Apologetics was instead reserved for examining the credibility of the foundations of faith (that is, Revelation, Scripture and Tradition, and true Church); these subjects were generally found in a treatise that preceded treatment of dogma. The theologians who wrote the manuals were quite comfortable calling the task of defending articles of faith “polemics.” But, whichever term was used, studying doctrinal error afforded an opportunity to augment the gains achieved by history and systematics:

[A]...course in theology [also] has...its polemical character. The fact is evident; the course practically moves from adversary to adversary, and at every turn comes to grips with error.... Obviously, the teaching Church needs to know her adversaries and all the involutions of their doctrine. She must know the adversaries of the past, first, because they are never entirely dead, but chiefly because of the precious clarification and development of the truth that they unwittingly occasioned.... Then...[she] should see how...[the] element of truth [in the heresy] finds its organic place in the Catholic synthesis, and is freed from its devitalizing element of error. Finally, by reference to the sources of revelation, ...[she] should see why the error is error, and why, if admitted, it would shatter not only a particular truth but the whole Catholic *corpus doctrinae*.²

These theoretical considerations were in turn supplemented by practical matters. No heresy occurs in a vacuum, and as the false teaching was presented in its original context, it became possible to suggest “more perfect solution[s] to the religious, social, or historical problems out of which error develop[s].”³

So, the manuals had their good points. Not only did the manualists who wrote them endeavor to present the entirety of the Catholic faith gradually throughout an undergraduate curriculum, they also honed a unique method of presentation, one “in which the positive, the scholastic, and the polemic viewpoints [that is, historical, systematic and apologetic approaches]... [were] all adopted at once.”⁴

¹ Tanqueray, *Manual of Dogmatic Theology*, 248; author’s italics.

² Murray, “Towards a Theology for the Layman,” 61; author’s italics and parentheses; brackets added.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Congar, *History of Theology*, 177.

Of course, not every manual had equal measure of these virtues. But once the manuals vanished from undergraduate classrooms, their virtues disappeared, too. Given the state of undergraduate Catholic theological education in the United States, the most glaring weaknesses of the current system might be overcome if some way could be found to retrieve the manuals' good qualities without necessarily bringing back the manuals themselves.

The thematic-elective approach now in place cannot effectively produce Catholics broadly knowledgeable in the Christian faith. The method associated with the manuals, one in which a complete survey of faith and morals is presented slowly, over four years, in units of manageable size, has been replaced with a minimum requirement, usually in the core curriculum. This requirement might be met through a theology department, or a more generic religious studies department, but the number of courses a student is obliged to take is often no greater than two. Statistically, the change from a manual-based or manual-inspired theology curriculum to one that requires a pair of three-credit courses does not reflect a drastic reduction in the amount of time spent studying theology. Again, using *Misericordia* as an example, back when the manuals were in vogue, theology classes met for one hour a week. Assuming a sixteen-week semester, the total number of hours in theology for a bachelor's degree was 128.¹ Taking two three-credit courses comes to 96 hours, which is a drop of only 25 percent. However, the count of semesters in which a student has to think continually about God in a formal, academic way drops from eight to two, a 75 percent decrease. It is not possible for a Catholic college to provide a thorough education in the faith by cramming all theological study into two classes, sometimes taken during the same semester. Aside from students who major in theology, if a major is offered, undergraduates generally consider the theology requirement to be an unnecessary nuisance that must be cleared in order to study what really interests them, a perception that seems to be reinforced in part by the nominal amount of theology needed to graduate.²

¹ Carr, "Departmental Curricula and Course History," 1-2.

² It should be noted that theology or religious studies is not the only liberal art to have a reduced presence in the undergraduate core curriculum at *Misericordia University*. During the last third of the twentieth century, the requirement in other disciplines was almost always lowered, and for the sake of illustration, the number of credits in theology needed for a bachelor of arts degree will be compared to that in philosophy, English, and history.

In theology, the undergraduate requirement went from sixteen (c. 1955-1966) to twelve (1967-1970) to nine (1970-1980) to six (1980-present). *College Misericordia Bulletin, 1967-1968* (Dallas, PA: Religious Sisters of Mercy, 1967), 32; *College Misericordia Undergraduate Catalog, 1970-1971*, 37; *College Misericordia Undergraduate Catalog, 1980-1981*, 37.

The current thematic-elective model also tends to restrict theological history to individual courses or sections within a course, and this de-emphasis is damaging in two important ways. First, a full appreciation of what Christian doctrine means can never really be obtained without a sense of how each article of faith is grounded in the sources of revelation and then develops throughout the life of the Church. Secondly, because doctrinal development usually occurs in response to events in the Church at particular historical moments, failing to understand how and when doctrine matures also deprives Catholic students of the historical knowledge necessary to understand themselves as Christians. Knowing one's history is essential for knowing one's identity. This principle applies not only to the secular dimensions of a person but also to their religious faith. Just as the ethnic, national, and other social factors that define a given individual are inherited from previous generations, so too is one's religious identity. Awareness of Christian history is vital for seeing how having been born into a Catholic family, or deciding to enter the Church as an adult, has defined or now affects one's person. And learning history can influence the choices one makes in the future. If what students know about the history of doctrine and the Church teaches them to appreciate the importance of their own Catholic heritage, they are more likely to cultivate a stronger, personal commitment to Christ and thereby a willingness to endure the difficulties that a truly Christian life entails.

With respect to the faith's systematic character, the thematic-elective model has weakened a Catholic university's ability to communicate the unity of Christian doctrine, leaves students in the dark about the scope of orthodox belief, and further alienates the laity from theology. Happily, the interconnectedness of the Church's teaching ensures that no student can leave a class on Christianity without

Philosophy (including logic) credits generally fluctuated between fourteen and twenty from 1924, the year of the Misericordia's founding, and 1966; from 1924 to 1950, the philosophy requirement was actually larger than that of theology, which ranged from the usual eight credits to a peak of twelve (1927-1928). But in 1967, students were obliged to take only nine credits in philosophy (with a temporary increase to twelve credits for the 1968-1969 academic year), and current level of six credits began in 1973. *College Misericordia Bulletin, 1967-1968* (Dallas, PA: Religious Sister of Mercy, 1967), 32; *College Misericordia Undergraduate Catalog, 1973-1974*, 26.

English credits (taking into account both composition and literature courses) in the core curriculum has ebbed, too. A brief spike of twenty-two credits (1927-1928) was followed by a low of ten credits (1939-1943), but the average settled to twelve, where it remained for several decades (1944-1981). Afterward, the core curriculum featured nine credits in English (1981-1999) and now merely six (1999-present). *College Misericordia Academic Catalog: Undergraduate Studies, 1981-1983* (Dallas, PA: Religious Sisters of Mercy, 1981), 28; *College Misericordia Academic Catalog: Undergraduate Studies, 1999-2000*, 10. Since World War II, the history requirement at Misericordia has remained steady at six credits.

some awareness that the articles of faith fit into a pattern. The problem is that such awareness is caused by fleeting exposure to theology in the core curriculum, and so there is little likelihood that this awareness will be retained. An introductory class in Christian theology, or a single elective taken that focuses on a set of specific doctrines (such as Christology, ecclesiology, the sacraments), can do nothing more than provide the highlights or a single snapshot of doctrine's unity. To offer a vision of the faith that is intellectually satisfying and credible, a theology curriculum must help a student examine Christian doctrine in a manner that is more complete, unified, and in-depth. In so doing, students would be given a better sense of exactly where and how Christians can entertain different opinions. A systematic presentation of theology has the ability to reveal the present boundaries of belief. Finally, having replaced a comprehensive and organized theology curriculum like that supported by the manuals with one that is thematic and disjointed, the impression left is that theology is really suitable only for theology majors or candidates for the priesthood.

The popular perception is that an academic department exists to prepare a student for a specific kind of job. Limiting theology course offerings to a couple of random topics confirms the opinion that theological study is only for aspiring professionals in higher education or the ministry and so really does not have any practical importance for the laity in their daily lives.

The apologetic or polemic aspect of the manual tradition probably gave the most impetus to the desire for change in the theology curriculum, but by virtually eliminating the apologetic dimension from Catholic colleges and universities, the integrity of the Church's institutions is compromised. As a reminder, the point of a manual being apologetic, in the best possible sense, was to appreciate the partial truth in differing religious points of view and understand them as imperfect responses to speculative or concrete problems. Achieving these goals demands that the Catholic worldview be presented as true. To this day in some academic circles, teaching the faith as if it were the truth breeds fear of triumphalism. The fear is that commitment to the Gospel could lead to an excessive and irrational gloating about the superiority of Catholicism, and the lack of a detached attitude toward Christianity is thought to be precisely what kept Catholic universities from becoming accepted as authentic institutions of higher education in America. However, seeking such acceptance has come at the price of a Catholic university's integrity as both Catholic and a university. First, there is nothing identifiably distinctive about a Catholic college or university if the faith is not given the opportunity to be presented as true somewhere in a classroom. Second, when there is no academic commitment to the Gospel, the very academic enterprise is undermined. A university is supposed to discover and transmit what there is to be known about the various aspects of reality, and to know any object of study

properly, one must see how it fits within the context of reality as a whole. Yet even reality has a context, which is God. Without knowledge of God's revelation in Christ, nothing in the universe, or the universe itself, can be understood correctly.¹ A faulty grasp of reality then impairs one's ability to make sound moral judgments. Furthermore, placing God in eclipse ensures that the various academic disciplines are deprived of a unifying principle; instead of working together to present a single, comprehensive vision of reality, they each go their own way, and so students are left with the suspicion that every field of study lacks the capacity to be integrated with the others.

The manuals of dogmatic theology were undoubtedly creatures of their time, but during the 120 years of their dominance in Catholic higher education, they were responsible for many of the contributions made to the Church's teaching mission, especially within the Church. Both the duration and success of the manuals' use were grounded in a method that communicated the entirety of the Christian faith by using the critical tools from history, systematics, and apologetics. When the manuals were discarded after the Second Vatican Council, their strengths and weaknesses vanished together. In order for Catholic colleges and universities to continue effective participation in the teaching mission of the Church, some way will have to be found for restoring the virtues of the manual tradition without simply reprinting the texts. Restoration of these virtues could go a long way in revitalizing the Catholicity and academic quality of the Church's educational institutions.

¹ "It is a plain fact that we do now know anything at all until we see it in its context, that is, in its place in the totality to which it belongs. Take the human eye as a convenient example. The human eye is very beautiful as all lovers have seen. But the most ardent lover might find it hard to recapture his emotion if the lady, taking his praise of her eye too literally, decided to present it to him on a plate. The eye needs to be seen in the face; its beauty, its meaning, its usefulness all come from its position in the face; and one who had seen eyes only on plates would never really have known them at all, however minutely he might have examined the eye thus unhappily removed from its living context.

"This is true of all things whatsoever. Nothing is rightly seen save in the totality to which it belongs; no part of the Universe is rightly seen save in relation to the whole. But the Universe cannot be seen as a whole unless one see God as the Source of the existence of every part of it and the center by relation to which every part is related to every other. The man who does not see God may have vast knowledge of this or that section of being, but he is like a man who should know all about the eye, never having seen a face. His knowledge is of items in a list, not of features in a face. The shape of things, the proportion of things, the totality of things are unseen by him, indeed unsuspected by him. Because he does not know them he must omit them from his vision of things and his judgment of actions. He sees nothing quite right, because he sees nothing in its context." F. J. Sheed, *Theology and Sanity* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1946), 7-8.

Catholic Higher Education in America in 2018 – and Beyond

*Gerard V. Bradley**

ABSTRACT: Much of the debate in recent decades about the essential qualities of Catholic higher education has amounted to a set-piece argument based upon what are considered to be the sharply contrasting visions set out, on the one hand, by Pope Saint John Paul II in *Ex corde ecclesiae* and, on the other hand, by a host of Catholic college administrators led by Fr. Theodore Hesburgh in the Land o' Lakes statement. In truth these two documents have more in common than is usually described. Although the Holy Father's vision is the superior one (and, in any event, some elements of it are binding Church law), a truly sound foundation for the Catholic education of young adults must transcend *both* articulations, for neither clearly identifies the three anchors of a genuine Catholic higher education, namely, the cultivation of an adult Catholic faith, preparation for the lay apostolate as described in the Vatican II Decree on the laity, and the training needed to go about discerning one's personal vocation.

I

For a full generation now the guiding light, and even the measure, of renewal for Catholic colleges and universities in America has been Pope John Paul's Apostolic Constitution on Catholic Universities. Promulgated on the Feast of the Assumption in 1990, *Ex corde ecclesiae* (*ECE*) has been the touchstone of orthodox criticism of nominally Catholic institutions. *ECE* is central to any proper self-understanding of institutions steadfast in their Catholic faith and mission. How *ECE* is doing in America might therefore tell us how American Catholic higher education is doing.

But we face a paradox. In a lecture at Villanova, Archbishop Charles Chaput said that the bishops' implementation of *ECE* to the United States "had no teeth."¹ The American bishops, on the other hand, say that things are going great.

Which is it?

The most probative piece of evidence is the 2012 U.S. Conference of

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¹ Quoted in Massimo Faggioli, "A Wake-up Call to Liberal Theologians," *The Commonweal* (May 16, 2018).

Catholic Bishops' review of how well *ECE* had been implemented. The single page of their "Final Report for the Ten Year Review of *The Application of Ex Corde Ecclesiae*" is not an executive summary. It is the *whole* report. This terse document is based upon a data-set limited to conversations between some bishops and some university administrators within their dioceses, undertaken between November 2011 and June 2012. Here are the key findings of the "Report":

[T]he prevailing tone [of these conversations] was positive and the news was good... The relationship between bishops and presidents on the local level can be characterized as positive and engaged, demonstrating progress on courtesy and cooperation in the last ten years.

[O]ur institutions of Catholic higher education have made definite progress in advancing Catholic identity. Clarity about Catholic identity among college and university leadership has fostered substantive dialogues and cultivated greater mission driven practices across the university. In acknowledging that much progress has been made, we recognize there is still work to be done.

[A] working group of bishops and presidents will be formed to continue the dialogue about strategic subjects on a national level.

The Report concluded that "the success of the ten-year review provides a clear course for continued dialogue regarding Catholic higher education and its essential contribution to the Church and society."

If *ECE* were a coffee-table book, I'd say that it is doing very well, for it has evidently instigated a lot of edifying conversations. I suspect, however, that the pope had more in mind than perpetual dialogue when he included in *ECE* several "General Norms" that were "to be applied concretely at the local and regional levels by Episcopal Conferences and other Assemblies of Catholic Hierarchy in conformity with the Code of Canon Law and complementary Church legislation."¹ Still, the bishops' eminent satisfaction gives one pause, even where so perceptive an observer as Archbishop Chaput files a dissenting opinion.

One way of unraveling the paradox would be to hypothesize that enforcement of *ECE* was *meant* to be toothless, because neither the bishops nor the colleges ever *wanted* actually to implement it. So, hypothetically, the bishops are happy to talk endlessly about implementing *ECE*. Archbishop Chaput is not.

When the Vatican released for comment in 1985 a draft schema on Catholic universities, the American colleges opposed the whole idea as unnecessary, and even dangerous. (The American responses were collected and published in *Origins*, dated April 10, 1986.) The Catholic academic establishment's resistance to episcopal (including papal) involvement goes back further than that, of course, to the Curran affair at Catholic University and the Land o' Lakes Statement (both

¹ Part 2, a. 1, §2.

1967), and to the revolt of the theologians against *Humane vitae* the next year. Resistance was manifest throughout the 1970s, as the Vatican began developing what would become *Sapientia Christiana*, the Apostolic Constitution on ecclesiastical universities. The 1983 revised Code of Canon Law (807-814) includes several regulations about the Catholic character of universities, including the requirement of the *mandatum*, an episcopal license for those teaching “theological disciplines.”

At least since 1990 the bishops have taken their cues in all academic matters from the colleges. The best that one could say about many bishops is that they might have gone along with a real application of *ECE* if the colleges would have. This episcopal docility is most graphically reflected in the adoption in November 1996 of an *ECE* “Application” so bereft of dentures that it makes the current toothless version look fearsome. The Vatican’s Congregation for Catholic Education, then headed by Pio Cardinal Laghi, sent it back to the USCCB as -- and here I translate the Vatican diplomatic rhetoric into the vernacular -- *unserious* (literally, as no more than a first draft). The bishops had adopted it by a vote of 224 to 6.

The Vatican wanted a “juridical” application; the Americans wanted a “pastoral” approach, where “pastoral” was synonymous with “toothless.” At the heart of this disagreement was the nature of theology and its practice in relation to the truths of the faith and thus to the authority of scripture and of the magisterium. This dispute ripened over the *mandatum*. Only at Cardinal Bevilacqua’s insistence was any mention of it made in the ill-fated 1996 “Application,” and then only in a footnote promising future study of the matter. Most of the sometimes heated, other times rhapsodic, rhetoric about “academic freedom” and “institutional autonomy” has always been another way of saying that academics could not stand the *mandatum*.

The Vatican insisted. The colleges resisted. The bishops were caught in the middle. They were in the in the uncomfortable position of being made by their ecclesiastical superiors to do something that the academics would not permit them to do.

In the event, the bishops genuflected to Rome and caved to the academics. The enacted “Application,” which underwent its decennial review in 2012, says that “Catholic who teach the theological disciplines are required to have the *mandatum*,” with various details about making that requirement stick. But the preparatory document sent to all the bishops prior to their conversations – also a one-pager – indicates how wobbly it went. Bishops were asked to ask the college presidents: “How has it been possible to incorporate the norms of the Application . . . within the actual situation of the institution?” Included among five categories of topics was “granting the *mandatum*.”

Not a word is said of their answers or of the mandatum itself in the ten-year report. In practice the *mandatum* “requirement” is widely ignored. In other cases, it is rendered meaningless by granting it on request, or even (I am told) sometimes giving the *mandatum* to theologians who have not asked for it. It is difficult to say more, because the chanceries will not tell you who has the *mandatum* and who does not. The whole subject is buried; *omerta* is the code.

II

The bishops’ enforcement of *ECE* has gone from feckless to farce. There are nonetheless many encouraging signs of renewal in Catholic higher education. A large handful of institutions, such as Franciscan University, Ave Maria, Benedictine, and the University of Mary, have taken to heart the task of providing a genuine Catholic education, while also offering majors that prepare young men and women to take their places as Catholic laity in the workforce and as citizens. God bless them for it. These institutions are treasures. We should pray that they be fruitful and multiply.

The sobering fact, however, is that the *total* enrollment in *all* the colleges recommended by the Cardinal Newman Society (to take just one index of committed Catholicity) is several thousand fewer than the enrollment at Saint Leo’s in Florida or at DePaul in Chicago, neither of which is likely to crack the Newman list any time soon.

So, another welcome development over the last two decades is the establishment of so many Catholic institutes, study centers, and think tanks on or near secular campuses. These foundations, of which the University of Chicago’s Lumen Christi Institute would be a prototype, have brought Catholic education to places where many Catholics are actually going to school. These foundations, along with the intellectually and spiritually ambitious Newman Centers on secular campuses (at the Universities of Illinois, Kansas, and Virginia, for example), provide some of the Catholic education that is available in more substantial measure at the faithful Catholic colleges mentioned above, and more than is available on some nominally Catholic campuses.

The more sobering fact is that the market for genuinely Catholic higher education is now quite limited. There are many reasons why. Secularization of society and the comparative affordability of public colleges are two. Another is the ambient reduction of collegiate education to a combination of pabulum and vocational preparation, a development so widespread and apparently so intractable that it has taken many Catholic colleges and universities in its maws and shows no sign of letting them go. Even in its most basic form, a genuine Catholic higher education is neither pabulum nor in itself marketable.

To say that the market for Catholic higher education (or for anything else) is limited is to say that not many people find it appealing enough to purchase. The situation is actually worse than that. Real Catholic higher education is nearly unintelligible to the teens who shop for colleges by considering curb appeal, sports teams' buzz, amenities worthy of cruise ships, and post-graduation job prospects. This consumerist approach to higher education, and the catering to it by so many colleges, constitutes a market in which the appeal of *any* genuine learning – much more the Catholic kind – is marginal.

No wonder that enrollment consultants invariably tell faithful colleges with flagging enrollments to lighten up. Downplay the whole Catholic thing. Be less religious and more “spiritual.” Make sure you have co-ed dorms and a rock-climbing wall, and that the professors prepare digests of all the readings they assign.

Even seriously Catholic parents do not think that if Jack wants no part of a real Catholic education, he should be made to get one anyway (or at least have to foot the bill for State U. himself). These parents might send their children to Notre Dame. But most parents who do so undertake this mostly for the reasons that their neighbors send their kids to Duke: to study at a *US News & World Report* elite school among their peers from Charles Murray's “Belmont,” all of whom want the valuable credential and network connections that come from doing so.

