

# Marriage and the Common Good

Gerard V. Bradley

I have written and lectured quite a bit lately on the matters doing business in our culture as “the gay agenda,” especially on the question of homosexual sexual activity. Some friends have asked, and others have probably wondered, am I obsessed with sex? What’s all this talk of sodomy?

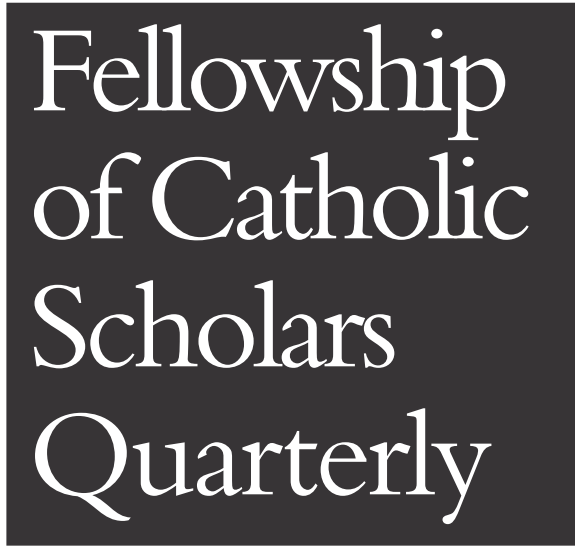
Well, I doubt I am obsessed with sex. And I am sure that my interest in these questions owes to my interest in marriage. More exactly, what makes making the argument against the gay insurgency so important is that we are already in the later stages of an almost incomparable revolution: the collapse of marriage, as a cultural and legal institution, in the span of a single generation. What is left of marriage as the permanent, exclusive union of one man and one woman—and that may not be much—will be wiped out by recognition of “gay marriage.”

My specialty is the law. And the law is truly in danger of a total collapse regarding marriage. The writer of a prominent treatise on the law of marriage and domestic relations said a few years ago that marriage had been transformed from a “clearly defined relationship” to one whose “incidents” are either uncertain or left largely to the control of the parties to the relationship. This privatization of marriage occurred, the author wrote, “without, so far as it appears, any general consideration by either courts or legislatures of the total effect which the judicial decisions will have on the institution of marriage.” So, a revolution with blind guides, or worse.

The FCS Board of Directors met in early April. The Directors determined that our 1999 Annual Meeting will be on the topic, “Marriage and the Common Good.”

Look for information on our 1998 meeting on “Science and the Faith” elsewhere in this issue. ✠

*O Timothee, depositum custodi, devitans profanas vocum novitates et oppositiones falsi nominis scientiae, quam quidam profitentes circa fidem aberraverunt. Gratia vobiscum. 1 ad Timotheum 6*



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# Observations on the Pastoral Letter from the Bishops' Committee on Marriage and Family

Rev. John F. Harvey, OSFS  
*Director of Courage*

## “ALWAYS OUR CHILDREN”

The pastoral message “Always Our Children” manifests compassionate understanding of persons with homosexual tendencies, and their parents and siblings. It is theologically sound on the morality of homosexual acts, and its broad message is that parents should love their children who struggle with homosexual tendencies, while not accepting homosexual behavior. We are also pleased to see that the document recognizes the complex nature of homosexuality and that the document makes the important distinction between just and unjust discrimination. In a spirit of love, we have gathered some suggestions from leaders, members, and supporters of Courage throughout the country, and we pass these suggestions on to the Bishops, with the hope that the pastoral letter can be strengthened.

The use of the terms “gay” and “lesbian,” and the distortion of the term “orientation” give the public the impression that the homosexual condition is fixed and permanent. There is much scientific and empirical evidence to the contrary. Men and women who sincerely desire to develop their heterosexual potential should not be in ignorance of the opportunities for help to move toward their God-given masculinity or femininity. We do not say that every individual who makes such an effort will be able to complete the journey, but he should at least be given the knowledge that many people have been able to do so. In this effort, *the primary goal* will always remain the practice of interior chastity, which is nothing else but Gospel purity of heart. It is really not a good idea for anyone to identify oneself as “gay” or “lesbian,” because it gives the impression that one’s homosexual orientation is his most important characteristic. The 1986 *Letter from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith* says that “the human

person, made in the image and likeness of God, can hardly be adequately described by a reductionist reference to his or her sexual orientation.”