In truth, the appetite for a real Catholic education is an acquired one. It is developed by the cultivation of a tutored desire for it. It is as if one has to *be properly educated in order to want to be properly educated*, which is probably true of liberal education generally, too. Demand has to be stimulated and presented to people as a kind of moral imperative: it is just what good people do. The idea is this: Catholic higher education may not be eye-catching in the showroom. Buy it anyway, and later one will agree that it was not a luxury option but something like a necessity. A genuine Catholic education is the pearl of great price. It just so happens to be one that few today want to purchase.

It might be worth recalling here that the robust enrollments at Catholic colleges in yesteryear (often at 50 percent, and occasionally higher, of the total number of Catholics attending college or university), resulted partly from a peculiarly potent stimulus, namely, muscular episcopal salesmanship. Bishops preached in season and out of season the crucial importance of patronizing the Church's institutions. Some bishops even enforced, during the first half of the twentieth century, a disciplinary requirement that Catholics obtain pastoral permission to attend non-Catholic institutions. Bishops worried about the religious indifferentism at public schools and about outright hostility to Catholics at some private institutions. They worried, too, about mundane temptations outside Catholic auspices. Throughout those decades there was even a lively controversy

among bishops over whether Newman Centers should be encouraged, lest they make going to a non-Catholic college appealing and spiritually plausible.

At the heart of the episcopal sales pitch, though, was invariably this message: Catholic higher education fits one out for the challenges of being an adult lay man or woman in mid-twentieth-century America. Perhaps it did. But that does *not* imply that today's Catholic colleges should try to mimic their ancestor institutions, if only because the prevailing understanding of the lay life was quite different then from now. Besides, nostalgia is no recipe for effective education. Ecclesiastical discipline is not an appropriate guide to college choice. Catholic teens and their parents should choose colleges for themselves. But do they know what they should be looking for? Have pastors catechized them about the moral responsibilities incumbent upon the overwhelming majority of young Catholics as they enter adulthood, namely, the obligations to acquire an adult faith, to prepare for the lay apostolate, and to discern one's personal vocation? Have parents and teens been instructed about how the whole collegiate experience can aid, or hinder, each one's discharge of those serious moral duties? Are they prepared, in other words, conscientiously to select a college?

Almost certainly not. Instead, the party line adopted by the episcopacy, in union with the Catholic academic establishment, flattens the demand curve for real Catholic higher education. Its depressing effects fall into two categories. For those parents and high-schoolers who are interested in Catholic higher education, the party line dilutes attempts – by the Cardinal Newman Society, by the *National Catholic Register*, and by anybody else – to steer them to places that will deliver the real deal. We should not judge these parents and kids too harshly for believing what a phalanx of professors, presidents, and prelates all profess to be true: things are fine at all the Catholic colleges and universities. If you doubt it, read the bishops' ten-year review of how well *ECE* is doing on campus: it is all going great. Just pick a Catholic college that strikes your fancy.

Yes, some pastors dare speak the truth. But not many, and few are as fearless as Charles Chaput. Many bishops know the truth about the dismal state of Catholic higher education today; it is plain enough to see. These men won't parrot the party line. But they cannot change the course of the national conference, and they are reluctant to speak *so* forthrightly about the dismal state of things as to implicitly rebuke their brother bishops, and the academic establishment, for slack judgment, roseate optimism, and for straight-out duplicity. These alert pastors remain on the sidelines, muffled if not mute. Here is the party line's second sort of effect: good pastors do not tutor the faithful about the true nature and great value of a genuine Catholic higher education – and how it can promote living up to what morality and the faith require of each one of us.

The party line is a pastoral catastrophe. It makes no difference at all that

bishops and college presidents occasionally have pleasant chats. Bishops seem to think that, because they may have no direct role in governing the local Catholic college (which typically is civilly incorporated with a lay board of trustees in charge), they can do no more than occasionally “dialogue” with presidents about Catholic “identity.” Over the years many bishops have gladly reported that, because they maintained such good relationships with a Catholic college, they were able to talk a president out of some scandalous scheme, such as awarding an honorary degree to a pro-choice politician. These bishops are unwittingly boasting about being patsies in a protection racket: colleges refrain from breaking the Church’s windows in return for episcopal payouts, where the bishop ignores a host of other scandalous acts. In truth, bishops have an essential role to play in authoritatively judging whether any institution or association in the *Official Catholic Directory* belongs there. In other words, the bishop is solely in charge of authoritatively judging whether a college in his diocese is truly Catholic.

This duty is made most explicit, and certainly obligatory, by Canon 808: “Even if it is in fact Catholic no university is to bear the title or name of Catholic university without the consent of competent ecclesiastical authority.” This is not the charge of a consultant. Nor is it that of an avuncular senior advisor. It is the role of a spiritual governor. And there is no doubt whatsoever that civil law courts in this country would enforce a bishop’s decision to delete an institution from the *Catholic Directory*, and his decree that thereafter it never identify itself as “Catholic.”

Bishops must, in addition to so governing colleges, go over the colleges’ heads to the people. Pastors must jumpstart demand for a genuine Catholic higher education by teaching all those in their spiritual care what college is for and what a Catholic college should be doing. Bishops must also go over the colleges’ heads to the American Catholic donor class. For the second main reason why Catholic colleges decades ago were filled with the faithful is that the price tag was right, even for working-class families. Now, not so much. The reasons why a Catholic higher education used to be so affordable – crushing teaching loads for barely paid religious faculty and underpaid lay professors, as well as very modest accommodations and amenities – are no longer available. Because the vast majority of Catholic colleges and universities are now tuition-driven, they are always teetering between red and black at the end of the fiscal year. Philanthropy is the solution.

America’s Catholics need to make Catholic higher education affordable again. Fortunately, they can. The American Catholic community is unquestionably capable of making a real Catholic collegiate education affordable for all those who want one. (Notre Dame’s \$10 billion endowment alone proves the point.) Redirecting the contributions of vain baby-boomer donors, from underwriting an

unnecessary “event space” or boutique gym at a rich university to supporting fellowships at a struggling college, will be hard pastoral work. It is certainly true that some or even many gifts currently being made to higher ed should be directed elsewhere, to meet more pressing material and even spiritual needs of the flock. Nevertheless, those who are called to give to higher education ought to be giving much more judiciously than they are.

The sooner America’s bishops begin catechizing the rich about their stewardship obligations, the better. The anticipated result would resemble the Church’s commitment today to making elementary and secondary education widely available, and affordable. And this redevelopment project must include ample resources for the off-campus institutes and Newman Centers at non-Catholic institutions. For many of America’s Catholic will, and should, conscientiously select them: the programs of study there, comparative affordability, and proximity to home might all (or each) make the choice the right one for many Catholic teens. Consider, for example, that there is no Catholic college or university in several states, including Arizona and South Carolina. Launching such an ambitious project calls for a compelling description of Catholic higher education and the moral necessity of patronizing and underwriting it. *ECE* does not supply it.

III

So far we have barely scratched the surface of the question: what is the state of Catholic higher education in America in 2018? After all, Catholic higher education is much more than those 220 or so colleges and universities listed in the *Official Catholic Directory*. Only a tiny fraction of the Catholics in post-secondary schools are enrolled in them. Somewhere between 90 and 95 percent are enrolled elsewhere, in public and non-Catholic private institutions. Add in that only half of those enrolled in Catholic colleges and universities self-identify as Catholic (a percentage in sharp decline over the last few decades, and almost certain to shrink further), and it is even clearer that any consideration of how Catholic higher education is doing, and where it should go, must venture well beyond the Kenedy Directory.

And beyond *ECE*. There Pope John Paul II was almost exclusively concerned with Catholic institutions and so with a tiny percentage of Catholics seeking higher education. *ECE* does not say much about the great majority of Catholic institutions, either. It is principally about the modern Catholic research university. But those institutions in particular are not listening to the Holy Father. With the partial exception of the bishops’ own university, the Catholic University of America, is there a research university that is living up to its Catholic mission? No

other is listed in the Newman Guide.

ECE is principally about the dynamic, creative intellectual life of university faculty, considered individually and as a community of scholars. It is also about the constructive if not vital role that community, and the university as a whole, should play in its host society and culture. In *ECE* the pope described the Catholic university as “a community of scholars representing various branches of human knowledge and an academic institution where Catholicism is vitally present and operative,”¹ here citing the International Federation of Catholic Universities’ 1972 document “The Catholic University in the Modern World.” (IFCU was a partnership between the Vatican department of education and Catholic colleges throughout the world.) The pope wrote in *ECE* that the mission of the university is the “continuous quest for truth through its research, and the preservation and communication of knowledge for the good of society. A Catholic university participates in this mission with its own specific characteristics and purposes.”² *ECE* also identified four characteristics that every Catholic university must possess, and Pope John Paul II took this *verbatim* from the 1972 IFCU document. Thus, the American bishops’ 1993 starting point in thinking about implementing *ECE*, as they found it in *ECE*: “According to *Ex corde ecclesiae*, ‘the objective of a Catholic university is to assure in an institutional manner a Christian presence in a university world confronting the great problems of society and culture.’”³

These passages and the many like them in *ECE* locate it firmly within a stream of reflections instigated by Vatican II. It is the document foreshadowed in the Council’s treatment of education, *Gravissimum educationis* (*GE*), but not delivered until 1990. *GE* was almost entirely about elementary and secondary education, about pupils, schools, and parents. Only a few paragraphs of it address higher education. These brief passages in *GE* are best summarized in these excerpts:

The Church is concerned also with...colleges and universities. In those schools dependent on her she intends that by their very constitution individual subjects be pursued according to their own principles, method, and liberty of scientific inquiry, in such a way that an ever deeper understanding in these fields may be obtained and that, as questions that are new and current are raised and investigations carefully made according to the example of the doctors of the Church and especially of St. Thomas Aquinas, there may be a deeper realization of the harmony of faith and science. Thus there is accomplished a public, enduring and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture.⁴

¹ No. 14.

² No. 30.

³ No. 13.

⁴ No. 10.

Here in *GE* is *ECE in utero*. Nonetheless, it might actually be most fruitful to understand *ECE* as an attempt to implement *Gaudium et spes* (*GS*), the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, by and through the activities of the Catholic university. It is no small irony that the document lately taken to be the alter ego of *ECE* – the Hesburgh-orchestrated Land o’ Lakes Statement – is squarely within the same stream of reflections. No doubt its authors thought of their work as applying *GS* to their own institutions. Commemorating in 2017 the fiftieth anniversary of that statement, Notre Dame president Fr. John Jenkins wrote in *America* magazine that *ECE* “can be viewed as the result of the dialog begun by the Lakes statement, echoing some of its themes, while providing a corrective to others.”¹

How could this be? In the United States these two visions of the contemporary Catholic university – Land o’ Lakes and *ECE* – have been sharply opposed, as two battle flags under which antagonistic visions of Catholic higher education have warred for hearts and minds.

Fr. Jenkins is right. These statements have much more in common than not. Each is mainly concerned with the social role of the Catholic scholar and of Catholic research institutions, as an intellectual force among others, and as a catalyst for social change. They could both be neatly folded into the 1972 treatment of “The Catholic University in the Modern World,” with only the limited but important canonical commitments of *ECE* appended.

It is telling that in the walk-up to the “Application” of *ECE* to the United States, there was agreement across the aisle between colleges and prelates that *ECE* was a terrific document – until the pope got to the part about juridical implementation, and there mainly Canon 812. To those operating this train of thought, the *mandatum* would naturally become, as it did for the academic establishment as well as the bishops, the tail wagging the dog. In the great work of conversing with the wider intellectual world and of trying to save the rest of it, the ecclesiastical credentialing of theologians, if indeed “theology” should continue to be thought of in connection with the Church at all, would be a footnote, if not an impediment to achieving those large aims.

It is therefore no mystery why the Americans not only opposed the *mandatum* all along, but also considered it entirely negotiable, even after Rome insisted on it. It is also a bit mysterious why anyone, including the pope, would make the *mandatum* requirement somehow indispensable to the Catholic university doing the grand extramural work set before it in *ECE*. After all, theology is not a required course at many Catholic colleges, and *ECE* does not plainly require that

¹ “The Document That Changed Catholic Education Forever,” *America* (July 11, 2017).

all students be instructed in it. It says only that “Courses in Catholic doctrine are to be *made available* to all students” (my emphasis).¹

At this point in time, at least, it rather seems that *ECE*’s rich vision of the Catholic research university and its place in society is practically incompatible with providing a true Catholic education to its undergraduates. The sources of incompatibility are many. The commitment of faculty members to their own scholarly work and reputations indenture them to a secular guild with little or no sympathy for things Catholic. Commitments to graduate students drain time from care for undergraduates. Departments competing for the best prospective graduate students – themselves aspiring apprentices in the guild – must double-down on their secular prestige. Prospective faculty hires, ideally (these days) from secular schools such as Harvard or Yale, are not going to warm to a Catholic university that takes chastity, for example, as it should.

There is nothing necessarily incompatible about being both a profoundly serious Catholic intellectual and being a fully engaged, respected participant in the wide scholarly conversation about, say, worthwhile literature or the origins of the universe or government family policy or the history of religion in America or same-sex “marriage.” But anyone who has lately tried to unite these aspirations will tell you that it is a steep uphill climb, with trade-offs all along the way. And, then, improbable success, even after hiding one’s lamp under a bushel.

The understanding of a Catholic university throughout all these documents is heavily mortgaged to the prevailing wider understanding of the modern research university. They all understand the Catholic university as a particular inflection of the modern research university, which makes such an institution Catholic, as species within the genus. The Catholic university is enjoined to stay in tune with, and to be a fully respected member of, the contemporary academic scene. It is also enjoined to help solve the political and cultural problems of its host society. This latter injunction would immerse the Catholic university in myriad shifting contingencies and a now-bitter partisan rancor. Whatever might have been the wisdom thirty or forty (or fifty) years ago of a clarion call to heed these two external forces, now it is plainly an injunction to immerse the university’s Catholic character in acids of radical secularism and even of irrationality. Today, a nearly militant independence of purpose, if not of mind, has to be an essential feature of a genuinely Catholic college or university.

IV

Vatican II *should* have transformed Catholic higher education. It did. But its

¹ Part 2, a. 4, §5.

legacy in fact was compromise, dissent, and secularization. The Council *should* have occasioned documents about colleges with a palpable sense of hopeful renewal. In the event we got Land o' Lakes. The Council Fathers' work *should* have been consummated by a papal intervention that deepened and concretized the new foundations for Catholic higher education that they articulated. Instead we got an inadequate, and too-long delayed, papal response in *ECE*.

The basic goal of a distinctly Catholic collegiate education is indicated in *GE*: “[A] public, enduring and pervasive influence of the Christian mind in the furtherance of culture and the *students of these institutions are molded into men truly outstanding in their training, ready to undertake weighty responsibilities in society and witness to the faith in the world*” (emphasis added).¹ Yes, in the lay apostolate lies the central aim of Catholic higher education. But how to develop and make specific that broad aspiration? In *ECE* the Holy Father spoke of the presence of so many laity in the university as a “*sign of hope and as a confirmation of the irreplaceable lay vocation in the Church and in the world.*”² Indeed. But what are the distinctive elements of education for the lay apostolate? These distinctive elements have to *go beyond* (that is: include but surpass or transcend) technical mastery of a discipline-cum-personal piety; otherwise, it would suffice for a Catholic education to plant a good chapel near a non-Catholic campus. Life can be good for a serious Catholic student at State U., which teaches engineering well and has an excellent parish next door. But a good spiritual life plus a good engineering degree does not equal a Catholic education. Much less does a degree from a nominally Catholic college.

The distinctively Catholic elements of a higher education cannot be entirely supplied by a curricular module or summer seminar, as if the Catholic components were affixed to what would otherwise be the schooling on offer at State U. These distinctives are well promoted by discrete projects, such as courses, seminars, lectures, service opportunities, extracurricular activities: all so many “Catholic” moments in the course of an undergraduate’s collegiate career. But the distinctively Catholic elements are not reducible to such moments. They surpass all particulars and must suffuse the entire enterprise. It is important to note that an energetic Newman Center or nearby institute such as Lumen Christi can supply much of the distinctive education, if students are willing to commit to more than attending the occasional lecture. Offering the occasional lecture or discussion session is useful in itself. But it is better as an introduction – and invitation – to take up the serious business of educating oneself for the lay apostolate. Catholic moments, on or off campus, will not themselves do.

¹ No. 10.

² No. 25.

It would not be wrong to say that inculcating a “Catholic worldview” is that distinctive purpose. But that project is vague and incomplete. Inculcating a Catholic worldview is in any event *included* within the interlocking and reinforcing purposes of a distinctly Catholic higher education. That distinctive purpose is not coming to know the Catholic intellectual tradition, much less is it a deep dive into particular parts of that tradition, such as Thomism or early Church history. Studying the Catholic intellectual tradition consists mainly in studying writers: the Fathers, or Bonaventure, or de Lubac. Scholars make careers out of studying Lonergan or John Courtney Murray. Some of those scholars are not Catholic and may not be believers at all. Requiring students to study, say, Aquinas or von Balthasar is in itself fine. But to do so without very critically evaluating whether, for example, von Balthasar is *right* about heaven, or Aquinas *right* about the death penalty, is not enough.

It is better to identify the core of a distinctively Catholic education as the *faith*, or as *the truths of the faith*. Pope John Paul wrote in *ECE* that the Catholic university’s “privileged task” is to “unite existentially by intellectual effort two orders of reality” often thought to be opposed, namely, “the search for truth and the certainty of already knowing the fount of truth.”¹ What the Holy Father had precisely in mind is unclear. But whatever it exactly is, it is subsumed within, or incidentally accomplished by, dedication to that core. The truths of the faith include those accessible to unaided reason, some of which are confirmed (explicitly or implicitly) by revelation, as well as truths accessible only by faith, through a faith that is itself *reasonable* to hold, truths that can only be understood and developed by use of our reason.

The Second Vatican Council founded the renewal of Catholic higher education upon a triple refraction of this core. That tripod supporting (or specifying) its core in truth was: the extraordinary development in the Church’s understanding of adult Catholic faith in *Dignitatis humanae*, as a free decision to adhere to the truth, a whole turning of the person that is uniquely and deeply personal; the breathtaking teaching on the lay apostolate in *Apostolicam actuositatem* (*AA*); and the rediscovery of the concept of *personal vocation*, which had lain buried for centuries under the sediment of clericalism.

The first leg of the tripod so deepened and universalized the gospel truth about *metanoia* that it was tantamount to a development of doctrine. The second was a doctrinal innovation. The third revived a theological corpse. Each was, therefore and in its own way, startlingly *new*. Together they constituted a transformative impetus for Catholic higher education, for they converge upon that span of life when the teen leaves (if not literally, then practically) home and

¹ No. 1.

prepares to take up the responsibilities of an adult member of the lay faithful. Every Catholic, college-bound or not, is obliged to make this transition. Every Catholic needs substantial assistance making it, especially because of the intellectual shoals that a complex secularized culture puts in the way to mature faith, and most especially where the young Catholic is going to college. Then it is essential that he or she be accompanied on that journey by a faith-filled Catholic higher education.

Let me say a little more about each leg of the tripod of renewal. The Council's Declaration on Religious Freedom (*DH*) is justly acclaimed for its development of doctrine on the right of non-Catholics to the public manifestation of their religions, even in a polity predominantly populated by Catholics. This welcome change is probably the only development of doctrine in the document, strictly speaking. But *DH* is powered throughout by its fresh, keen recognition that (as the Council Fathers phrased it) "[t]he truth cannot impose itself except by virtue of its own truth, as it makes its entrance into the mind at once quietly and with power."¹ The Fathers added that it is "in accordance with their dignity as persons – that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility – that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth."² This pairing of existential freedom with abiding moral duty is the challenge of coming to a faith-of-one's-own, both mine and true, indeed, *mine-because-true*.

This is *adult* faith. It is adult not only because it is one's own (for even children have a genuinely personal faith), but because it is acquired and held by dint of personal conviction of its truth, and not because of habit, conformity to family ways, social advantage, or parental authority. It is also a more critical and sophisticated and integral grasp of the faith than is possible during childhood. It is an adult *faith* in two senses: that of holding certain propositions as true by dint of faith, as well as enjoyment of that intimate relationship with the Master that we so often call "faith."

The journey to adult faith is obviously personal, individual, and interior. An education fitted to the challenge is nonetheless essential, in or out of a collegiate setting. A college or university education in America today is certain to throw up numerous obstacles, including the student's first serious encounter with cultural relativism, evolution, a suitably critical approach to reading scripture, the problem of evil, and the apparent – or at least reported – sufficiency of a personal

¹ No. 1.

² No. 2.

“spirituality” as an alternative to religion.

In the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity (*AA*) the Council Fathers provided a theological account faithful to revelation but fresh in its departure from centuries of clericalism, which made sense of what had been practically developing within the Church for several decades, namely, the increased role of the laity in social and political affairs consciously as Catholics. But even in its most celebrated moments, such as Pius XI’s christening of Catholic Action in the 1920s, activist laity invariably were described as participating in the apostolate of the hierarchy, and so operating in the temporal sphere at the direction of their pastors. Lay persons were soldiers, commanded by clerical generals. And up to the Council there was too much truth to the layman’s lament that his job in the Church was to “pay, pray, and obey.”

Before the Council a few creative theologians (in America, at least) developed a theological understanding of lay action that anticipated *AA*. John Courtney Murray published two fine scholarly articles in *Theological Studies* in 1944 on the lay vocation.¹ He also favorably reviewed in those pages *The Layman’s Call*, an amazingly prescient 1942 book by the Rev. William R. O’Connor. In that work O’Connor emphasized that all members of Christ’s body – lay as well as priestly and religious – are called by God to a particular life’s work. Each and every Christian is graced by God with a vocation: “no one is without a definite call of some kind from the Lord.”² Lay persons are called to engage in an apostolate that contributes to the building up of the Kingdom of God and to strive for the perfection appropriate to their state in life. Written two decades before the Council’s opening session, one might think that *The Layman’s Call* would have contributed to a flourishing conversation in American Catholic thought on the importance of the lay apostolate. Yet O’Connor’s contribution to that discussion seems not to have been much noticed, let alone appreciated.

Yves Congar notably contributed to the development of doctrine about the laity, as did Pius XII, in several speeches during the 1950s. Even so, these words from *AA* in 1965 were unprecedented, and challenging: “The laity are called by God to exercise their apostolate in the world like leaven with the ardor of the spirit of Christ.” In this they “share in the priestly, prophetic, and royal office” of the Master. These shares are not derived from participation in the apostolate of the hierarchy. Rather, the laity “have their own share in the mission of the whole

¹ “Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Problem of Its Finality,” *Theological Studies* 5 (1944): 43, and “Towards a Theology for the Layman: The Pedagogical Problem,” *Theological Studies* 5 (1944): 340.

² William R. O’Connor, *The Layman’s Call* (New York: P. J. Kenedy & Sons, 1942), 18.

people of God in the Church and in the world.” This is their “right and duty,”¹ rooted in their union with Christ the head.

This task is a form of faith-filled service. Performing it is possible only with the grace of the sacraments. A fervent prayer life is essential. But one more thing (at least) is needed: understanding, or knowledge. To be sure, a Catholic need not receive the sort of advanced higher education that a bachelor’s degree offers in order to acquire this knowledge and thus this adult faith; were that true, most of the Church’s saints would not pass muster, notwithstanding that some (the Little Flower among them) championed their faith as a childlike faith. But the understanding or knowledge typically constitutive of the *adult* faith of which I am speaking nevertheless has to be born out of critical reflection on the reasonableness of faith and, to some extent, has to be able to give a reason for one’s faith in response to objections, as St. Peter reminded his flock (1 Pt 3:15). In *this* sense, what is needed to perform this form of faith-filled service is precisely what a genuinely Catholic education can well or even paradigmatically provide: a full-orbed Catholic worldview, wherein the connections and pathways between the Catholic faith and the various autonomous spheres of modern life (science, self, sex, economy, politics, and use of force) are illumined. Indeed, the single concept of being “leaven” within the temporal order reveals that each member of the laity is to integrate the gospel with all his undertakings: scholarly, professional, social, political, economic, familial. Doing so requires learning, to be sure. But it depends too upon models of such integration. For college students, these models would have to include their professors, not only in theology, but also and more importantly, in the disciplines related to temporal affairs – business, nursing, psychology, science, teaching, and various pre-professional studies.

Finally, Vatican II rediscovered and revived the idea of personal vocation, what Cardinal Newman talked about beautifully in words quoted by Pope Benedict in 2010 during Newman’s beatification ceremonies: “God has created *me* to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to *me* which he has not committed to another. I have my mission.”²

“My mission” is a distinct and unrepeatable assignment. Pope John Paul II once described (in his book *Love and Responsibility*) it this way: “‘What is *my* vocation’ means in what direction should *my* personality develop, considering what *I* have in me, what *I* have to offer, and what others – other people and God – expect of *me*” (my emphasis).³ In *Gaudium et spes* the Council

¹ No. 2.

² Homily of September 19, 2010, quoting from Newman’s *Meditations and Devotions*, 301–02, available at: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/meditations/meditations9.html>.

³ Karol Wojtyła, *Love & Responsibility* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1981), 257.

Fathers taught that Jesus “assures us that...the way of love is open to all...[and that] this love is not something reserved for important matters but must be exercised above all in the ordinary circumstances of daily life.”¹

These are all unmistakable references to an individualized way of following Jesus, in season and out of season, in life’s choices large and small. John Paul II preached regularly throughout his papacy – perhaps most notably in his 1988 Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles laici* – that each and every one of us is called to a unique life of service for the sake of the Gospel. He said, for example, on the Fortieth World Day of Prayer for Vocations:

how can one not read in the story of the “servant Jesus” the story of every vocation: the story that the Creator has planned for every human being, the story that inevitably passes through the call to serve and culminates in the discovery of the new name, designed by God for each individual? In these “names,” people can grasp their own identity, directing themselves to that self-fulfillment which makes them free and happy.²

Most of us will come to know what Jesus wants us to do more subtly, through a process of methodical discernment. John Paul II pointed to what might be called the raw data of discernment: one’s gifts, one’s opportunities, one’s training, and, most importantly, the needs of others within the circle within reach, so that one may act in a helpful way.

These three distinctive purposes of Catholic higher education – the Vatican II tripod – are so tightly related that the meaning of each to some extent bleeds into the others. For example: an adult faith includes seeing to it about personal vocation and how to live as lay man or woman in the real world. Who could discern one’s personal vocation without an adult faith? Who could spend a lifetime endeavoring to be leaven in an increasingly godless wider world without the resources provided by an adult faith, and the serenity that is a by-product of conscientious discernment? The synergy is powerful, as each of the three purposes depends upon deepening sense of all three.

V

What might an operational core Catholic higher education look like? How might the truths of the faith be made foundational to a program that promotes the undergraduate’s transition to adult faith, preparation for the lay apostolate, and discernment of his or her personal vocation?

My answer is to make select documents of Vatican II a required core. To it

¹ No. 38.

² Message of May 11, 2003, no. 3, available at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/vocations/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20021118_xl-voc-2003.html.

Catholic colleges could add additional core requirements, up to the limit case where almost the whole four-year program would be a required liberal arts curriculum. Other Catholic colleges could add a modest additional core, and then make ample opportunity for practical majors (nursing, business, physical therapy, education, or architecture), as well as majors in the humanities and social and natural sciences. There is nothing like a one-size-fits-all to Catholic higher education in the round. But something like what is sketched below is an invariable core of any genuine Catholic higher education. Catholic institutes and Newman Centers should, in addition to their other activities, try to deliver as much as possible of it, too.

The core would consist of eight three-credit courses, one each semester over four years. The entire reading list for each of the first six semesters would be one or two of the Council documents, with very limited additional assignments as needed for explanation and illustration – and *not* for interpretation or “dialogue.” The point is to let the faith be heard by letting the Council speak. Critical discussion of these documents is of course the objective. The many legitimate questions about translation from the original Latin, historical derivation of leading themes and propositions, as well as how best to give coherent content to vague parts and *lacunae* in them, should be taken up by the teacher and discussion of them led by him or her. A seminar-sized group of students with ample opportunity for discussion and debate is, too, essential.

The precise order in which the documents should be taken up is debatable. It would seem best to begin, however, with *Dei verbum*, the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, so that students can learn immediately that there is *truth* in and about religion, that God has chosen to reveal himself to humankind in a way that has been reliably transmitted from the apostles to us, and that the Church safeguards and expounds that truth. These realities are foundational to further study. The sooner students learn how to read scripture in a properly critical way, the better.

The second and third semesters would best be devoted to exploring, in one, the nature of the Church and thus *Lumen gentium* and, in the other, *DH* along with *Nostra aetate*, the Declaration on the Relation of the Church with Non-Christian Religions. The priority of *LG* is probably self-evident. The importance of the other two documents is to engage students sooner rather than later in exploring the relationships among natural religion, positive or revealed religion, human freedom, and respect for the conscientious but mistaken religious beliefs of other people. The fourth semester almost certainly then should be devoted to *Sacrosanctum concilium*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy. The Mass is the source and summit of the Christian life. Enough said.

Junior year is the time to take up, first, *GS* and then *AA*. The first situates the

student within the Church as it conceptualizes its relationship to the modern world. The latter of course brings that engagement home to the individual student, as he or she begins to consider concretely now, after nearly three years of college, how to be leaven in the temporal order. The seventh semester should be devoted to a suitably critical study of the leading magisterial documents of what is conventionally called Catholic social thought.

The final semester is the time to challenge students to develop their own resolve about how, and how faithfully, they will witness to the faith after they go forth. If I were teaching this capstone course right now, the first quarter of the semester would be given over to *sitz im leben*; we would read Archbishop Chaput's *Strangers in a Strange Land: Living the Catholic Faith in a Post-Christian World* and Russell Shaw's *American Church: The Rise, Meteoric Fall, and Uncertain Future of Catholicism in America*. Then we would take up biographical essays by articulate living saints in the pro-life, Catholic Worker, and peace movements. The third quarter would be occupied with one book: Shaw and Germain Grisez's *Personal Vocation: God Calls Everyone by Name*, as well as with Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles laici*. The seminar would conclude with consideration of the last things. Here we would read Ralph Martin's *Will Many Be Saved? What Vatican II Actually Teaches and Its Implications for the New Evangelization*. Students on the eve of commencement might best be required to consider lastly two sections (38-39) of *Gaudium et spes* that pastors and theologians (Grisez notably excepted) have almost entirely ignored since the Council:

Therefore, while we are warned that it profits a man nothing if he gain the whole world and lose himself, the expectation of a new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age. Hence, while earthly progress must be carefully distinguished from the growth of Christ's kingdom, to the extent that the former can contribute to the better ordering of human society, it is of vital concern to the Kingdom of God.

For after we have obeyed the Lord, and in His Spirit nurtured on earth the values of human dignity, brotherhood and freedom, and indeed all the good fruits of our nature and enterprise, we will find them again, but freed of stain, burnished and transfigured, when Christ hands over to the Father: "a kingdom eternal and universal, a kingdom of truth and life, of holiness and grace, of justice, love and peace." On this earth that Kingdom is already present in mystery. When the Lord returns it will be brought into full flower.

Ideally, a Catholic college would require all faculty to rotate in and out of teaching these classes, on the view that if these are the things that every student at a Catholic college should be immersed in, so too every faculty member. A

transitional arrangement might be to have the best and most qualified teachers teach these seminars, with other professors encouraged to sit in, and to have perhaps weekly evening receptions where students and faculty are very strongly encouraged to come and discuss the week's readings. Doing so would establish a community of learning and of mutual aid in exploring life's challenges, one big campus conversation about living the faith in contemporary society.

It is probably easy to see by now that *ECE*'s stated norm that Catholics constitute at least a bare majority of faculty at a Catholic college is considerably short of the mark. No doubt a faith-filled theology faculty is essential to the educational project at hand as well. The *mandatum* would be a sign of its presence. But it is easy to see too that having faithful Catholic throughout the faculty, in all of the disciplines, is possibly even more important to preparing Catholics to be gospel leaven in the temporal order.

VI

Renewal of Catholic higher education is not a just noble ideal or a desirable aspiration. It is an important obligation. At its core is the perennial faith. Animating its instantiation in institutions – Catholic colleges and universities; Catholic institutes and Newman Centers – are the moral duties of everyone. These duties include those of the young to fit themselves for the life of active adult lay men and women. They include the obligations of everyone else, from bishops to donors to parents to educators on down, to make readily available a real Catholic education to all who want one.

The New Romanists: *America's* Changing Perspective on Papal Authority

*John F. Quinn**

ABSTRACT: Last April, when a group of theologians meeting in Rome urged that *Amoris laetitia* be interpreted in the light of tradition, *America's* editors referred to the gathering as a “dissenters’ conference.” For *America*, this language marks a significant shift. For decades, the magazine had given sympathetic coverage to dissenting theologians and movements in the Church. *America's* current embrace of all things Roman is reminiscent of its defense of Pope John XXIII in the early 1960s. When *National Review* criticized the pope’s encyclical *Mater et magistra* for failing to denounce communism, *America's* editors declared the column to be “slanderous” and said that the magazine’s editor, William F. Buckley, should have treated the encyclical with “filial respect.” *America* would continue to defend the papacy against all critics until the late 1960s. After Pope Paul VI issued *Humanae vitae* in 1968, however, *America* started to distance itself from Rome and often sided with dissenting theologians like Charles Curran and Richard McCormick, S.J. *America* would remain wary of Rome until 2013, when Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, a progressive-minded Jesuit, was elected to the See of Peter.

Last April, when a group of lay theologians meeting in Rome urged that Pope Francis’s *Amoris laetitia* be interpreted in the light of tradition, *America's* Rome editor dubbed the gathering a “dissenters’ conference.”¹ Likewise, six months later, when Fr. Thomas Weinandy, O.F.M. Cap., the doctrinal consultant for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, criticized the pope’s pronouncements and style of governance, Fr. James Martin of *America* noted that Weinandy must now be numbered among the dissenters.² For *America*, this sort of language marks a significant shift as the magazine had an uneasy relationship with Rome for a number of years and had often sided with dissenters. *America's* current embrace of Rome is reminiscent of its defense of Pope John XXIII in 1961 against the

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¹ Gerard O’Connell, “Dissenters’ Conference on ‘Amoris Laetitia’ Hears Call for an Answer to the Dubia,” *America* (April 22, 2017).

² James Martin, S.J., “Dissent, Now and Then: Thomas Weinandy and the Meaning of Jesuit Discernment,” *America* (November 3, 2017).

criticisms leveled at him by William F. Buckley and the other editors of *National Review*. By the late 1960s, *America* was moving away from Rome, especially after Paul VI's promulgation of *Humanae vitae*. In the years following, *America* had mixed reactions to Popes John Paul II and Benedict XVI, sometimes applauding their initiatives and sometimes criticizing them. However, with the election of a progressive Argentine Jesuit, Cardinal Jorge Bergoglio, to the See of Peter, *America's* editors have become ardent ultramontanes once more.

America's Early Years

America was founded in 1909 by Fr. John Wynne, an energetic and enterprising New York Jesuit, who was already editor of the *Catholic Encyclopedia* project and had served as editor of a devotional magazine, *The Messenger of the Sacred Heart*. Wynne believed that the Jesuits needed a weekly magazine that would address current affairs along with arts and culture. He wanted the articles to be brief and readable. Concerned with the widespread anti-Catholicism of the time, Wynne wanted his new magazine to show that Catholics were thoughtful, intelligent contributors to American life.

In its first years, *America* paid considerable attention to foreign affairs, lamenting the outbreak of World War I in 1914 and then taking what some critics thought was a pro-German line during the war. At the war's end, the editors focused on the Versailles Treaty negotiations, emphasizing Ireland's right to self-determination.¹

On domestic matters, *America* championed unions and sympathized with Franklin Roosevelt's efforts to bring the nation out of the Depression. Culturally conservative, the magazine worried about the increasing divorce rates and condemned birth control in no uncertain terms. Strong opponents of communism, *America's* editors came out clearly for Franco during the Spanish Civil War. On this issue, *America* split with the lay Catholic journal *Commonweal*, whose editors maintained a neutral stance throughout the conflict.²

At the start of the Second World War, *America* took an isolationist stance, criticizing Roosevelt's imposition of the draft. After the Pearl Harbor attack, however, *America* strongly supported the war effort. With the war's end, *America* adopted a Cold War posture, warning its readers of the threat posed by the Soviets. In the 1950s, the magazine remained anti-Communist, but distanced itself from Sen. Joseph McCarthy.³

¹ Charles R. Morris, "The First 50 Years," *America* (April 13, 2009), 39.

² Rodger Van Allen, *The Commonweal and American Catholicism: The Magazine, the Movement, the Meaning* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974), 60-66; Morris, "The First 50 Years," 41.

³ The criticisms of McCarthy by the editor, Fr. Robert Hartnett, antagonized some of

On domestic policy, the historian Charles Morris notes that America followed a “left-liberal” line.¹ Its editors promoted civil rights with vigor and predicted a “long, hard” struggle in the South. They also worried about the lack of affordable housing and continued to support unions.²

Battling Buckley

In the spring of 1961, Pope John XXIII issued *Mater et magistra* to mark the seventieth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII’s groundbreaking pronouncement on Catholic social teaching, *Rerum novarum*. In *Mater et magistra*, the pope defended labor unions and declared that workers should be granted a share in the governance of companies and in their profits. The pope also called on wealthier nations to provide generous aid to the newly independent states of the Third World. William F. Buckley and his associates at *National Review* were deeply disappointed with this pronouncement. With Cold War tensions at increasingly high levels, the pope did not make any reference to the communist threat to the West. In a brief editorial, Buckley wrote dismissively of the letter. He remarked, “[I]t must surely strike many as a venture in triviality coming at this particular time in history. The most obtrusive social phenomena of the moment are surely the continuing and demonic successes of the Communists, of which there is scant mention.”³ The following week, he quipped that conservatives were now saying, “Mater Sí, Magistra No,” a takeoff on Castro’s line, “Cuba Sí, Yanqui No.”⁴

Buckley’s flippant comments enraged the editors of *America* and prompted an immediate response. In an editorial on Buckley, *America*’s editors sized him up, noting that he was

no ordinary person. It takes an appalling amount of self-assurance for a Catholic writer to brush off an encyclical of John XXIII as though it had been written by John Cogley [an editor of *Commonweal*]. Mr. Buckley was up to the challenge. It takes a daring young man to characterize a papal document as “a venture in triviality.”⁵

In a separate editorial in the same issue, the editors adopted a sterner tone.

his fellow Jesuits and eventually led to his removal. See Raymond A. Schroth, S.J., *The American Jesuits: A History* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 165-69, 274; Peter McDonough, *Men Astutely Trained: A History of the Jesuits in the American Century* (New York: Free Press, 1992), 260.

¹ McDonough, *Men Astutely Trained*, 257-60.

² Morris, “The First 50 Years,” 43.

³ *National Review* (July 29, 1961).

⁴ *National Review* (August 5, 1961). Garry Wills, who was then working at *National Review*, came up with the line. See Patrick Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals and Conservative Politics in America, 1950-1985* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1993), 94.

⁵ “William F. Buckley, Jr.” *America* (August 19, 1961).

Buckley's remarks were an "insult to fellow Catholics. We consider the statement slanderous." Buckley should have received *Mater et magistra* with "filial respect."¹

Buckley then replied to *America*, but the editor-in-chief, Fr. Thurston Davis, refused to print it. In response Buckley then published his letter to Davis in the pages of the *National Review*. Buckley tried to persuade Davis that his quip about "Mater Sí, Magistra No" was a "flippancy, pure and simple." And as for his remarks about the content of the encyclical, he reminded Davis that it "was a very public document...and demanded attention as a political document."² Davis was not satisfied. He would have no more communication with Buckley and would accept no further advertisements from *National Review*.³ Even so, the skirmishing continued for weeks following. One *National Review* editor, Frank Meyer, wrote to *America* asking why a secular publication like *National Review* could not offer critical commentary on a papal encyclical.⁴ Meyer's letter provoked a lengthy rejoinder from *America*'s editors about the pope's right to speak out on public policy matters and to be accorded "an ordinary, everyday, secular respect, which he did not receive at the hands of the editors of the *National Review*."⁵ Another *National Review* editor, Will Herberg, faulted both sides in the dispute, and *Commonweal* weighed in forcefully on *America*'s side.⁶ *Commonweal*'s editor reminded his readers that the "new social encyclical represents a solemn application of traditional Catholic principles to the problems of our day, and this by the successor of St. Peter; it therefore has to be regarded with the utmost gravity. No one, certainly, should take the statement that *Mater et magistra* is not *ex cathedra* to mean that the principles it enunciates can be lightly dismissed or easily evaded."⁷

America Dissents

In the aftermath of Vatican II, *America* no longer exhibited the confidence

¹ Quoted in Allitt, *Catholic Intellectuals*, 94.

² "An Open Letter to Father Thurston Davis, S.J.," *National Review* (September 23, 1961).

³ John B. Judis, *William F. Buckley, Jr.: Patron Saint of the Conservatives* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988), 187; "Ils Ne Passeront Pas," *National Review* (September 9, 1961).

⁴ Frank Meyer, Letter to the Editor, *America* (September 30, 1961).

⁵ "Magistra, Sí," *America* (September 30, 1961).

⁶ Will Herberg, "Controversy over an Encyclical," *National Review* (November 4, 1961).