Sexuality is a gift of God expressed in the unitive and procreative good of marriage. The document very correctly points out that homogenital behavior is objectively immoral, because only in the two-in-one-flesh union of a man and woman in marriage is sexual activity moral, and because homogenital behavior is not open to the possible creation of human life. The document also distinguishes between homogenital behavior and homosexual orientation; however, while the document does point out that the homosexual orientation is not in itself immoral, it neglects to mention that the homosexual orientation is objectively disordered (*CDF Letter to the Roman Catholic Bishops of the World, sect. 3*). Instead, it says that “sexuality is a gift from God” and then goes on to quote the Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2333: “Everyone... should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity.” The idea conveyed is that homosexuality is also a gift from God, and should be accepted as one’s fixed and permanent identity; however, the actual quote from the Catechism, “Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual identity” is part of a paragraph describing the complementarity of man and woman in married life and in society. It is incorrect to use this quote as a justification that one should accept one’s homosexuality as a fixed state. Neither can homosexual attraction be considered as a gift of God, except in the sense that suffering can be a gift. In the context of homosexuality, it is more accurate to speak of “sexual attraction” rather than “sexual identity.” It is important to distinguish between the proper other-sex attraction and a misdirected same-sex attraction. The conviction that a misdirected attraction is a stable or “fundamental dimension of one’s personality” has no support from Catholic teaching.

The 1986 *Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons*

(PCHP) warned that, in some cases, “an overly benign interpretation was given to the homosexual condition itself, some going so far as to call it neutral or even good.” We suggest that a pastoral on this subject stress that the homosexual inclination cannot be considered as equal to heterosexuality. The capacity for human love, which is expressed in its highest form in the sacrament of marriage, is a fundamental component of human nature and of God’s plan for mankind. It is a vocation that is ordered to the full giving of one’s self in the sacramental bond, and in the gift of parenthood. It is thus an inherent good. Homosexuality is nothing of the sort.

As the CDF has stated, it is “objectively disordered” because it urges a person, not toward the inherent good of marriage and procreation, but toward sinful conduct. The document in several places fails to make this clear, and may cause uninformed persons to conclude that homosexuality is a normal variant of sexual development, something which is contrary to the explicit statements in the catechism and in the Vatican pastoral letters of 1976, 1986, and 1992. It would be helpful if the Bishops’ pastoral would explain the Church’s position on “Gay Rights Legislation” (*Sacred Congregation of the Faith*, 1992 statement on non-discrimination). Many clergy, parents, and young people are confused by the current propaganda in favor of same-sex marriage.

The document quotes the phrase “homosexuals who are definitively such because of some kind of innate instinct” from the 1975 *Declaration on Certain Questions Concerning Sexual Ethics*. This phrase is an inaccurate translation of the Latin “*quasi innatus*” which should be translated “as if innate.” The first Italian edition of the Catholic Catechism which used the word “innate” in describing the homosexual orientation was revised. Cardinal Ratzinger explained the reason for the change: “One objection was that we made people think homosexual tendency was innate, that it was already present at the moment of birth or conception of the person. Many competent experts said that this has not been proven.”

In addressing how a parent should deal with an adolescent who is confused about his sexual identity, the document says, “*If your son or daughter is an adolescent, it is possible that he or she may be experimenting*

*with some homosexual behaviors as part of the process of coming to terms with sexual identity. Isolated acts do not make someone homosexual. Adolescence is often accompanied by anxiety or confusion about sexual identity. Sometimes the best approach may be a ‘wait and see’ attitude, while you try to maintain a trusting relationship and provide various kinds of support, information and encouragement.*” This “wait and see” attitude is very dangerous. If someone is attracted to drugs or to alcohol, we do not accept that attraction as a given, or indicate that it is beyond their power to reject. The truth is that we are dealing with an objective disorder within the person. The parent should do everything possible to help the youth to move away from this particular attraction, and from the surroundings which encourage him to act out. If pastors are going to advise parents concerning homosexuality, they should remind parents that their first obligation is to protect the child from immoral and dangerous behavior.

Given the epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV disease, among *male* homosexuals, advising parents to adopt a “wait and see attitude” to same-sex experimentation among adolescents is an invitation to tragedy. If the male child has been involved in homosexual behavior, he ought to be immediately tested, because in several large cities, a significant number of youth who were involved in homosexual activity became HIV positive. New studies show that 9% of homosexually active males aged 20 to 22 are already HIV positive. The earlier a boy becomes involved in same-sex behavior, the more likely he will become HIV positive or infected with other possibly fatal sexually transmitted diseases such as hepatitis and human papilloma virus. Adolescents who become involved in the homosexual lifestyle are also at risk for drug and alcohol abuse and sexual addiction; moreover, the document seems to imply that “experimenting with some homosexual behaviors as part of the process of coming to terms with sexual identity” is part of a normal developmental process. On the contrary, adolescents should be discouraged from experimenting with illicit sexual behavior which is both immoral and futile. When seeking professional help, the parents should choose a knowledgeable counselor who respects the moral teaching of the Church.