⁷ "A Venture in Triviality," *Commonweal* (August 25, 1961). For similar sorts of commentary from other Catholic journalists, see Garry Wills, *Bare Ruined Choirs: Doubt, Prophecy and Radical Religion* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1972), 54-56.

that had been its hallmark for so many years. In the late 1960s, the magazine published articles that frankly acknowledged that priests were leaving the ministry in significant numbers and that far fewer young people were entering religious life. *America's* editors themselves seemed uncertain about traditional Church teachings. They ran an essay advocating intercommunion with Protestants, and they even shifted away from their longstanding opposition to abortion. In December 1967, the editors devoted a whole issue to the question of abortion and in their editorial began with a question:

Should the Catholic Church in the United States adopt a more flexible attitude and engage actively in abortion law reform? We think it should. There is, first of all, the hard fact that changes are going to come (and come quickly) whether we oppose them or not. While there can be no doubt that we have a grave obligation to bear witness, however unpopular our position, to the sanctity of fetal life, there can also be no doubt that the Church has never believed that everything immoral should be made criminal.¹

Several months later, the magazine faced a crisis: Pope Paul VI had promulgated *Humanae vitae*, his long-awaited encyclical on birth control, and had reaffirmed Catholic opposition to artificial forms of contraception. Having already dropped its opposition to abortion, there was no way *America* could affirm the pope's teaching on birth control. The magazine, under a new editor, Fr. Donald Campion, a sociologist, acknowledged the quandary in which he and his fellow Jesuits found themselves:

No Catholic undertaking to comment on an encyclical can do so except in a spirit of true respect for the Pope, the successor of St. Peter and the supreme teacher in the Church. True respect has an added dimension for this review's editorial staff, in large part a group of Jesuits, members of a religious family whose *raison d'être* is service to Christ's Church in a spirit of special loyalty to the Pope.²

Despite these qualms, Campion ran an editorial in the same issue, expressing the magazine's dissent: "If there is a question of obedience involved, there is also at issue a root question of the search of the whole Church for the truth."³ In the weeks following, Campion published a series of articles criticizing *Humanae vitae* and stressing the rights of lay Catholics to follow their consciences on the matter. Campion also published an essay by John R. Quinn, then auxiliary bishop of San Diego, which affirmed the pope's encyclical.⁴

¹ "The Abortion Question: Life and Law in a Pluralistic Society," *America* (December 9, 1967).

² "Of Many Things," *America* (August 17, 1968).

³ "An Editorial Statement on 'Human Life,'" *America* (August 17, 1968).

⁴ See *America* (August 17 and September 7, 1968). Quinn served as Archbishop of

America's response to *Humanae vitae* was considerably more measured than was *Commonweal's* reaction. As early as 1964 *Commonweal* had been raising doubts about the teaching, and in 1965 its editorial board put itself on record favoring a change, in part because of the desperate need for "world population control."¹ When *Humanae vitae* appeared, *Commonweal's* editors remarked that to "call it a bitter disappointment would be an understatement."² Four years later, when the Supreme Court issued *Roe v. Wade*, *America's* editors were quite disappointed. While they had been willing to countenance some loosening of abortion statutes, the Court's decision was much too radical for them. While promising to respect the Court's ruling, the editors remarked that *Roe v. Wade* reminded them of the *Dred Scott* case where an earlier generation of justices "decided that blacks were not people."³

America's Ambivalent Embrace of John Paul II

John Paul II's accession to the papacy in 1978 brought new energy and new emphases to the Catholic Church. Only fifty-eight at the time of his election, the new pope traveled over much of the world tirelessly promoting what he called the "New Evangelization" and confronting totalitarian dictators, especially in his native Poland.⁴

America proved to be generally sympathetic to John Paul II for much of his reign. The editor-in-chief from the mid-1980s till the late 1990s was Fr. George Hunt, a literary scholar. Under Hunt's leadership, the journal revisited some of the liberal stances it had taken on moral questions in the late 1960s. David Carlin, a sociologist and pro-life legislator, wrote cover stories on abortion-related topics.⁵ To mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of *Humanae vitae* in 1993, Hunt published an analysis by Fr. Richard McCormick, a leading critic of the document.⁶ Several weeks later, however, he ran a response from two young Jesuits, Frs. Kevin Flannery and Joseph Koterski, entitled, "Paul VI Was Right." Flannery and Koterski claimed that the "easy availability of contraceptives" had exacted a terrible toll and that married couples should be encouraged to pursue Natural

San Francisco from 1977 to 1995.

¹ Van Allen, *The Commonweal and American Catholicism*, 169.

² *Ibid.*, 170.

³ *America* (February 3, 1973).

⁴ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: HarperCollins, 1999), 235-436.

⁵ For example, see David R. Carlin, Jr., "Abortion, Gay Rights and the Social Contract," *America* (February 27, 1993), and "Paying for Abortion," *America* (November 20, 1993).

⁶ Richard A. McCormick, S.J., "'Humanae Vitae' 25 Years Later," *America* (July 17, 1993).

Family Planning if they wished to space their births. Hunt gave McCormick the last word, allowing him a rejoinder.¹ Still, Hunt's decision to print the Flannery–Koterski article was a significant shift for the magazine.

In the fall of 1993, John Paul II released one of his most important encyclicals, *Veritatis splendor*, which took aim at moral relativism and at propositions popular in some liberal Catholic circles, such as the “fundamental option,” which downplayed the sinfulness of individual acts.² Hunt responded with an editorial praising the pope effusively for his recent World Youth Day meeting in Denver. He remarked that the pope is “bursting with the good news of Jesus Christ and has the bad taste (in the secularist view) to keep mentioning his name.... Our Pope is an evangelist par excellence. This is what we are all called to be: defenders of human life and human rights and promoters of a civilization of love.”³

With regard to the encyclical itself, however, Hunt was more equivocal. While approvingly noting the encyclical's potential impact on the abortion debate, Hunt wondered whether “professional ethicists will be persuaded” by the pope's claim that “certain acts are irremediably and intrinsically evil.”⁴ To address the “technical” aspects of the encyclical, Hunt turned again to Richard McCormick, a sharp critic of the pope on these matters.⁵ He also invited Fr. Avery Dulles to analyze John Paul II's writings up to the publication of *Veritatis splendor*. Dulles responded with a detailed essay lauding the pope for his “prophetic humanism.”⁶

America's tone changed somewhat in 1998 when Hunt stepped down and was succeeded by Fr. Tom Reese, a political scientist and former associate editor of the magazine. A more partisan liberal than his predecessor, Reese almost immediately began publishing controversial essays. In the fall of 1998, Reese sharply criticized the guidelines issued by the American bishops for implementing John Paul II's document on higher education, *Ex corde ecclesiae*. He described the new norms, which were meant to shore up Catholic identity in American colleges and universities, as “unworkable and dangerous.”⁷ Reese also published a number of articles that seemed to call into question the magazine's commitment

¹ Kevin Flannery, S.J. and Joseph Koterski, S.J., “Paul VI Was Right,” and Richard A. McCormick, S.J., “A Response,” *America* (September 25, 1993).

² Weigel, *Witness to Hope*, 686-95.

³ “Pope John Paul Evangelist,” *America* (September 11, 1993).

⁴ “The New Encyclical,” *America* (October 23, 1993).

⁵ Richard A. McCormick, S.J., “*Veritatis Splendor* and Moral Theology,” *America* (October 30, 1993).

⁶ Avery Dulles, S.J., “The Prophetic Humanism of John Paul II,” *America* (October 23, 1993).

⁷ “New Norms for Catholic Higher Education: Unworkable and Dangerous,” *America* (November 14, 1998).

to the pro-life cause. In one piece, Rep. David Obey, a senior Democrat from Wisconsin, tried to reconcile his generally pro-abortion votes in Congress with the practice of his Catholic faith, describing himself as “a John Courtney Murray kind of Catholic.”¹ And in an editorial during the 2004 presidential campaign, Reese warned that denying communion to Catholic politicians who, like Sen. John Kerry, favored legal abortion would be “pastorally offensive and politically inept.”² Articles such as these drew the ire of some American bishops and led to Reese’s removal in 2005.³

Bearing with Benedict

As Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith were responsible for Reese’s ouster, it would be fair to say that *America* did not start off on a good footing with the newly elected Pope Benedict XVI. However, Reese’s successor, Fr. Drew Christiansen, a high-ranking official at the USCCB, proved much more cautious in his commentary. In 2006, the pope returned to Germany and delivered an address at Regensburg about the complementary relationship between faith and reason. The speech, which included a quote from a fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor criticizing Islam for using force rather than reason to spread its faith, angered many Muslims around the world. Christian churches were bombed in the Middle East and a nun was killed in Somalia in reaction to what was seen as an insult to Muhammad.

In response to the controversy, Christiansen took the pope’s side, contending that he was not seeking to denigrate Islam, but “was calling for a conversation across cultures.... In the pope’s view, faith and reason need each other. Faith severed from reason is irrational, just as reason unmoored from faith has no moral compass. Furthermore, for believers of different faiths, reason, rooted in a rational creator God, provides the necessary alternative to violence.”⁴

Two years later, the pope made a short trip to New York and Washington, D.C., and Christiansen wrote an appreciative editorial about it:

The enduring impression Pope Benedict XVI left with most Americans following his recent visit...was of a pastor ministering to his flock.... While Pope Benedict showed appreciation for American culture..., he also laid bare our temptations and failings.... Americans may find it hard to look in the mirror Benedict held up to us.... But the challenge of the visit is to learn from Pope Benedict’s criticism as well as his praise, take it to heart and find new

¹ David Obey, “My Conscience, My Vote,” *America* (August 16-23, 2004).

² “Catholics and Politics 2004,” *America* (May 24-31, 2004).

³ “We Had Hoped,” *America* (May 23, 2005); Schroth, *American Jesuits*, 274. *Commonweal*’s editors were enraged by the Vatican’s intervention. See “Scandal at ‘America,’” *Commonweal* (May 20, 2005).

⁴ “Clash or Conversation?” *America* (October 9, 2006).

ways to redeem the shadow side of our American character.¹

In 2012 Christiansen announced that he would be stepping down from the editorship and would become a visiting professor at Boston College. As his replacement, the Jesuits made a surprising selection: Fr. Matt Malone, a forty-year-old, newly ordained priest who would become *America's* youngest editor that October. Just a few weeks later, Malone had to report on a dramatic news event: Pope Benedict had chosen to resign his office, the first pope to retire in more than 700 years!

Malone devoted much of an issue to a consideration of Pope Benedict's eight years in office. While there were some sympathetic columns, including an analysis of his encyclicals by Christiansen, the main essay by historian Christopher Bellitto offered a decidedly mixed appraisal. While praising the pope's encyclicals and his writings on Jesus and the saints, Bellitto then launched into a long list of criticisms. The pope had not dealt aggressively enough with the sexual abuse crisis; he had moved too aggressively to discipline dissident theologians; he had done little to advance dialogue with Protestants, instead focusing on reconciling with the "numerically few" Latin Mass adherents; and he had made no attempt to reform the Vatican curia.²

Rowing with Francis

With the election of Francis as the new pope in March 2013, *America's* editors have thrown their full support behind the Vatican once again. Malone, who was in Rome for the papal conclave, described the shock and thrill that he felt knowing that a "Jesuit now sat on the throne of St. Peter."³ The other articles in the issue lauded Francis for his spirit of poverty and noted the rapturous reception he received from the people of Rome.

From the outset of his papacy, Francis has made clear that he is disturbed by the challenges facing families in the contemporary world and believed that the Church needs to respond to them with mercy. In 2014 he organized an Extraordinary Synod on the Family, which was followed by another Synod on the Family in 2015. At both synods, there was considerable discussion, debate, and disagreement about how the Church should handle people who are in "irregular" relationships such as those who have been divorced and remarried civilly. Cardinal Walter Kasper, one of Germany's most influential churchmen, argued that remarried Catholics should be allowed to receive Holy Communion if, after

¹ "Pastor and Prophet," *America* (May 5, 2008).

² Christopher M. Bellitto, "A Pope's Progress: Assessing Benedict's Legacy," *America* (March 11, 2013).

³ "Of Many Things," *America* (April 1, 2013).

a period of discernment, they conclude that they are in good standing. Kasper's proposal was resisted by prelates such as Archbishop Charles Chaput of Philadelphia who argued that remarried Catholics would need to have an annulment before they would be eligible for the Eucharist.

In the spring of 2016, Pope Francis issued his post-synodal exhortation, *Amoris laetitia*, which appeared to support Kasper's view. Some bishops conferences, including the Germans, Argentines, and Maltese, responded by allowing remarried Catholics to come forward for communion, while the Polish bishops and individual archbishops such as Chaput and Alexander Sample of Portland, Oregon, declared that the pope's statement must be read in the light of the Church tradition and therefore does not permit communion for those civilly remarried.

In the wake of these conflicting interpretations, four cardinals wrote privately to Francis with a list of their five "dubia," doubts about the precise meaning of his exhortation. When the pope did not respond, the cardinals publicized their letter. A number of other leading Catholic thinkers such as John Finnis, Josef Siefert, and Fr. Aidan Nichols, O.P., then also publicly expressed their misgivings about *Amoris laetitia*.¹

America has chosen not to focus much ink at all on the concerns that critics of *Amoris laetitia* have raised. When the letter appeared, *America*'s Rome correspondent Gerard O'Connell applauded the pope for starting a "process that has already given new hope to many people and, in the long run, could renew the face of the church."² Malone likewise hailed the letter as "a beautiful gift to the church, a call to a change of heart and a summons to prayer."³

The magazine's perspective on Francis and his critics has best been articulated by Gerard O'Connell. In an essay entitled, "On Board with Peter," O'Connell lauded the pope's selection of three new American cardinals, Blase Cupich, Kevin Farrell, and Joseph Tobin, who all have aligned themselves closely with Francis. O'Connell remarked that a cardinal is "called to be the pope's advisor, not his opponent or critic.... This is the context in which Francis has given the U.S. church three new cardinal electors. In doing so he is inviting American bishops to row with him as these three are doing."⁴ O'Connell used the same phrasing when noting that Pope Francis had removed Cardinal Gerhard Müller as prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) at the end of his first term. Müller, who had called for reading *Amoris laetitia* in the light of

¹ See, for example, John Finnis and Germain Grisez, "An Open Letter to Pope Francis," *First Things* (December 9, 2016).

² Gerard O'Connell, "A Milestone on the Road," *America* (May 2, 2016).

³ "Family Time," *America* (April 25, 2016).

⁴ Gerard O'Connell, "On Board with Peter," *America* (November 7, 2016).

tradition, was replaced by a Spanish Jesuit, Archbishop Luis Ladaria. O’Connell predicted that the change would “have far-reaching consequences, not the least of which is to ensure that the CDF and its prefect are rowing with and not against the pope on key issues, including the interpretation of *Amoris laetitia*.”¹

Conclusions

After years of estrangement, *America* is embracing Rome once again. It is championing Francis’s writings and actions just as it championed John XXIII and *Mater et ,agistra* against Bill Buckley’s criticisms. And its current editors are just as determined defenders of the pope as their predecessors had been in the early 1960s. All Catholics are called to “get on board with Peter” and row with him or risk being depicted by the magazine as “dissenters.”

¹ Gerard O’Connell, “Pope Francis appoints Spanish Jesuit Ladaria to replace Müller at CDF,” *America* (July 1, 2017).

Letter from the President of the Fellowship

Dear Members of the Fellowship,

Summer greetings to you!

Please make plans to attend our annual convention, which will be held September 28th through 30th this year. Many thanks to the members of our program committee, who have assembled an impressive lineup of speakers to address this year's theme, "The Future of Science, Technology, and the Human Person."

For the first time, we are holding the convention on the campus of a Catholic college, Benedictine College in Atchison, Kansas. I hope you can join us! Please go online for more details and to register.

I am sure you are enjoying the new format for our Quarterly. Thank you to Fr. Joseph Koterski and to Prof. Elizabeth Shaw for their hard work on it.

I wish you a productive and relaxing remainder of the summer.

Cordially,

William Saunders, Esq.
President, FCS

Washington Insider

*William L. Saunders**

THE FORTY-FIFTH ANNUAL MARCH FOR LIFE, with hundreds of thousands of participants, took place in Washington, DC, on January 19. The theme was “Love Saves Lives.” Political leaders such as Paul Ryan and Chris Smith spoke at the rally preceding the march down Constitution Avenue to the Supreme Court.

In previous years, Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H. W. Bush, and George W. Bush each spoke to the marchers via telephone or radio hookup from the Oval Office, and last year Mike Pence became the first vice president to address the march in person. This time, however, President Donald Trump spoke from the Rose Garden, surrounded by many pro-life White House staffers and invited guests. His message was broadcast live via jumbotrons to those gathered on the National Mall.

The president noted that his administration “will always defend the very first right in the Declaration of Independence, and that is the right to life.”¹ The president underscored the sad and ironic fact – a fact that a fact checker at the *Washington Post* admitted was true – that the United States, despite substantial majorities who want strict laws, is one of only seven nations in the world that permit abortion without any restrictions.²

President Trump’s administration has, in fact, taken a number of steps during its first year to defend life. For instance, it reinstated the Mexico City Policy

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¹ Donald Trump, Address to March for Life Rally, C-SPAN, January 19, 2018, video, 07:59, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?439973-1/president-trump-addresses-march-life-rally>.

² “New Marist Polls Find That Americans of All Political Persuasions Favor Substantial Abortion Limits,” Knights of Columbus, January 17, 2018, <http://www.kofc.org/en/news/media/marist-poll-substantial-abortion-limits.html>. See also Michelle Ye Hee Lee, “Is the United States One of Seven Countries That ‘Allow Elective Abortions after 20 Weeks of Pregnancy?’” *Washington Post* (October 9, 2017). The other countries are China, North Korea, Canada, the Netherlands, Singapore, and Vietnam.

banning aid to organizations that promote or provide abortions abroad,¹ and it nominated to the Supreme Court a judge, Neil Gorsuch, who has been confirmed and is committed to applying the words of the Constitution. It revoked the Department of Health and Human Services contraception mandate, created a new office in HHS to protect the conscience rights of health care providers, and issued regulations to this effect.² (It should be noted that, although there are several different laws that protect health care conscience rights, none provides for a private cause of action by which an aggrieved party can file suit to force lax government officials to enforce the law, usually by denying federal funds to the offending entity. There is a bill pending in Congress to remedy this situation by providing a private cause of action to existing laws – the Conscience Protection Act, HR 644.)

In his remarks, the president thanked pro-lifers for saving “tens of thousands of lives,” and he urged the Senate to pass the Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act. The act, which the House of Representatives had already passed, bans abortion from the time a child can feel pain.

National Legislative Developments

Ten days after the March for Life, on January 29, the Senate rejected the president’s call. In a vote requiring sixty votes to proceed, the Senate failed to muster enough votes to bring the act forward for a vote on the merits. Although Democratic senators Joe Donnelly (IN), Joe Manchin (WV), and Bob Casey (PA) supported bringing the act to the floor for a vote, they were not joined by enough Democrats to reach the sixty-vote threshold. Fourteen self-identified Catholic Democratic senators voted against bringing the act to a vote, effectively defeating it.³

Among the fourteen Catholic Democrats opposing the act was Richard Durbin of Illinois. In response on February 22, Durbin’s bishop, Thomas

¹ A review of implementation of the new policy found, contrary to the predictions of abortion proponents, that it did not result in participating organizations refusing to continue to participate. “Abortion Funding Limits Get Priorities Right, Bishops Say,” *Catholic News Agency* (February 10, 2018).

² In May, President Trump issued an executive order requiring religious freedom/freedom of conscience to be treated the same as other civil rights. Following the issuance of detailed guidance by the Attorney General, HHS announced the creation of the new office to protect the conscience rights of health care professionals. See, for example, Ariana Eunjung Cha and Juliet Eilperin, “New HHS Civil Rights Division Charged with Protecting Health-Care Workers with Moral Objections,” *Washington Post* (January 19, 2018).

³ Two Republican senators, Susan Collins (ME) and Lisa Murkowski (AK), joined Democrats in opposing a vote on the act.

Paprocki, reiterated the position of his predecessor bishop, George Lucas: “Because his voting record in support of abortion over many years constitutes ‘obstinate persistence in manifest grave sin,’ the determination continues that Sen. Durbin is not to be admitted to Holy Communion until he repents of this sin. This provision is intended not to punish, but to bring about a change of heart.”¹

Nevertheless, Georgetown University presented Senator Durbin with its Timothy S. Healy, S.J., Award on February 28.² The award, given by the Georgetown Alumni Association, is conferred upon Georgetown alumni who have rendered “outstanding and exemplary... service in support of humanitarian causes and advancements for the benefit of mankind.”

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court is considering two cases that have important ramifications for pro-life Americans.

The first is *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*. This case involves a cake baker and a gay couple. The gay couple were planning to be married under Colorado law. They asked the baker to make a cake for the wedding. The baker refused. While the baker was willing to sell them a cake off the shelf, he was not willing to make a cake especially for the wedding, because he believed such weddings to be a violation of the law of God, in which he could not participate.

Although the case involves the actual range and meaning of the religious liberty assurances by the Supreme Court in its decision legalizing same-sex marriage³ – in which the Court said that religious liberty would be protected for Americans who disagreed with the decision – speaking more precisely, the case involves the guarantees of freedom of religion in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.⁴ Hence, the Court’s ruling on the extent of religious freedom, and conscientious objection, could have far-ranging consequences in areas other than those involving same-sex marriage.

The test under the First Amendment⁵ is whether the law at issue (the

¹ “Change Your Heart, Change Your Abortion Votes, Bishop Paprocki Tells Sen. Durbin,” *Catholic News Agency* (February 22, 2018).

² Haley D’Alessio, “Sen. Durbin Receives Healy Award for Service to Humanitarian Causes,” *Georgetown Voice* (March 16, 2018).

³ *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 576 US ____ (2015).

⁴ “Amendment I. Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

⁵ Some readers may notice that this test differs from that involved in the HHS mandate cases, which I have covered in prior columns. The reason is that the test in those cases was

Colorado Anti-Discrimination Act, which, as interpreted by its Civil Rights Commission, requires the baker to create the cake for the same-sex wedding) is “neutral” and “generally applicable.”¹ The issue is not whether a commercial enterprise can refuse to serve same-sex couples. Rather, the issue is whether a baker must act contrary to his conscientious religious beliefs in preparing a special (“custom-made”) cake for a same-sex wedding.

Is it “generally applicable”? In other cases, the Colorado Civil Rights Commission protected bakers who refused to put a message *against* same-sex marriage on a wedding cake; protecting bakers depending on whether they support or oppose same-sex marriage hardly seems “generally applicable” (some bakers covered, some not). Is Colorado being “neutral” as between religious conscience and secular conscience, as constitutionally required, or does it *favor* secular conscience (of the bakers who would not put an anti-same-sex-marriage message on a cake)? Is the law *targeted against* religious conscience? Obviously, there is a strong argument that it is. If so, the state law fails the test and will be overturned, permitting the baker to refuse to custom-bake a cake for a same-sex wedding.

The other case is *National Institute of Family and Life Advocates (NIFLA) v. Becerra*. This case involves a California state law. The Reproductive FACT (Freedom, Accountability, Comprehensive Care, and Transparency) Act requires the posting of “informational” signs in the waiting rooms of pregnancy clinics. Plaintiffs (NIFLA) are pro-life pregnancy resource centers that offer various forms of assistance to women considering an abortion. Under the act, if the clinic offers medical services, it is required to post a large notice on the wall giving a phone number that can be called to obtain a free abortion. If it does not offer medical services, it must post a notice stating that it does not provide medical services. Depending on location, these various postings must be in many different languages.

The act provides exemptions for for-profit centers, for doctors in private practice, and for centers that participate in the state’s family planning program (a program that provides, inter alia, contraception, abortifacients, and abortion).

that of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA), that is, substantial infringement of religious liberty by government must be justified by a compelling interest, using the least restrictive means possible. After its adoption, the Supreme Court restricted the reach of the statute (the statutory test) to actions of the *national* government – the Court held that constitutional requirements of federalism prevented the Congress from going further than the Constitution required vis-à-vis the states, but permitted it to restrict the national government as it deemed appropriate. *Masterpiece Cake* involves state, not national, law. Hence, the less demanding (!) constitutional test applies.

¹ *Employment Division v. Smith*, 494 US 872 (1990). The Court might decide to overturn *Smith* in its decision and apply the same strict-scrutiny test required by RFRA, which was required by the Court before its decision in *Smith*.

Since the plaintiffs are *nonprofit* pregnancy resource centers and refuse to provide abortifacients or abortions, none of them qualifies for the exemptions. This point attracted the attention of several of the justices during oral argument on March 21. Justices Anthony Kennedy and Samuel Alito were skeptical of the law, seeming to feel that the exemptions indicated the law was *targeted against* pro-life pregnancy resource centers (since the law exempted everyone else). Under Supreme Court precedent, if the regulation discriminates on the basis of the content or the viewpoint of the speaker, strict scrutiny (the most demanding standard) is triggered, and there is very little likelihood the law will survive.¹

Surprisingly, the Ninth Circuit had upheld the FACT Act, holding that this was “professional” (that is, not private) speech that is entitled to less protection. However, the Supreme Court has never endorsed the concept of “professional speech.”

Although most observers expect the Court to overturn the California law, the Court might send the case back for evidentiary hearings since it came to the Court on a “facial” challenge (that is, without extensive fact-finding in the lower federal court).

Although the case is being argued under the free speech portion of the First Amendment, the issues raised are analogous to those being raised in *Masterpiece Cake*, which concerns the religious liberty portion of the First Amendment. In both cases, the question is whether someone is being targeted under state law because of his conscientious beliefs on a contentious social issue. It will be interesting to see if the Court will protect conscience regardless of the portion of the First Amendment involved.

One thing that is all but certain is that the Court will wait to announce decisions in these cases until the last day of its term, near the end of June. This is invariably the practice with highly contentious, hotly debated cases (such as *Obergefell*).

But will there be another announcement on that last day or soon thereafter? Will Justice Kennedy, the key swing vote between the liberal four and the

¹ For the law to survive, California would have to show that it has a compelling reason to target pregnancy resource centers and that it used the least restrictive means. The U.S. Solicitor General, arguing on behalf of the plaintiffs, pointed out that if California alleged that its compelling interest was fraud-prevention for women seeking abortions, it could have addressed that *more narrowly* through ordinary antifraud laws; hence, the means employed by California were overbroad, that is, not the least restrictive. One issue not before the Court in this case, but which could be affected by the Court’s ruling, concerns state laws requiring disclosure by abortion clinics. Pro-life states require abortion clinics to provide women with various kinds of information. Will such disclosure be effectively overturned as *targeting* abortion clinics or as being content- or viewpoint-based discrimination?

conservative four, announce his retirement? It is widely anticipated that he will. If so, that will trigger a titanic confirmation fight over whomever President Trump nominates. He has promised to nominate another “originalist” like Gorsuch. Time will tell.

State Developments

Tennessee was one of several states whose state constitution has been interpreted by its state supreme court to provide for abortion rights as broadly as does *Roe v. Wade*. That means that, even when the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe*, abortion-on-demand would still be available in Tennessee *under state law*.

In 2014, Tennessee voters approved an amendment to the state constitution, stating that the state constitution does not provide for a right to abortion. Since then, the way the votes were tabulated has been challenged in federal court. However, in January, the Sixth Circuit held that Tennessee need not recount the votes and stated, “It is time for the uncertainty surrounding the people’s 2014 approval and ratification of Amendment 1 to be put to rest.”¹

One may hope that this outcome will encourage other states with similar interpretations of their own state constitutions by their state supreme court to pass similar state constitutional amendments.

In March, Mississippi passed a law banning abortions after fifteen weeks. Litigation over the law will work its way to the Supreme Court, which makes the possible retirement of Justice Kennedy even more tantalizing, as the case would present a good opportunity for the Court, with a new “originalist” replacement, to overturn *Roe*.

Other Developments: FEMA and PAS

Readers may be aware that after the terrible hurricanes this summer and fall, FEMA (the Federal Emergency Management Agency) refused to reimburse churches, synagogues, and other houses of worship. In January, FEMA reversed itself, saying this was necessary following the decision in *Trinity Lutheran*. In February, Congress passed a law cementing this result.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) held a scandalous inquiry into “the facts” about physician-assisted suicide – only they forgot to invite any opponents of the practice! The event was organized by the prime advocates of the legalization of physician-assisted suicide, Compassion and Choices. Professor Daniel Sulmasy of Georgetown University is to be commended for forcing his way onto the program and for accurately and severely criticizing this biased

¹ Jonathan Mattise, “US Appeals Court: Tennessee Abortion Amendment Vote Was OK,” *Chicago Tribune* (January 9, 2018).

inquiry.¹ As in the debate over human embryonic stem cell research and cloning a decade ago, NAS demonstrated that it is not to be relied on for objective inquiry.

¹ A video recording of Dr. Sulmasy's presentation is available at <http://nationalacademies.org/hmd/Activities/HealthServices/PADworkshop/2018-FEB-12/Videos/SessionI-Videos/5-Sulmasy.aspx>.

From the Editor's Desk: *Claritatis Laetitia*

*Joseph W. Koterski, S.J.**

HOW IS ONE TO KEEP ONE'S SPIRITS UP amid the encircling gloom? One avenue that I have found to be reliable is regularly to re-read the works of Joseph Ratzinger, our Pope Emeritus. In his works there is such a *claritatis laetitia*, the joy of clear thinking. Of course, given the vast number of his writings, it is often not even a matter of re-reading things, but simply of reading something for the first time.

Long unread on my shelf there stood a small book by then Cardinal Ratzinger that I took along for personal reading on a recent trip. Its humble title belied the depth of wisdom therein: *'In the Beginning...': A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995). First published in German in 1986, this book contains Boniface Ramsey's translation of four Lenten sermons that then Cardinal Ratzinger delivered in 1981 at the Liebfrauenkirche (the Church of the Virgin) in Munich, plus an appendix called "The Consequences of Faith in Creation" that was originally published separately.

No Need to Be Embarrassed by the Doctrine of Creation

What motivated these talks was the preacher's conviction that the creation narratives are almost completely absent from contemporary catechesis, preaching, and even theology, except for the occasional comments to indicate a certain embarrassment over the issue. The examples that Ratzinger cites of influential theological texts in German and French that exhibit this self-conscious awkwardness about the doctrine could easily be duplicated among English-language titles.

To cite just a few of the disturbing comments that Ratzinger found: "Concepts like selection and mutation are intellectually much more honest than that of creation"; "creation as a cosmic plan is an idea that has seen its day"; and "the concept of creation is withal an unreal concept" (xi). The theological tomes that he references present in some detail the current objections to the notion of creation, but without any readiness to defend this doctrine. Instead, these texts

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tend to treat faith in God as merely a human way of trying to make sense of a confusing world. The God they describe seems to have had nothing to do with God bringing the material world into existence or with Jesus working any miracles.

Besides the obvious need for us to do better than that when treating the doctrine of God's creation of the entire universe, there is a new stimulus for taking up this topic that appeared not long ago in popular culture. Dan Brown, whose *Da Vinci Code* attempted to attack the Church as a den of greed and iniquity, has issued a new novel, *Origins*, that seems aimed to apply the hermeneutics of suspicion to the very idea of creation. The purpose of the present article, however, is not to enter into the web that Brown is weaving, but to appreciate the wisdom of Ratzinger as a way for all of us to be better prepared to preach and discuss this central Christian doctrine.

Each of the four homilies in this book challenges any readiness to surrender crucial parts of the Church's faith in some vain effort to accommodate current trends in elite society, clerical or secular. The first homily concerns the inclination to think that the modern science has simply rendered the "myths" of creation in Genesis irrelevant; the second, the inclination to suppose that the only answer to our ecological problems is the removal of human beings from the ecosystem; the third, the readiness to think that the theory of evolution obliterates the claim that human beings could possibly be made in God's image and likeness; and the fourth, the notion that the desire exhibited in some current evangelization strategies to make Christianity attractive somehow justifies the suppression of all talk about sin and repentance in religious education and homilies. The essay found in the appendix offers further reflection on these same themes.

Interpreting Genesis

In the course of these homilies Ratzinger asks in various ways about the charming lines at the opening of Genesis. Are they now suitable only for evoking a nostalgic longing for a period when we could still believe in such things as the creation of the universe in seven days and in a God who hung the sun, the moon, and the stars in the firmament to measure time? To put his question a different and forceful way, can we be intellectually honest when we recite the Creed and say, "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth"?

He begins by explaining a certain strategy that we have all heard and that we may well have been tempted to use ourselves, namely, distinguishing between form and content in the creation narratives. Often preachers do this to suggest that the message of the text is simply to indicate that God somehow created the world, while taking the details of the story to be the result of the (over-active) creative imagination of the author. Ratzinger concedes that there is something that can be

helpful in this strategy, for there is a valid distinction between form and content. But he insists that it would never be enough to say only that the Bible is not a textbook in natural science, or that it merely teaches that God created the universe, or that it does not claim to show us the specifics of how the stars were formed or how plant life and animal life emerged.

What he finds insufficient in this way of handling the text is its failure to deal with an underlying suspicion likely to arise today. A preacher who proposes an interpretation limited to a distinction between the images used in scripture and what these images “really” mean could easily seem to be attempting to lower popular expectations when one has run out of real solutions but does not want to admit it. Surely, runs this suspicion, the Church must have taught differently in the past or else there would have been no reason to put Galileo on trial.

The Danger of Leaving a Bad Impression

The danger of giving only this explanation and nothing more is to leave the impression that the last several centuries of Christian history have really been a rear-guard maneuver for covering a retreat while actually giving up on a central affirmation in the Creed. The fear latent here is that the regular use of this maneuver will eventually leave nothing left to be defended, that nothing in Sacred Scripture or among the articles of faith will ever need to be taken seriously any more – not even the resurrection of Christ, his miracles, his teachings on marriage, or his real presence in the Eucharist. In short, using only this strategy for handling questions about religion and science could end up impugning the integrity of biblical interpreters and could imperil the faith of the Church in regard to the articles of the Creed. This situation is, of course, comparable to the problems that have decimated some of the mainline forms of Protestant Christianity. Their rationalist reductions of the content of the faith have made them seem largely irrelevant anachronisms.

There is a better response, argues Cardinal Ratzinger. We will still need to make use of the distinction between a biblical image like the seven days of creation and the meaning of those images, for a proper understanding of the senses of scripture recognizes that there is a difference between form and content. But what we also need is a thorough-going account of the way in which the scriptures themselves (and not just modern-day interpreters) give witness to this distinction. Ratzinger finds within the scriptures themselves a sophisticated use of this distinction. It is not some late-in-the-day technique of evasion. Rather, it is an intrinsic part of the biblical record of divine revelation, albeit one that has often been overlooked in recent centuries amid the quarrels over the literal level of the Bible’s meaning between Catholic and Protestant apologists that made many forgetful of the sophisticated hermeneutics traditionally associated with the four

senses of scripture.

Canonical Exegesis and the Four Senses of Scripture

To see the relevance of this point for the proper understanding of the creation texts, Cardinal Ratzinger argues, we must note that not only individual parts of the Old Testament but also the Old Testament as a whole came to be written under divine inspiration. Over the centuries the Holy Spirit led the writers of the Bible in various ways, so as to enable human minds to become ever more able to understand important aspects of the mystery of God.

Rather than taking any one stage of the Old Testament as if it could be contained in itself, we need to apprehend when a given book or passage was composed within the long journey on which the Holy Spirit was leading the Chosen People and the writers of the Bible. The Old Testament, even in its totality, records various stages of the divine self-disclosure that pervades biblical history. But it is only possible to become clear about the real meaning of any part of the Old Testament or about the whole of it by appreciating that its goal is to point to Christ. Each part of the Bible derives its meaning from the whole, and the whole derives its meaning from its end-point: Jesus Christ.

Against the Hermeneutics of Suspicion

Readers of other books by Joseph Ratzinger – *Milestones*, in particular – may well call to mind the debt that Vatican II's *Dei verbum* owes to the work of the young Father Ratzinger in distinguishing between revelation (God's self-disclosure), tradition (the handing on of divine revelation as faithfully and completely as possible), and scripture (the written record that came to be recognized as authentic and canonical). Readers of the *Deus caritas est* will notice here a similar attentiveness to the hermeneutics of suspicion, much as that encyclical exhibits much care to lay out a pattern for countering deceptive strategies of the great masters of suspicion – Freud, Marx, and Nietzsche – against the Church's teaching in the areas of sexual morality and social charity.

Among the things one needs to consider in handling this topic is that creation gets handled in quite diverse ways within the scriptures. Sometimes Israel was so engrossed in its current sufferings or in its hopes for the future that it rarely looked back at creation. But, Ratzinger shows, during the Babylonian Exile, when Israel had incomprehensibly lost its land and its temple, the account of creation came to take the form that we find in the opening chapter of Genesis.

For the prophets whom God inspired in that age, Israel's God might have seemed a weak God – or even no God at all – if he seemed unable to prevent his devotees from being snatched away. But in fact God inspired the writing of this part of the book of Genesis to show his people that he was not confined to any

particular plot of land and never had been. He could bestow land on Abraham and could bring his people out of slavery in Egypt precisely because he was not the god of just one locale but the creator of all heaven and earth. Likewise, he could usher his faithless people into Babylonia, a land foreign to them, so as to make himself known there. In the very moment of apparent defeat he showed himself as the creator of all that is and the source of all power.

The text of the opening chapter of Genesis comes from this bleak period of Israel's history. When it pictures the sun and the moon as lamps that God hung in the firmament of the sky for the measurement of time, what we are reading is not some old fairy tale that has now been surpassed by our science. What we have here is an audacious way by which the light of faith confronted Babylonian worship of the sun and moon as great gods. In countering the pagan myths that claimed the creation of our world to be the result of a demonic contest of cosmic forces, this part of Genesis actually asserts instead that the entire universe arose from God's reason and rests on his Word.

Scripture's Many and Diverse Images for the Creation

In addition to bringing out the meaning of various biblical images that a hasty misinterpretation is ready to consign to the sphere of simplistic myth-making, Ratzinger shows us an additional element that preachers would do well to point out in their treatment of biblical images and their meanings. The second creation account in Genesis (the one with the story of Adam and Eve) is actually the earlier account, and it uses a different set of images. There are still other accounts and other image clusters in the psalms. And in the Wisdom Literature (Job, Qoheleth, Sirach, and so on) the creation story gets a massive re-working, so as to confront the rationalism of Hellenistic cosmology. For Ratzinger, the lesson here is that the Bible itself again and again adapts its images in order to bear witness to the one thing that God wants to disclose to us about himself in divine revelation: the message that God created all that is.

For Ratzinger, the decisive element needed for the proper understanding of all these creation texts is the recognition that the entire Old Testament leads to the New Testament and thus to the definitive message of Jesus Christ. Only then do we receive the definitive and normative divine account of creation: "In the beginning was the Word..." (John 1:1-3).

John thus shows a unique way of deliberately reworking the first verse of Genesis and thereby re-writing the creation account afresh. He does it in such a way as to identify the incarnate Word of God with the Word present with the Father at creation. What becomes manifest here is that Christians do not read the Old Testament for its own sake but always with and through Christ and the Church. In him all things have their fulfillment, all truth is revealed, all that is

sinful is sanctified. In freeing us from slavery to a certain kind of literalness, Christ gives us the truth of the images in their fulness.

It was at the start of the modern era, Ratzinger reminds us, that the living unity of the scriptures came to be forgotten. It was the modern era that tended to read each text by itself and in isolation, thereby examining every image and particular detail and forgetting the whole. Taking this historical method means reading the text backward rather than forward – with a view not to Christ but to the probable origins of the text. This course involved a literal-mindedness that was forgetful of the spiritual senses of scripture and of the end of the Bible.

Paradoxically, it was a slavish attachment to a single level of interpretation that did much to create a sense of conflict between the natural sciences and theology. This conflict, explains Ratzinger, is one that need never have happened. In this little book he gives preachers much material for countering that impression. As he notes, “even today, faith in creation...is reasonable.” Even as a way for looking at the data that the natural sciences gives us, it is actually the “better hypothesis,” for its disclosure of a thoughtful and loving Creator laboring over his creation like an artist over his canvas offers a fuller and better explanation of the beauty, the complexity, and the order that science continues to discover than does an explanation that rest content with pure chance.

With a volume like this in hand, there is no reason to yield to the gloom of suspicion or to hues of embarrassment. We can take delight in *claritatis laetitia*.

Unacknowledged Nobility in our Midst

*Jude P. Dougherty**

AS STATUES, MONUMENTS, AND MEMORIALS tumble in Austin, Baltimore, Charlottesville, Durham, and other parts of the country, it may be fruitful to examine what the fuss is all about.

The public has been led to believe that the men for whom those monuments and plaques have been erected were bad men, men who owned slaves or supported slavery as an institution. Often the truth is just the opposite, or at least more complicated than most imagine. What we witness here is the action of the ignorant and the barbarous, often with vicious intent, the vandalizing of public displays that have existed for decades without disturbance. But pretended moral offense by the supposedly aggrieved is not self-validating. If one were to study the events that led to the conflict between North and South, one would find that the issue was primarily one of “states’ rights.” Such study might lead one to appreciate the valor displayed by those who fought for the legitimate right of states to secede.

Major officers on both sides of the conflict were trained at the United States Military Academy, commonly known as West Point. Ulysses Grant, Robert E. Lee, Winfield Scott, and Jefferson Davis were all commissioned officers in the U.S. Army.

This essay will draw upon the *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History* by A. L. Long¹ and *Recollection and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* by his son, Captain Robert E. Lee.² These I take to be primary sources for an insight into the character of this great man. The letters consulted were written before, during, and after the War between the States.

We have this portrait of Lee from a fellow officer, General Joseph E. Johnson: “We entered the Military Academy together as classmates. We had the same intimate associates who thought, as I did, that no other youth or man so united the qualities that win warm friendship and command high respect. For he was full of sympathy and kindness, genial and fond of conversation, and even fun, that made him the most agreeable of companions.” At the rank of colonel, Lee

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¹ A.L. Long, *Memoirs of Robert E. Lee: His Military and Personal History* (New York: J. M. Stoddart & Co., 1886).

² Robert E. Lee, *Recollection and Letters of General Robert E. Lee* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1905).

became commandant of the Academy, where he served from 1852 to 1855.

Among the letters, we find one addressed to his son. It reveals his deep-seated piety: "Be true, kind and generous and pray earnestly to God to enable you to keep His Commandments, and walk in the same all the days of your life."

Writing in December 1856, Lee said: "There are few in this enlightened age who will not acknowledge that slavery as an institution is a moral and political evil." With respect to Southern blacks, he goes on to say, "Their emancipation will sooner result from the mild and melting influence of Christianity than from the storm and tempest of fiery controversy." He was later to write, "I can anticipate no greater calamity for the country than dissolution of the Union."

When Texas seceded from the Union, Colonel Lee of the Corps of Engineers was ordered to Washington by General Winfield Scott, his commanding officer. At that time neither Virginia nor North Carolina had yet seceded. Given the divided opinion among leaders in each state, it was not clear whether they would leave the Union. President Lincoln offered Lee command of Union forces in North Carolina. Lee, fearing that North Carolina would leave the Union, resigned his commission in the U.S. Army, lest he, in refusing to bear arms against his native state, would become a traitor to his country.

Eventually Virginia was drawn into the conflict, and Lee was obliged after thirty-two years of service to take up service against the Union in order to serve the state he loved. On the eve of hostilities, this former superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy wrote to his sister, "I recognize no necessity for this state of things and would have foregone and pleaded to end the redress for grievances real or supposed, yet, in my own person, I had to meet the question whether I should take part against my native state."

"The whole South," he wrote, "is in a state of revolution into which Virginia has been drawn. With all my devotion to the Union and feelings of loyalty and devotion as an American Citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have, therefore, resigned my commission in the army, and save in defense of my native state, with the sincere hope that my poor service may never be needed." As a citizen, he later accepted command of the Army of Northern Virginia.

During the course of the War, at the directive of Jefferson Davis, Lee wrote on August 13, 1863: "The President of the Confederate States has in the name of the people appointed August 21st a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer. A strict observance of the day is enjoined upon the officers and soldiers of this army. All military duties, except such as are absolutely necessary, will be suspended. The commanding officers of brigades and regiments are requested to cause divine services, suitable for the occasion, to be performed within their respective commands.... God is our only refuge and our strength. Let us humble ourselves

before Him.”

Upon surrendering, Lee wrote on April 10th, 1865: “After years of arduous service, marked by unsurpassed courage and fortitude, the Army of Northern Virginia has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.... I earnestly pray that a merciful God will extend His blessing and protection.”

Some future historian may be prompted to compare antebellum slavery, North and South, to the welfare enslavement of subsequent generations. In any event, it does not make sense for one generation (Karl Barth notwithstanding) to hold another one responsible for the deeds of yet earlier eras. One is tempted, but this is not the place, to compare the ruthless T. S. Sherman and his treatment of blacks with the gentility of Robert E. Lee.

I have spoken of the deeds of Lee, but I must say something about the character of Jefferson Davis as well, a gentleman of the South who performed his duties in the interest of what he thought was a just cause. Davis was a Mexican War hero, a U.S. senator from Mississippi, and Secretary of War (1853-57) under President Franklin Pierce. Prior to the start of the War, Davis, like Lee, argued against secession and in more than one speech urged the preservation of the Union.

Although many today still think the War was primarily about slavery, the truth is, as Lincoln saw it, that the War was about the right of states to secede. Lincoln denied such a right and fought the war to preserve the Union. In his First Inaugural Address, Lincoln assured the country that he had no desire to interfere with the institution of slavery where it already existed and that, in his opinion, he had no right to do so. Contrary to Lincoln, Jefferson Davis believed that each state was sovereign and had a constitutional right to secede from the Union, but he recognized that the North would not permit it. He also knew that the South did not have the military and other resources for a defensive war. Events proved him right.

What is one to conclude? Given the leftward bent of the media and its propensity to promote racial discord, these truths have not and are not likely to enter the public’s consciousness. The destruction of worthy monuments will continue.

From Puritan Aspiration to the Virginia Declaration of Rights

*Jude P. Dougherty**

Throughout the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century, schoolbooks depicted the early European settlers of the North American continent as noble-minded immigrants, in the Old World persecuted for their religious faith, and in the New bent on the creation of a more congenial society. In spite of attempts to totally secularize public school curricula, that story may yet prevail, if only to support the liberal immigration policy advanced by the progressive left. The truth is far more interesting and, perhaps, more relevant.

From the ranks of the Pilgrims who settled in the New World between 1620 and 1630 emerged a theocracy that was to prevail in New England through the latter part of the seventeenth century and most of the eighteenth. It was a theocracy that came to be replaced by a kind of democracy, marked by its own idiosyncratic conception of God's plan for mankind.

The Puritans were a reform-minded group in the Anglican Church whose objective was the practice of Christianity in what they considered to be its pristine purity. Opposed to what they described as fleshly and worldly compromise, opposed to sacramental rituals and all forms of rite, the Puritans insisted in doctrinal matters on the right of private judgment and in worship on the "priesthood of all believers." They were united in their conviction that the Church of England had not gone far enough in disassociating itself from the Church of Rome.

The most renowned congregation of Puritans is the one from Scrooby that fled Holland in 1607, sailing on the *Mayflower* to the shores of Cape Cod, where the Plymouth Colony was established in 1620. That colony became the model for many others in North America. Taking a cue from Thomas Cartwright, the Massachusetts Bay Colony fashioned a new framework for the church. Only the elect would vote, and only they were to rule in the commonwealth. The church was not to govern. It was, however, to supply the instruments of rule, namely, the rationale for law and the principles that determine election procedures. Biblical law was to be primary for ordering both church and state. The Bay Colony

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prospered, which was taken as evidence of the favor of God. True, it had its heretics: Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and Mary Dyer, for example, and the Colony did not hesitate to banish them. Some among the banished Quaker group founded by Dyer returned to be punished and finally hanged.

None of the original thirteen colonies escaped Puritan influence – not even the one named after William Penn. Calvin eventually became their most important theologian. Purifying worship became a major objective. Ritual and symbol were replaced by preaching, prayer, and the singing of psalms. Sermons based on biblical texts could last from one to two hours, not only on Sundays but on market days as well. Congregations were divided on whether they had authority to legislate for the community as a whole. Nevertheless, the famous New England “blue laws” came into being. They were the result of the Puritan effort to enforce community-wide observance of the Ten Commandments.

Because the preaching of the word of God was of paramount importance, ministers required superior education. Their training grounds were the New England grammar schools and seminaries, modeled on the English, and they became the foundation for some of the country’s most distinguished schools. Institutions that we know today as the Boston Latin School and Harvard College were established within ten years of the founding of the Bay Colony.

The North American shores attracted not only the Puritans but a multiplicity of other dissenting religious groups. By the time of the American Revolution and the framing of the United States Constitution, it was clear that no one religious group was dominant. The compromise worked out by the Constitutional Convention repudiated a national church but allowed each state among the original thirteen to determine its official church. It was not until the early decades of the nineteenth century that it became clear that there could not be even at the state level an official church. Although Virginia disestablished the Church of England in 1786, Connecticut did not disestablish the Congregational Church until 1818.

With independence, the spokesmen for the colonists still took for granted the good effects of religion as they drafted the federal and state constitutions. The problem at hand was the adjudication of conflicts among the multiplicity of sects. George Mason’s draft of the Virginia Declaration of Rights provided that men should enjoy “the fullest toleration in the exercise of religion.” His colleague James Madison thought that stronger language was needed since toleration could be taken to mean only a limited form of religious liberty, that is, toleration of dissenters in a state where there was an established church. Madison drafted a substitute, declaring that “all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion,” and, therefore, “no man or class of men ought, on account of religion, to be invested with any peculiar emolument or privileges.” Madison wrote in a

state that had an established church, and it was not his intent to disestablish the Anglican Church in Virginia. Out of the Virginia debate came the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution with its declaration that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or preventing the free exercise thereof.”

The neutrality doctrine that governed legislation in the early days of the Republic eventually came to be construed by the United States Supreme Court as neutrality between religion and irreligion. Such a turn may have surprised Thomas Jefferson, who while he spoke of a “wall of separation” never wanted to divorce religion from public life. The founders of modern political theory like Thomas Hobbes and John Locke believed in the social utility of religion. John Stuart Mill repudiated Christianity, but not the “religion of humanity.” Auguste Comte, in spite of his denial of all metaphysical validity of religious belief, was willing to accept as a civic good the moral and ritual traditions of at least Catholic Christianity. Émile Durkheim was not so positive. For him the major task of the state was to free individuals from partial societies such as families, religious collectives, and labor and professional groups.

In the twentieth century, John Dewey was to adopt the views of Mill and Durkheim. Whereas Dewey began his career speaking of “our obligation to know God,” the mature Dewey had no use for religious institutions, whatever roles they may have played in the past. Religion, he held, is an unreliable source of knowledge and, in spite of contentions to the contrary, even of motivation. The thrust of Dewey’s critique of religion is not merely to eliminate churches from political life but to reduce their effectiveness as agencies in private life. Dewey’s philosophy became, *de facto*, that of the American public school, with consequences for morality and culture that we are now encountering.

As Europe cedes the Continent to Islam, we may be aware but reluctant to accept the pessimism of prominent political theorists who try to envision what life might be like under an Islamic theocracy at odds with Christianity. We in the United States are beginning to face a similar fate as our institutions come under the influence of an intellectual cadre at war with Christianity. Absent a respect for the Constitution’s Bill of Rights, absent the recognition of a natural moral law, all decisions become political. Unless the Constitution holds, those who control the media are likely to determine the future of the country.

Book Reviews

Ross Douthat. *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018. xvii + 234 pp.

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

The Diocese of Washington has recently issued a fifty-six-page, richly illustrated booklet entitled *Joy of Love in Marriage and the Family: A Pastoral Plan to Implement Amoris Laetitia*. His Eminence Donald Cardinal Wuerl has made it available to all parishioners in the diocese. The faithful are assured that the Church's teaching on faith and morals has not changed, and that there is an objective moral order to which one is accountable. "While one's culpability before God follows one's conscience, [nevertheless] the decision of conscience to action one way or another requires guidance and spiritual formation." The booklet is designed to offer such guidance and does so admirably.

It is the ambiguity of Pope Francis's 256-page *Amoris laetitia*, the longest papal document in history, that provoked this unusual diocesan response on the part of Cardinal Wuerl.

Pope Francis, in discussing the Church's teaching on marriage and sexuality, seems to have fallen into the situational trap. Speaking of Catholics in irregular marital relationships, Francis offered a list of mitigating circumstances that would allow the divorced and remarried to receive communion, seemingly undermining the Church's traditional teaching on the sanctity of marriage. Francis may not have explicitly taught heresy, but there were doubts with respect to his intent. In 2016 four cardinals (Raymond Burke, Walter Brandmüller, Carlo Caffarra, and Joachim Meisner) in a private letter to the pope, raised a series of *dubia* that asked for clarification of certain parts of *Amoris laetitia*.

The cardinals were not the first to question the pope's intention. Two book-length studies appeared shortly after the publication of *Amoris Laetitia*. One was *The Dictator Pope* by H.J.A. Sire, under the pseudonym Marcantonio Colonna,¹ and the other, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism* by the American journalist Ross Douthat.²

Douthat ends his book with a telling passage that he takes from a work by the British writer Paul Vallely, the author of *Pope Francis: Untying the Knots*.

¹ H.J.A. Sire, *The Dictator Pope: The Inside Story of the Francis Papacy* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2017).

² Ross Douthat, *To Change the Church: Pope Francis and the Future of Catholicism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2018).

Vallely tells the story of a Latin American Jesuit who served for years under Jorge Bergoglio when he was provincial of the order in Argentina. The Jesuit is quoted as saying, "As provincial he generated divided loyalties: some groups almost worshiped him, while others would have nothing to do with him, and he would hardly speak to them.... He had the aura of spirituality which he used to gain power. It would be a catastrophe to have someone like him in the Holy See. He left the Society of Jesus in Argentina destroyed, with Jesuits divided and institutions destroyed and financially broken. We have spent two decades trying to fix the chaos that the man has left us."

Douthat believes that Pope Francis by his reckless style has plunged the Church into the worst theological crisis in its history. Douthat is not a historian but an op-ed columnist for *The New York Times* who knows enough history to warrant his assessment of Francis' papacy. He also knows enough theology to recognize the seriousness of the Church's teaching on marriage. That teaching, he reminds his readers, begins with the Gospel of Mark where Christ says, "whoever divorces his wife and takes another commits adultery." This vision of the indissolubility of marriage was crucial to Christianity's development. Douthat rightly adds, "If a rule rooted in Jesus's own words, confirmed by dogmatic definitions, and explicitly reconfirmed by the previous two popes...could be so easily rewritten...then what rule or teaching could not?"

Throughout *To Change the Church*, Douthat addresses what he regards as the big issues facing the Church, namely, clarity with respect to the purpose of the Church itself, the authority of the Bible, the nature of the sacraments, the definition of sin, the true identity of Jesus, the nature of God, and the reality of hell. These have all been addressed before, notably by Vatican Council II.

The retreat from traditional teaching on marriage and sexuality may have begun in the aftermath of Vatican II, although nothing in the Council's deliberations and doctrines were meant to rewrite doctrine or Protestantize the Catholic faith. Yet the likely impact of Vatican II was noted even before the Council was closed. In retrospect it is hard to deny the ambiguous nature of many of the implementation documents released after the close of the Council. Even *Gadium et spes: The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World*, one of four constitutions, lent itself to varied interpretations, left and right, liberal and traditional.

Douthat recounts the consequences: "In the heartland of the 'Spirit of Vatican II Catholicism,' the northern European nations whose theologians contributed so much to the Council's liberal voice, the Church's collapse was swift, steep and stunning. Over the course of two generations, much of German, French, Belgium and Dutch Catholicism became Potemkin churches, rich in art and finery and historic buildings, but empty of numbers, vitality and zeal." The subsequent

promulgation of *Humanae vitae* by Paul VI in 1968 stoked further dissent by liberal theologians and other intellectuals.

By 1970 the institutional collapse of the Church in the West was evident in the sudden drop in religious vocations, with many priests and nuns abandoning their vocations, and a drop in Mass attendance. Karol Wojtyła, who had played a significant role in the Council's deliberations, recognized that reform had turned into revolution. Within months after his election in 1978 as John Paul II, he set about clarifying the situation with his encyclical *Redemptor hominis*. Thus began a resurgence that continued during the papacy of Benedict XVI. A Catholic renaissance was in the making, but it is threatened by the directives that have been given during the current papacy.

Douthat sums up the situation: "Many of the legacy institutions of Western Catholicism, the diocesan bureaucracies and national committees and prominent universities and charitable organizations never reconciled themselves with the John Paul II era, as they went along with it half-heartedly, awaiting a different era and a different pope. The liberal element now has their pope."

In a playful supposition, Douthat suggests that the damage done may await the Council of Nairobi in 2088 to definitively clarify the ambiguity created by Pope Francis. He is particularly appreciative of the role that Cardinal Burke is playing in his defense of orthodoxy, comparing him to St. Athanasius, who defended the tradition against the Arians of the fourth century. Who knows, Douthat reasons, some future generation may pray to St. Raymond Burke, lion of orthodoxy, as we today pray to St. Athanasius for his defense of the Nicene Creed.

The recently published text *The Paris Document: A Europe We Can Believe In*, signed by thirteen distinguished European scholars, is a distinctly European document, but it is one that Douthat could endorse for its recognition of the Christian origins of Western civilization, for he too believes that the survival of Western culture depends on an acknowledgment of its sources.

Given what this reader regards as the accuracy of its reporting, *To Change the Church* is highly recommended for both the informed and the ill-informed.

Ludwig Ott. *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*. Translated by Patrick Lynch, revised and updated by Robert Fastiggi. Castletown, Isle of Man: Baronius Press, 2018.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Koterski, S.J., Fordham University, Bronx NY

A highly reliable manual of Catholic dogma that is already a classic has now gotten even better. The updated version of Ludwig Ott's *Fundamentals of*

Catholic Dogma, originally issued in German in 1952 and then published in an English translation in 1955, has now been fully revised by Robert Fastiggi, a distinguished member of our Fellowship.

The material newly included in the current German edition comes from the documents of Vatican II – mainly from the section on revelation in *Dei verbum* and the section on the Church in *Lumen gentium*. As a sourcebook on Catholic dogma, Ott’s volume featured not only accounts of official ecclesial statements from popes and councils but also summaries of significant work by Catholic theologians over the ages about important dogmatic questions and of the response of the Magisterium to these theologians.

Fastiggi’s practice in the new edition is entirely consistent with Ott’s own constant fidelity to the Church’s Magisterium, especially in clearly distinguishing what is still a matter of theological speculation from what is the constant teaching of the Church. Of particular help throughout this volume is the way in which it joins to each dogmatic thesis an appropriate “theological note” to indicate the level of doctrinal authority the statement has and thus the degree of assent that is expected from the faithful. For each point of dogma covered in the volume there is an account of the supporting evidence for the position in Sacred Scripture and Tradition, a summary of the historical development of the particular dogma, and a discussion of various theological proposals related to a given dogmatic thesis, including documentation of any ecclesial statements that gave official approval to a particular position or that rendered a judgment about its heterodoxy.

Fastiggi’s updating includes a revision of some of the technical terms so as to reflect current usage (for example, changing “Holy Writ” to “Sacred Scripture”). Likewise, he has modified the style of biblical citations to reflect what has become standard practice in Catholic bibles that are in print today. Further, the references to canon law now place citations to the 1917 Code in brackets and put the citations to the 1983 Code to the fore.

What is especially valuable is this edition’s care in handling the theological notes. The establishment of the appropriate level of doctrinal authority for any given position is an important scholarly task that has been somewhat neglected in recent decades, as the late Cardinal Avery Dulles, S.J., notes in his *Magisterium: Teacher and Guardian of the Faith* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press, 2007). The record of these determinations about the expected level of assent that are found in this handbook will be of enormous value for anyone trying to understand how theological ideas (those newly proposed or those raised at some earlier point in the history of thought) stand vis-à-vis the Church’s perennial teaching of its dogma.

How best to use a book like this? Its indices, of course, make it a marvelous sourcebook in its own right, but it will also prove helpful for use in conjunction with the definitive collection of ecclesial texts found in Heinrich Denzinger’s

Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei (43rd edition), revised, enlarged, and (in collaboration with Helmut Hoping) edited by Peter Hünermann, recently translated into English by Fastiggi and Anne Englund Hash as *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012).

While the main way in which anyone will use the recent editions of the works originated by Ott and Denzinger is likely to be for scholarly reference on particular points, Fastiggi's new volume could also be read through by an individual wanting a survey of the breadth of Catholic dogma, whether for the first time or to review the subject. In preparing this review, I could not help but recall with pleasure the underlining and annotations that I made in my now dog-eared paperback copy. It gave me to remember the hours spent making my way through this material one summer during graduate studies in philosophy, in an effort to understand the Faith better and to learn more about the interplay of reason and revelation. I remain grateful to a mentor at that time who turned my attention to Ott's great work, and we can all be grateful for Fastiggi's labors on the present volume.

Christopher O. Blum and Joshua P. Hochschild. *A Mind at Peace: Reclaiming an Ordered Soul in the Age of Distraction*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2017. 179 pp.

Reviewed by Marie I. George, St. John's University, Queens, NY

The internet and social media are part of contemporary culture and cannot simply be ignored: schools communicate with parents using it; virtually all groups use it; research is greatly facilitated by it; and so forth. Despite the numerous downsides of internet and social media usage – shortened attention spans, loss of interpersonal skills, sleep problems, to name a few – electronic usage is here to stay. For this reason, Blum and Hochschild do not recommend throwing away our devices (though they do recommend that we at times “fast” from them), but rather propose to show us how to “cultivate the qualities of character [we] need to survive in our media-saturated environment” (back cover). The authors take a step back from the immediate problems posed by electronic devices and address what makes for a well-ordered soul, so that we integrate our device usage into the bigger picture of our lives as rational beings ordered to God.

This short book draws on Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. It is substantive, but not abstruse or ponderous. It is divided into three sections: living well, sensing well, and thinking well. Each section is divided into short chapters

averaging five pages in length. At the end of each chapter are questions for reflection, some of which concern the more general ideas discussed in the chapter and some of which concern applications of these ideas specifically to internet usage.

The first section on living well is devoted to various virtues in our exterior acts. It opens by reminding us that we cannot be responsible agents if we are compulsion driven. In subsequent chapters the virtues of temperance, courage, and liberality are examined. Temperance allows us to readily set aside sensory goods in light of higher spiritual goods. Courage allows us to readily eschew alleviating boredom through continual distraction. And liberality provides detachment from material goods (for example, the latest model smartphone). The authors then speak of qualities needed for friendship: trustworthiness and the ability to be really present to another person. Then they speak of the need to direct one's life to the common good, having in their sights how internet usage tends to fuel individualism.

The next sections focus on virtues concerned more immediately with what is going on in our minds. The authors recognize the dependency of thinking on sensing, and so they address the latter first, speaking about the five senses, as well as about the inner senses (imagination, memory, and so on). In these chapters the authors comment not only on some of the more obvious harms that internet overuse poses to our sensory lives, but also on some of the subtler ones, such as how smartphone usage tends to engender insensitivity to the differences that distinguish the various kinds of natural things that surround us.

The final section begins by looking at how reason ought to operate in both practical and theoretical realms, and closes by speaking about the wisdom that is a divine gift and the crucial need for humility if we are to profit from this gift. In this section, the authors reflect on, among other things, the vice of curiosity, which consists in failing to direct our desire to know toward perennial truths and away from matters of no importance (think of all the links to gossip and trivia that appear on the bottom of or alongside many internet articles).

The authors' philosophical reflections are on the whole insightful, though I find some of what is said about the internal senses questionable. For example, the authors claim that what Aristotle and Aquinas "intended to signify by that name [that is, the 'common sense'] has no relation whatsoever to the faculty of good judgment that comes to mind when we hear or use the phrase" (73). Yet Aquinas says that the internal sense that is called the "common sense" contributes to goodness of judgment: "It is manifest, however, that the goodness of counsel and the goodness of judgment are not reduced to the same cause; for many who engage in counsel well are nevertheless not of good sense, as judging rightly. Just as also in theoretical matters, there are some who are good inquirers...but

nevertheless are not of good judgment, which is on account of a defect of the intellect, which mainly happens from a bad disposition of the common sense that does not judge well" (*Summa Theologiae* II-II, q. 51, a. 3). Also, at the sensory level, the common sense allows for the knowledge of the *per accidens* sensibles; for example, it is what allows one to associate the shiny appearance of a wet floor with the tactile quality of slipperiness. People who lack common sense take longer to make such connections, and consequently sometimes do things that display bad judgment or a lack of common sense, such as running on a shiny floor.

The book could have been longer. There are a number of problems that electronic device usage generates that the authors omit or could have further elaborated on. It would have been worth noting that viewing images and reading articles online generate different problems. In the case of imagery, the authors do point out that "when our lives are dominated by man-made imagery, we are at risk of losing the ability to distinguish between what is real and what is not" (103). However, yet another problem arises when images of real things are selectively posted. The resulting distortion is known to sometimes lead to depression in young people who view social media images of friends whose lives appear to be more interesting than their own and who appear to be more popular than they are. Though perhaps none of the readers of *A Mind at Peace* are susceptible to this sort of thing – and I say perhaps – still, a reminder that generally a selection is made as to what the viewer is shown would have been helpful. Also, while the authors speak about the importance of the sense of touch they never explicitly point out that it gives us direct knowledge of things, whereas smartphones at best give us only knowledge of images of things (that is, when what is displayed on the screen is not a fabrication).

When it comes to reading things online, a serious problem I observe with my students is that they think that if they google an answer then what comes up is the correct answer. This destroys wonder and engenders double ignorance, as they then think they know things they really don't know. This can be because the answer is false, but even if the answer is true, many fail to realize that it is not an answer for them if they cannot understand what is being proposed in terms of their own reasoning based on their own experience. Perhaps the authors thought that the intended readers of the book would not be susceptible to such erroneous thinking, but I'm not sure that is the case. People who are in the habit of looking everything up on line are liable sometimes to confuse seeking answers to questions concerning singular contingents, such as "where is the nearest gas station?", with seeking answers to questions that concern universal truths. The authors do emphasize that the latter is not something that can be quick, but requires reflection over long periods of time. Still the themes of the premature death of wonder and the birth of double ignorance would have made appropriate

additions in a book that draws from Plato and Aristotle.

There are doubtlessly some readers who could have profited from a reminded that the vice of vanity is fueled by selfies. In a similar vein, some of us could use a reminder that academic websites where one can track how often one's work is followed or cited can also fuel vanity. Though these sites can be viewed for legitimate research purposes, there is a risk that they be accessed to flatter one's ego.

Overall *A Mind at Peace* is a clear and practical guide to moral and spiritual growth, especially in regard to our usage of electronics. We have reason to thank Blum and Hochschild for tackling the issue of electronics usage by putting it in the broader content of our lives as intellectual beings ordered to God. *A Mind at Peace* is a book to read during Advent or Lent, or anytime one feels oneself falling under the spell of the internet Siren.

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

Reviewed by Debra Black, Graduate Management School, University of Liverpool, Business/Management Programs Course Chair, University of Maryland

Into His Likeness is a well-written Catholic devotional appropriate for men and women (mature teens and adults). Beautiful in its simplicity, Sri's book takes us easily through what can otherwise be a difficult process of paradigm shift. After first explaining Jesus's love for us in our imperfection, we are walked through three stages: "Be My Disciple," "The Encounter," and "Transformed by Fire." Each stage has several reflections of a few pages and two open reflection questions. It is a comfortable, nonintimidating journey in which each word has impact in Faith.

The focus of the book is that we are to be disciples in the midst of our ordinary lives and that we need to allow God to transform us. For example, we are not just given the prayer of St. Ignatius of Loyola ("Take all my liberty") but challenged to face its message. To ease us into this, practical metaphors are used that make doing so understandable and doable.

One aspect of Sri's approachable form is the encouragement to use our imagination to consider the *experience* of the disciples. By profiling Jesus and his disciples with concise detail, Sri is able to capture their personalities, perspectives, and emotions.

The cultural explanations and definitions of key terms set the historical context for each scripture passage. Sri surprises the reader by revealing how the

biblical character grows in relation with and likeness to Jesus. Done simply, the book's profundity is captured in the directness of the points made. Consider this passage, for example:

Jesus accepts this imperfect human love of Peter's and transforms it into agape. Peter finally presents himself to Jesus as he really is – not in the inflated view he previously had of himself or in the ideal way he'd like to live someday, but in the truth of his own fragility. And once Peter does this, once he comes to terms with the truth about himself – that he is simply not capable of agape right now – a new era begins in Peter's friendship with Christ.

Ultimately this coming to terms with the truth about ourselves is the difficult barrier that all of us must traverse to enter into a relationship with Christ.

Sri's introduction offers thirteen simple but thought-provoking reflections. Stepping casually through each of them, Sri invites the reader to voice any latent resistances. His probes (such as "Are you a follower of Jesus or just a fan?") are accompanied by insights that speak to the heart such as being "uncomfortable talking about Jesus as God... [Because i]f Jesus is God, then I must follow Him". Sri points out that "the Disciples are not models of perfection...[but instead] models of a process," which can open our eyes a bit further. Following this honest look at discipleship, Sri prepares the reader for an encounter with Christ.

Yet the reader will naturally want to know "what's in it for me." Sri explains that the reality of an encounter with Christ is not simply that we follow our chosen rabbi. Rather, the meaning of sanctifying grace is that Jesus exists within us, causing us to share in his life and enabling us to love supernaturally, particularly by addressing weaknesses in our life.

Supporting this point, Sri cites Pope Benedict XVI: "Holiness does not consist in never having erred or sinned. Holiness increases the capacity for conversion, for repentance, for willingness to start again and, especially, for reconciliation and forgiveness.... It is not the fact that we have never erred but our capacity for reconciliation and forgiveness which makes us saints. And we can all learn that way of holiness" (General Audience, January 31, 2007). A relationship with Jesus will mean understanding that while we strive for Christ, it is common to fall back into our own brokenness and need to be lifted up by God's grace. For Sri, this is the norm for the spiritual life. The necessary paradigm shift is for us to realize that even in a fall we can experience an encounter "that is a surer and more direct way up to God." Sri writes:

Even many of us Christians go through life relying on our talents, hard work, popularity, success.... But when all is taken away – when we experience broken relationships, health problems, job problems, marriage problems, being overwhelmed by the demands of raising children, or other sufferings – and none of our normal supports are working, the only thing left to cling to is God. It's then that we come to know God's love as more than an abstract

theory. We experience his love personally supporting us, holding us together, and helping us through.

Staying with this encounter and not running from it disposes the reader to let go of false images of God and self, and doing this can bring healing.

The final section of the book brings the reader to consider forming a holistic relationship with Jesus through guidance in regard to the external influences upon the mind. By naming the common ailments and attachments from which most people suffer, Sri encourages the reader to think about the need to temper the external influences that distract us from awareness of God's highest truth: "the most important part of the universe is spiritual reality." Sri offers practical suggestions and explains the role of the sacraments to help readers consider how best to maintain their interior life with ways to work prayer into their daily schedules.

Sri is straightforward, but with soft edges. Becoming a disciple requires shifting paradigms and changing perspectives. *Into His Likeness* helps the reader to begin that transition. It would be particularly useful for those who do not know how to begin a habit of talking with God, those who would like to get more out of the Mass or the scriptures, and those who are simply tired of running from their own interior restlessness. It is an enjoyable read.

Leo J. Elders. *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors: The Philosophers and the Church Fathers in His Works*. Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2018. xv + 381 pp. Cloth, \$75.00.

Reviewed by Anne Barbeau Gardiner, Professor Emerita, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, New York

In this informative work on St. Thomas Aquinas and his predecessors, from Plato to Maimonides, Fr. Leo Elders explains the sources that Thomas consulted – works written by ancient philosophers, Church fathers, and medieval philosophers. He explains not only the translations that Aquinas read and the frequency of his references to them but also the extent to which he agreed with them and the reasons why he found himself in disagreement and in need of reformulating their positions in light of his own philosophy of being.

Thomas mentioned Plato in about a thousand of his texts. Even though he was able to access very few of his dialogues directly, he understood Plato's thought profoundly. Elders explains that he included under Plato's name various Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists. For Elders, Aquinas "familiarized himself

with the intellectual universe of Platonism in an admirable way.” At the center of Elders’s comments on Thomas’s use of Plato are his contributions to a philosophy of mind and a defense of the soul’s immortality. In his discussion of the 500-some times when Thomas discusses the “platonici” – in particular Plotinus, Porphyry, and Proclus – Elders explains the reasons for Aquinas’s rejection of the Platonic thesis that “the Good is prior to being.”

Thomas referred to Aristotle about 2,000 times within his corpus. He found in Aristotle’s theory of act and potency “a key to understanding physical reality.” He admired his doctrine of first principles as well as his theories of the analogy of being, of virtue as the substance of the moral life, and of man’s end as happiness through contemplation. He agreed with Aristotle’s criticism of Plato’s Ideas but avoided his rejection of “participation,” a concept that Aquinas developed in his own way so as to express “the relationship of created beings with God.” In his seven last years Thomas wrote commentaries on twelve treatises by Aristotle, putting each in the context of the Stagirite’s entire work and thereby allowing himself to go beyond the limits of the immediate text under discussion. In his commentaries on the *Metaphysics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* Thomas did not, out of respect, let his own views intrude, but elsewhere in his writings he made various “corrections” whenever he felt that Plato or Aristotle wrote something that was not in accord with the Faith.

As for the Stoics, Thomas had direct access only to the Latin writer Seneca. For the views of other Stoics he made use of the remarks made about them by Cicero, Augustine, and others. Aquinas’s understanding of the natural moral law rests on an insight that he found discussed by Cicero and the Stoics, namely, that we rightly consider “good” what corresponds to the fundamental inclination of our human nature. Thomas, however, corrected the Stoic position on fate and the freedom of the will by insisting that the stars have no influence on our spiritual faculties.

St. Augustine is the Father of the Church most often mentioned by Thomas in his works. There are some 11,000 references to him. Fr. Elders speaks of a “real communion of mind” between these two thinkers with regard to theology, but he notes that Thomas “repeatedly” called attention to various “mistaken philosophical doctrines” associated with Augustine. Thomas saw him as an “undisputed master for the interpretation of the New Testament and a witness to man’s inner life.” He also realized that he was close to Augustine in his doctrine of being, and he felt that Augustine was groping toward a distinction between the essence of creatures and their act of being. Fr. Elders observes that the *Summa Theologiae* is “an uninterrupted dialogue with Augustine” and that the “vast extent” of Thomas’s reading of Augustine is revealed in that he cites not only this figure’s well-known works but also his sermons, letters, and treatises.

There are about 2,700 references to St. Jerome in Thomas's works, including references to his letters, his biblical commentaries, and his prologues to various books of the bible. Curiously, there are few studies on the importance of Jerome for Thomas. Fr. Elders shows Thomas adding nuances and precision to what Jerome said in various places. Jerome, for instance, said that anger was a mortal sin, and so Thomas added this qualification: "anger against sin is praiseworthy." Thomas agreed with Jerome on the importance of a life lived according to the evangelical counsels. While Jerome saw a need for withdrawal from ordinary society, Thomas argued that the monastic life in a city was possible.

St. John Chrysostom is mentioned even more often than St. Jerome in Thomas's works. There are 3,687 references to him. In fact, Chrysostom "accompanies Thomas in the questions on the life of Jesus." Thomas presented Chrysostom as "a vigorous defender of the primacy of Peter" but corrected him on the Virgin Mary so as to clarify that Our Lady never committed even a venial sin. Sometimes Thomas preferred Chrysostom's explanation of a scriptural passage to Augustine's, as in his discussion on John 11, where Jesus says that the day is coming "when you will not ask me any questions." Chrysostom interprets it thus: "that day means the time when the Holy Spirit will teach them." When Chrysostom said that Jesus will have "judiciary power" at the end of time because he is God, Thomas insists that this will be so because he is "the head of redeemed humanity."

Fr. Elders notes the "general presence" of the works of Boethius in the writings of Thomas. Aquinas wrote commentaries on two of his five theological treatises: *De Trinitate* (a work on the Trinity that does not cite scripture) and *De Hebdomadibus*. In his analysis of Boethius's first treatise, Thomas clarified "the scientific status of theology and of the speculative sciences and exposed the different methods to be used."

There are some 2,500 references to St. Gregory the Great in Thomas's works, more than to Jerome and Ambrose but fewer than to Chrysostom and Augustine. He is a "massive presence" in the *Catena Aurea*, where his allegorical interpretations are cited over 700 times, and he is cited 479 times in the questions on the moral life in the *Summa Theologiae*. Thomas was familiar not only with St. Gregory's commentaries on Job and Ezekiel and his *Forty Homilies on the Gospels* but also with his *Dialogues* and his letters.

Like others of his time, Thomas accepted Pseudo-Dionysius as a first-century writer rather than taking him as the sixth-century writer that he actually was, but he recognized the Platonic character of his works and reformulated some of his statements to place them "in the framework of his own philosophy of being." He also differed from him in emphasizing "the personal nature of God."

In the thirteenth century the Arabic treatise *Liber de Causis* was wrongly

attributed to Aristotle. Thomas's "precise attitude" toward this work has not been much studied, even though he referred to it 230 times, drew attention to its Platonic character, and corrected "some of its doctrines." In a "dense and quite long commentary" Thomas made it clear that this work was not by Aristotle, for he insisted that to understand the *Liber de Causis* it was necessary to consult its source, namely, the *Elementatio* of the Neoplatonist Proclus.

In Thomas's works there are more than 1,000 references to St. John Damascene's *De Fide Orthodoxa*, which was seen as a commentary on the Nicene Creed. Damascene is very present in part III of the *Summa Theologiae*. Thomas corrects or reformulates some of views of Damascene, especially on the procession of the Holy Spirit, on angelic powers, on man as made in the image of God, and on freedom of the will. Similarly, there are 300 references to St. Anselm in Thomas's works, and here too we find corrections, as once again on the procession of the Holy Spirit.

In the last part of Fr. Elders's book we read about Thomas's references to two Muslim and two Jewish philosophers of the Middle Ages: Avicenna, Averroes, Avicbron, and Maimonides. Thomas saw that the Persian philosopher Avicenna interpreted Aristotle through the Neoplatonism of Plotinus and followed the latter's emanation theory. Among Avicenna's teachings that Thomas rejected in "strong terms" in the 1250s were his claim that God had no knowledge of "individual things" and that man had no freedom of will. In particular, Thomas corrected Avicenna on "being" by insisting that it is not an "accident" added to "essence" but the act and the reality of any essence.

While Averroes rejected Platonism, he denied that God knew individual things and events, excluded Providence, and posited eternal matter. In five different texts Thomas reproached Averroes for having given "a perverse presentation" of Aristotle's view of the human intellect. Averroes was mentioned some thirty times in Thomas's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* for his "valuable explanations," but the fact that he had "led several Christian masters into error" probably accounts for Thomas's "very critical" response to him.

Avicbron was a Jewish scholar who also, like Avicenna, combined a Neoplatonic vision with his own interpretation of Aristotle. With regard to Maimonides, who is cited over eighty times, Thomas in general shows respect, though he disagrees with his theory of prophecy as marked by rationalism, with his view that there is no analogy between God and his creatures, and with his teaching that Providence does not reach down to the irrational animals.

It is hard in such a short review to do justice to work of such depth and learning. *Thomas Aquinas and His Predecessors* is a truly valuable book, one that gives us a vast panorama of the authors with whom Thomas conducted dialogues in his writings. We see here part of the saint's mental universe and its learned

inhabitants, and we listen with great interest to the “corrections” Thomas is obliged to make to their teachings, for the sake of the Truth.

Donald Haggerty. *Conversion: Spiritual Insights into an Essential Encounter with God*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017. 243 pp.

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

In *Dives et Misericordia* Pope John Paul II wrote that Christians, having experienced the power of God’s love and mercy, must live “*in statu conversionis* and it is this state of conversion which marks out the most profound element of the pilgrimage of every man and woman on earth in *statu viatoris*.” This statement corrects the common misbelief that all conversions are single, radical turning points in a person’s life. While some striking conversions, such as St. Paul’s or Dorothy Day’s, exhibit sudden transformations as the result of God’s love, there is more to say about conversion, for all Christians must regularly adjust the course of their lives to avoid sin and follow Christ.

Fr. Donald Haggerty offers a series of moving reflections on turning back to God in *Conversion: Spiritual Insights into an Essential Encounter with God*. He begins by noting that people require a restoration of spiritual vigor at various points in their lives: “We do not have to be sullied with terrible corruption in our lives to need this experience of conversion. We simply have to be ignorant of Our Lord to some degree” (23). Since we are all sinners, conversions should take place within our lives as course corrections in which we turn away from mediocrity and indolence to acquire a more intense desire for God. “Of its very nature, a conversion is an experience of divine mercy. An exquisite gesture of divine regard has taken place toward the uniqueness of our soul” (74).

The book focuses especially on the important period *after* the experience of the grace of conversion. In doing so, Haggerty demonstrates that this time provides invaluable opportunities for spiritual growth. “It is a privileged interval of discovery, not just in coming to know God more vividly, but in sensing a request from God to let our life be used by him” (39). When God bestows the grace to overcome habitual sin or spiritual torpor, that gift must become the impetus for a more intense following of Christ.

I would highlight four major themes in this wonderful volume. First, Haggerty reflects on how a greater understanding of sin helps the converted to pursue holiness. A return to God is accompanied by the realization that sin robs one of precious moments that could have been lived more fully in the supernatural life. “Recognition that lost periods of a life can never be returned can provoke an

intense desire to give completely to God what is yet remaining in a life” (43). The prodigal son must have mourned the years deprived of his father’s loving presence more than the lost inheritance. Thus, the converted Christian hungers to reinvigorate his new life with the power of divine mercy and grace. Sainthood becomes the goal; the longing for a full life of grace is the source of hope.

Second, a conversion does not remain insular, since it awakens the hunger to bring others to God. “On the contrary, [God] wants the remembrance of any former sin simply to compel our soul to a clear recognition of mercy. And that awareness is meant for one thing: to make our soul uniquely fortified for the effort of seeking the conversion of other souls in need” (62). St. Ignatius’s emphasis on the “salvation of souls” – the primary mission of those who have experienced God’s mercy – leads the converted Christian toward those in one’s family, community, and apostolate. The joy of conversion is to be shared.

Third, a conversion is characterized by a recognition of the need to seek God’s will always. Haggerty credits the French Jesuit Louis Lallemant with the idea of a “second conversion” and the fuller response to the divine will. “[Lallemant’s] view was that a man must come to a point in life, sometime after a commitment to God is already firmly in place, in which he realizes that he has not yet fully offered his life to God” (152). This does not mean that one will always have absolute clarity in respect to the divine will, but it does involve a greater abandonment to God’s plan of love.

Finally, a conversion inspires a greater self-gift when participating in the sacraments. The Eucharist, in particular, becomes the source of life and divine union for one who has recommitted himself to the Lord. “As our life continues after a conversion, the Mass is only superficially lived if we do not place our own lives on the altar of sacrifice and reaffirm our own offering in union with Christ’s offering” (213). The complete gift of self finds its renewal and fulfillment in the Body and Blood of Christ.

Haggerty reflects on many other important themes, including the commitment to the poor, the interior life of priests, and a life of simplicity. This is a superb book for spiritual reading that will undoubtedly lead to many conversions and to deeper commitments to Christ.

Edward Feser. *Five Proofs of the Existence of God*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2017.

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

This book provides further evidence of the resurgence of interest in natural philosophy now taking place, and in this particular case the evidence presented is

especially weighty. From the book's title one might suppose that the five proofs to be treated by Edward Feser, given his impressive credentials as a Thomist philosopher, are the famous *Quinque Viae* to be found in the First Part of the *Summa Theologiae*, but that would be an unfounded supposition. To be sure, one of the proofs he provides is based on the thought of St. Thomas, but the other four proofs have their origins in the thought of Aristotle, Plotinus, St. Augustine, and Leibniz. In all, it makes for a rather formidable lineup.

The first five chapters of the book are devoted to the arguments themselves, a chapter being given to each argument, beginning with the Aristotelian Proof and ending with the Rationalist Proof. Chapter 6 treats of the nature and attributes of God, and how he relates to the world. The final chapter presents common objections to natural theology and then responds to them. The five chapters devoted to the proofs all have the same basic structure: they begin with an informal statement of the argument, in two stages; this is followed by a detailed, step-by-step, formal statement of the argument, especially valuable as a crisp, concise summary of the argument just given; next comes the presentation of various objections to the argument and the author's responses to them. This structure shows itself to be a very effective way of handling the book's subject matter. It could have been mapped out and executed as successfully as it was only by an accomplished teacher.

In the informal statements of the arguments, Feser "talks out" in an engaging, straightforward manner that avoids technical or abstruse language the central idea around which the argument is built, giving helpful concrete examples to illustrate and illuminate various philosophical notions that bear upon the central idea. Thus, in the Aristotelian Proof the discussion focuses on the distinction between potency and act, stressing that the transition from the first to the second represents the essence, the explanatory core, of all motion or change. The book as a whole is exceptionally well designed to fulfill its aims, but what I find particularly commanding are the objections that are to be found in every chapter: first of all, for the author's strong, even-handed articulation of the objections themselves (he does not set up against himself an array of straw men); and, second, for the masterful way in which he responds to them. Taking them all together, the objections are remarkably comprehensive; there is not a single position Feser takes on a significant issue that does not have an objection thrown up against it, and he meets each of them head-on and deals with it decisively.

It is important to emphasize what Feser is not doing in this book: he is not merely giving us explications and interpretations of specific texts written by any of the five thinkers with whom he is dealing, important and valuable though that would be. Rather, he is culling from each of them key ideas representative of each thinker, around which they built their proofs for the existence of God, and then

building his own argumentative architecture around those ideas. The end result is that each of the carefully developed proofs as presented in this book are to be uniquely attributed to Edward Feser, and they bear upon them the stamp of originality.

The Aristotelian Proof, the most fully developed in the book, has the distinction between act and potency as its central idea. Whatever is potential in any particular respect can have its potential actualized only by what is already in act in that particular respect, hence the venerable principle that whatever is moved is moved by another. If the mover in this case is itself moved, then we do not have a complete explanation for either the moved or the mover. It will not do to suppose an infinite series of moved movers, for that offers no explanation for the supposedly infinite series itself. To explain not only the motion or change but also the very existence of any created being, we must conclude to an unmoved or prime mover, what Feser pointedly calls an *unactualized actualizer*. And this is God.

The Neoplatonic Proof, which comes from Plotinus and his doctrine of the One, has the composition of created beings, the fact that they are made up of parts, as its central idea. The very nature of composed things is such that they must have a cause to account for their composition, for there is potential to be realized in any composition. A composed thing may cause a composed thing, but there can be no appeal to a supposed infinite series of composed things. The only explanation for the existence of each and every composed thing is a being that is utterly simple, containing no parts, hence pure act. And this is God.

The focus of the Augustinian Proof is on abstract ideas such as universals, propositions, and numbers. Now, all of these abstract ideas can exist in the human mind, but given the way they are interrelated with one another, and given how some of them would seem to have a timeless quality to them, such as the mathematical proposition that $7 + 3 = 10$, they could not have their origins in the contingent, time-bound, human mind. This leads us to the conclusion that there exists a supreme, eternal intellect that is the ultimate source of abstract ideas. And this is God.

The Thomistic Proof has as its central idea the distinction between essence and existence, which is foundational to all created being. Essence tells us *what* a thing is, existence tells us *that* it is. With regard to that distinction, essence relates to existence as potency to act. Now, we have seen that whatever is marked by potential has to have that potential realized by what is already in act. But here the potential is for existence itself. It is obvious that no existent can actualize its own potential for existence, for that would entail the absurdity that it brought itself into existence. Given the fact that all contingent being is marked by the foundational distinction between essence and existence, we must, to explain their existence,

conclude to a being for whom there is no such distinction, for whom his essence is simply to exist, who is subsistent existence itself. And this is God.

The fifth proof, which Feser calls the Rationalist Proof, draws upon the thought of Gottfried Leibniz, and is built up around the principle of sufficient reason, which tells us that whatever exists has an explanation for its existence and its nature. To attempt to deny the principle of sufficient reason opens up a whole array of insuperable problems. Now, because each and every contingent being has potentiality as an inextricable aspect of its nature, it cannot be the explanation for itself. Given that universal state of affairs, we must conclude to the existence of a necessary or a self-explanatory being. And that is God. The explanation for God is God himself.

Each of these five proofs for the existence of God takes for its point of departure a different central idea, but all of those ideas are closely interrelated. In his chapter on the Rationalist Proof Feser writes: “this way of formulating the argument [by avoiding an infinite series of causes] is reminiscent of the Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic, and Thomistic arguments we have considered in earlier chapters. And one can take the argument of this chapter, and the arguments of those earlier chapters, to complement one another” (159). All of the arguments, though taking different paths, lead to the same conclusion: God exists.

In the book’s sixth chapter, after giving ample accounts of the principle of proportionate causality, *agere sequitur esse*, and the analogy of being, all of which will figure prominently in the chapter, Feser goes on to treat various of the divine attributes, such as the unity, simplicity, and immutability of God. The discussion of divine conservation and concurrence is followed by a fresh and stimulating treatment of the subject of miracles. The book’s final chapter, dealing with common objections to natural theology, represents one of the book’s most important contributions. Here Feser responds, in a systematic and thoroughgoing way, to seventeen specific objections to natural theology, the first of which is: “If everything has a cause, then what caused God?” This question, which is put forward repeatedly and with aplomb by any number of our contemporary militant atheists as supposedly the knock-out blow to philosophical proofs for the existence of God, is in fact flamboyantly nonsensical, and could be posed only by someone who is a complete stranger to even the remote suburbs of metaphysical reasoning. In his conclusive response to this inane question, Feser gives full disclosure to the clumsy, wayward thinking that lies behind it.

Five Proofs of the Existence of God stands as proof positive, not only of the existence of God, but also of the heartening fact that natural theology is alive and thriving. Like all of Edward Feser’s books, it is marked by the author’s clarity of style, lucidity of thought, and by the vigor and cogency of his arguments.

Klaus Stüwe, ed. *Religion und Politik in der freiheitlichen Demokratie / Religion and Politics in Liberal Democracy*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2018. Pp. 312.

Reviewed by Joseph W. Koterski, S.J., Fordham University, Bronx, NY

This volume is the most recent publication of the German-American Colloquium, a group that has for about thirty years sponsored biennial conferences on topics of interest both to academics and to men of practical affairs. The expectation that guides the conferences and the publications that are the fruit of those meetings is respect for the perennial principles of the Western philosophical and the Christian theological traditions. Previous volumes have considered such themes as the principle of subsidiarity (2015), property as a condition for liberty (2013), tolerance and human dignity (2011), the fragility of democracy (2007), the role of religion in society (2004), and the challenges of immigration (2003).

The current volume includes nineteen essays that display great practical wisdom in thinking about Catholic Social Doctrine from both practical and theoretical perspectives. A synopsis in English is provided for those essays that are written in German, and vice versa.

The first of the three sections in this book concerns the Christian roots of liberal democracy. In the lead essay Bishop Oscar Cantú (Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico) contrasts the positions of various violent and intolerant ideologies now operative in Europe and the United States with the stance taken on religious liberty by the Catholic Church in the Vatican II document *Dignitatis humanae* (1965) and by Benedict XVI in his Regensburg address.

In a similar vein, David Walsh's essay ("The Person as the Heart of Benedict's New Evangelization") reviews the intellectual foundations of the strategy of the New Evangelization that Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI promoted during their papacies. Of special note in this essay is Walsh's treatment of papal teachings on the concept of the human person as a prominent part of the Church's effort to dialogue with the world on various questions of the proper order of society. The notion of the person remains a concept that liberal democracies honor – at least in word if not always in deed – and thus something that can serve as common ground for discussions about the social order. Even if the concept of personhood does not yet settle the important and disputed questions about who counts as a person, there is such ready agreement even in secular circles about the respect due to persons that it can serve as a departure point for the elucidation of the Church's position in discussions about the legal protection of persons and about the rights of the unborn, the aged, and the feeble.

The essays by Martin Schlag (“Das Bekenntnis zur Menschenwürde als Beispiel öffentlicher religiöser Werte”) and by William A. Barbieri (“Dignitarian Discourses: From Human Dignity to *Die Würde der Kreatur*”) take up the related issue of human dignity and consider the role of that concept in American and European legal systems as the foundation for human rights. Schlag raises the important question of the limits of the validity of legal systems, such as Islamic shari’ah law, that have no place for this notion. Barbieri treats the question of dignity philosophically by considering a series of antinomies, including the claims that human dignity is inalienable but may be lost. Further reflection on this question, it seems to me, could lead to a clarification of the relevant portions of the *Catechism of Catholic Church* (§1700, 1929ff.) insofar as they coalesce the idea of inalienable human dignity (a metaphysical claim) and the possibility that individuals can lose their moral dignity by the commission of grave wrongs.

Two of the essays provide an historical perspective. Jude P. Dougherty’s “The Virtue of Religion and Social Utility” surveys a wide range of authors in the course of arguing that it was not until modernity that religion began to be regarded solely for its social utility. Rudolph Teuswen reviews the contributions of various figures in the history of thought to our understanding of the rights of individuals to freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

The final pair of essays in the first section are among the most significant in the entire book. In “Augustinians and Lockeans on Religion in American Public Life,” Daniel E. Burns calls into question the assumption that the American ideal of religious freedom is such a clear and coherent ideal that it merely needs to be applied to contemporary controversies for these to be easily resolved. He argues, instead, that the American experiment in religious liberty has always involved a practical compromise between two quite different and opposed notions of the relation between religion and the political order. For present purposes he calls these the Lockean and the Augustinian ideas. As the great theorist of natural rights, Locke tends to argue for the toleration of a wide range of religious doctrines and practices as a precondition for the protection of natural rights. This toleration is to be maintained so long as the religions in no way interfere with the government’s efforts to secure the rights to life, bodily well-being, liberty, and property, but religions that in any way interfere with these efforts may be outlawed and persecuted as politically dangerous. The Augustinian picture, Burns shows, is the diametrical opposite insofar as Augustine insists that civil authority recognize only one religion as true and promote that religion in whatever limited ways it can. As the great theorist of the doctrine of the two cities, Augustine lays down certain non-negotiable principles for the conduct of politics that guarantee the freedom to worship and that make various distinctions in favor of the true religion. In the final portion of his essay Burns gives evidence for the claim that

the Founding Fathers devised a practical compromise that is more Lockean on some points and more Augustinian on others.

The companion piece in this section is John P. Hittinger's "An Account of Human Rights in Light of Culture and the Gospel." This essay is devoted to an exposition and analysis of certain scriptural texts and various writings by Pope John Paul II. Using *Redemptor hominis*, Hittinger explicates in detail three principles for cultural renewal: (1) the priority of ethics over technology, (2) the primacy of the person over things, and (3) the superiority of spirit over matter.

In the seven essays of the second part there is a focus on how religion has fared in democratic states. "A Wider Public for Religion and Liberal Democracy," the essay by William A. Frank, the American convener of the Colloquium, challenges the limits that contemporary American politics and jurisprudence often tries to impose on religion. This trend has been much in evidence in recent court cases about Obamacare that tried to define religious liberty narrowly in terms of freedom for worship and to exclude the sphere of social charity that ecclesial bodies like the Catholic Church see as intrinsic to their religion.

The situation of religion within Germany is the topic of "Staat, Gesellschaft und Religion in Deutschland" by Jürgen Aretz. He provides a thorough historical treatment of the changes that have taken place since the Reformation and a penetrating look at the problems for the stability of democracy and for the general peace of society that have arisen within the decline of Christianity and the Christian churches in Germany over the last generation. In a similar vein, Richard J. Dougherty's "The Role of Religion in the American Political Experiment" offers an historical account of the changes in the role that religion has played in the development of American law and politics as well as an assessment of the current state of the question.

The final four essays of this second section take up questions of law and jurisprudence. The essay by Christian Hillgruber ("Das Verhältnis von Staat und Religion[sgemeinschaften] und seine Bedeutung für die öffentliche Wirksamkeit von Religion") contains a detailed comparison between America and Germany on the question of how strict a separation between state and church actually exists in the legal situations presently operative in these two countries. Stefan Mückl argues in "Recht der Religion auf öffentliche Präsenz im freiheitlichen Verfassungsstaat" that legal restrictions upon religious liberty has increased significantly over the past twenty-five years despite all the modern declarations about religious freedom in legal enumerations of human rights. In "Freiheitliche Demokratie und Christentum," Klaus Stüwe, the editor of this volume, argues that it was the rootedness of the ideas of freedom and equality in Christian thought that explains that it was specifically in an environment historically Christian that the concept of modern democracy emerged. Michael Eilfort's "Kirchen als

Basisinstitutionen des freiheitlich-liberalen Staats” is a demographic study on the correlation between declining rates of religious practice in Germany and the current trends in electoral participation, education, and moral values.

The final section of the book contains three essays on the relation of religion and democracy in light of migration and globalization. Anton Rauscher, the German convener of the Colloquium, describes the situation in Germany where many of the Muslims coming to Germany learn the language but have little interest in its culture or history. Johannes Thomas’s essay “Migration und Islam” provides a demographic study of Muslim immigration into Germany. Nicholas T. Pinchuk’s “Religion and the Multinational Corporation” provides the unusual perspective of a demographic study on the relations between religion and global business.

As any effort at dialogue makes clear, there needs to be certain points that are commonly assumed for there to be any progress. This fine book illustrates the strides that can be made when there is a deep-seated agreement about the fundamentals – here the the perennial principles of the Western philosophical and the Christian theological traditions.

Thomas Howard. *Hallowed Be This House: Finding Signs of Heaven in Your Home*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012. 129 pp.

Reviewed by Steven J. Meyer, University of St. Thomas School of Theology at St. Mary’s Seminary, Houston, TX

Six years ago Ignatius Press republished a short work by Thomas Howard, who is referred to playfully as “Tom Chrysostom” by Peter J. Kreeft (9). *Hallowed Be This House: Finding Signs of Heaven in Your Home* (henceforth, *Hallowed*) shows Howard’s sacramental vision of reality in an early stage (the 1970s) prior to his conversion to Catholicism.

As the ancients hallowed places (cf. 13), this book hallows an ordinary house. It does so because “the secular, or the profane, which is usually how we think of ordinariness, is actually holiness unrecognized” (24). Secularism infects the modern Christian mind with a belief “that everything is explainable..., there are no ‘divine mysteries.’ ... [Hence,] Christians often find it difficult to keep alive any notion at all of mystery, or of the hallowed” (15). In what follows I will very briefly examine the contents of Howard’s sacred ground, a house. Along the tour I would like to make particular observations on the dining room (chapter 6) and kitchen (chapter 7). I will quote Professor Howard often to display his literary eloquence.

Hallowed is divided thus: the household (chapter 1), the door (chapter 2), the four walls (chapter 3), the entryway (chapter 4), the living room (chapter 5), the dining room (chapter 6), the kitchen (chapter 7), the bathroom (chapter 8), and the bedroom (chapter 9). The household is the communion of persons, considered as sacred and set apart by the door. The door is a portal, a gateway, like baptism, taking us to a different place where our vision is changed. The four walls depict the boundaries needed for family communion. They mark the sacred space of the home.

Inside the walls is where the rite of exchange takes place. This rite is a key principle within the household or communion of persons as the family. "It is the mystery of My Life for Yours. It is expressed in the words 'I owe my life to you and I lay down my life for you'" (28). It is a rite of love under many forms: parents for each other, a mother for her children, children for their mother, siblings for each other, and so on. The entryway signals transitions. It is a place for greetings and farewells. Howard envisions it as a place for formal processions and recessions and the pomp and circumstance for life's special events. The living room is where the family gathers. As in all the other rooms, we may have desacralized this space with TV, but a question may arise: is it not intended to be a place for personal exchange?

The dining room is clearly the place that suggests the Eucharist – giving thanks. "The food really is exchanged life; but it is only in the Eucharistic vision that this becomes apparent" (70-71). Modernity has reduced this room to a place for eating, but eating can be done in any room. "Eating food is the most ordinary of things, and it is embarrassingly functional.... This room says, in effect, that the common, daily, necessary business of eating is just that – common, daily, and necessary – but that is also a picture of the thing that lies at the root of all life; namely, the principle of exchange. My Life for Yours" (68-69). Thanksgiving is the appropriate response for receiving life from death. We moderns are numb to this, for in consumption of food we have become disconnected from its original source.

The kitchen is the place of labor. It is where preparing food and cleaning up after others takes place. It signifies self-giving and humility. "We are bedazzled...by the appeal of power and glory, the Real Thing that lies just below the surface of all our ordinariness; ...involves tedium and service and obscurity, [moving us] toward the power and glory we dream of – a power and glory spoken of more accurately, we might remember, in the story of the Virgin than in the story of Caesar" (85). Work, a result of original sin, is for our growth and benefit and for the benefit of others. For Howard, "in households we have the chance to experience and celebrate work for what it really and truly is, a form of service, that is, of love offered to others" (88).

Often work is simply a source of frustration, a drudgery, or even a source of anger. Here we find another of Tom Chrysostom's principles: when work becomes disenchanted, when it frustrates us and causes us to rage at others (perhaps even to rage at God on account of the toil associated with original sin), we begin to experience in this life something of hell itself. When work is engaged in with charity, when the suffering can be a simultaneous cause of joy and humility, we are ascending to heaven. Those more familiar with Howard's work than I might have a formal name for this principle. It can be found in another of his books familiar to me, *The Secret of New York Revealed*. Here he explains it according to the thought of Charles Williams – the subject of his doctoral dissertation.

Concluding our brief tour, we are taken into the bathroom. Howard envisions another place of nakedness and shame, the garden and original sin. For this context we need baptism, a cleansing by water. Like baptism, which removes sinful impurities and cleanses our soul, the bathroom is the place where the actions of internal and external cleansing occur. Finally, the bedroom. Howard associates it with conception, new life, birth (traditionally), and death (traditionally). The bedroom signifies the ultimate room of arrival and departure for our life here on earth. It also should be linked with the sacrament of marriage. For these reasons the bedroom is set apart or made holy.

Hallowed is for Christians today who think “more about God in their hearts than in a temple” (14). It pulls the blanket off a secular and functional vision of a home. Given the brevity, it could be given to just about anyone. I think that it would be valuable to those on the way to the Church and to those who need to see with a sacramental imagination, in order to move them away from modern programming. I fully agree with him that secularism “is surely one of the bleakest myths ever to settle down over men's imagination” (19). *Hallowed* serves as a testimony to Professor Howard's creative engagement with the ordinary as sacredness in plain sight. In restoring a Christian imagination, the reader joins Howard in seeing how “ordinariness, in a word, opens out onto mystery, and the thing that men are supposed to do with mystery is to hallow it, for it all belongs to the Holy One” (20).

Books Received

Francis Cardinal Arinze. *The Evangelizing Parish*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 149 pp.

Daniel Avila. *Marriage as a Conjugal Reality: From the Frontlines to the Sublime. Why Man & Woman?* Roanoke, IN, 2018. 234 pp.

Tyler Blanski. *An Immovable Feast: How I Gave Up Spirituality for a Life of Religious Abundance*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 288 pp.

Jennifer Fulwiler. *One Beautiful Dream: The Rollicking Tale of Family Chaos, Personal Passions, and Saying Yes to Them Both*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 237 pp.

Jose Luis Iriberry, S.J. and Chris Lowney. *On the Ignatian Way: A Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of Saint Ignatius of Loyola*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 203 pp.

Leila Miller, ed. *Primal Loss: The Now-Adult Children of Divorce Speak Out*. Phoenix: LCB Publishing, 2017. 313 pp.

Ronald J. Rychlak, ed. *American Law from a Catholic Perspective: Through a Clearer Lens*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. 307 pp.

Joe Sikorra. *Defying Graving: How Choosing Joy Lifted My Family from Death to Life*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 209 pp.

Janet E. Smith, ed. *Why Humanae Vitae Is Still Right*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 384 pp.

Klaus Stüwe, ed. *Religion und Politik in der freiheitlichen Demokratie / Religion and Politics in Liberal Democracy*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2018. 312 pp.

Terrence C. Wright. *Dorothy Day: An Introduction to Her Life and Thought*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2018. 162 pp.

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