The document well describes the emotions of

parents upon discovering that their child is struggling with homosexual desires; however, the fear which these parents have for the spiritual welfare of their grown children is not mentioned in the document, and that is the first anxiety which many such parents express in counseling sessions with priests. Under the pastoral recommendation to parents, it should be clearly stated in point number two that, while demonstrating love for the child, the parent must firmly stand opposed to any homosexual activity, not simply because the parents find it “objectionable,” but because the behavior is damaging to the child’s soul.

The document’s definition of chastity is inadequate in stating that “chastity means integrating one’s thoughts, feelings, and actions in the area of human sexuality, in a way that values and respects one’s own dignity and that of others.” One can easily imagine an argument that one can “integrate” the “thoughts, feelings, and actions” that stem from one’s “innate” homosexual orientation “in a way that values and respects one’s own dignity.” Indeed the document seems to leave the field open for such an argument. This is clearly inferior to the definition offered by the Catechism at 2337: “Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man’s belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.” Why avoid such clarity in favor of such ambiguity?

In the document’s speaking of “the power and freedom of sexuality” as “gifts of God,” it would be helpful to show the relationship between freedom and truth as our present Holy Father does in *Veritatis Splendor*, and contrast it with the “slavery to sin” which is experienced by those who are trapped in the cycle of compulsive behavior so prevalent among those who are involved in illicit sexual activity. It will be an opportunity to show how the power of grace can overcome any human weakness. “The trials that you have to bear are no more than people normally have. You can trust God not to let you be tried beyond your strength, and with any trial he will give you a way out of it, and the strength to bear it.” (I Corinthians 10:13; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11)

We should like to conclude our observations on

the Bishops’ pastoral by requesting them to consider the work of Courage and Encourage, not mentioned in the document. Courage is a spiritual support group for men and women with homosexual tendencies who desire to live by the teaching of the Catholic Church. Under the inspiration of the late Cardinal Cooke in 1980, this group has developed a practical spiritual program for living the chaste life in union with Jesus Christ. It stresses its Catholic identity by encouraging members to frequently receive the sacraments of Reconciliation and the Holy Eucharist, and to develop a strong devotion to the Blessed Mother. It is now in 28 dioceses in the United States, 6 in Canada, and is also found in the Philippines, in England, and in Ireland. The Courage program has also been approved by the Pontifical Council for the Family as a ministry to persons experiencing homosexual attractions: “This Pontifical Council for the Family supports the organization called Courage which was founded by Father John Harvey, OSFS, for helping homosexual persons to live in accordance with the laws of God and the teaching of His Church.” (Cardinal Lopez Trujillo, speaking on behalf of the Holy See, July 7, 1994)

Encourage, an outgrowth of Courage, exists in Canada and the United States. It is specifically designed in a Catholic context to provide spiritual support and guidance to parents of persons who experience homosexual attraction. The parents, who are very often opposed by their own grown children, need spiritual and psychological help themselves, and in this respect, they are similar to members of Alanon. Very often a son or daughter who has decided to “come out” as a homosexual may demand, as a condition for continuing the relationship, that his or her parents acknowledge that homosexuality is morally acceptable. In such situations, these parents often undergo a form of martyrdom in adhering to their faith principles; nevertheless, they continue to love their children.

While recognizing the hard work of the authors of the document “Always Our Children” and the sense of compassion they conveyed, we believe that the document needs substantive revision. It is hoped that these observations from the leaders, members, and friends of Courage will be given due consideration by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops. ✠

# Thomas Aquinas College: Catholic and Secularist Morality In Conflict

Msgr. George A. Kelly  
*President Emeritus, Fellowship of Catholic Scholars*

**W**hen John Paul II told an audience some years ago, “We must begin all over again,” he did not have in mind Thomas Aquinas College of Santa Paula, California. The pope surely knows that a larger-than-life David would be needed to defend Catholicity against the Goliaths who control secularist America. Still, as often occurs, it is the “little” institutions of the Church which are showing the way to be fully Catholic, in practice and in theory, in a very post-Christian world.

Unlike the Philistines of the modernity who are willing to compromise their religious freedom along with their philosophy of education, for the privileges of worshipping the golden calf of secularist religion, Thomas Aquinas College—and schools like Steubenville and Christendom—know how to say “no” to those who tempt or bully them to be acceptably college by not being fully Catholic.

But why is Thomas Aquinas on center stage at this time? Because it expelled a young lady for immoral behavior. And, because it told an accrediting agency to keep its political nose out of the college’s in-house management.

One morning in 1997 (July 5th) readers of the *Los Angeles Times* woke up to read this headline: “Expelled Student Sues College Over Morality Issue.” The college was Thomas Aquinas and the plaintiff a 23-year-old junior, whose “sleeping over” with her boyfriend on weekends had become an object of campus gossip, which eventually came to the attention of the college administration. She was expelled. The college’s student handbook states: “It would be inconsistent to seek high and serious things in class and live outside class by unruléd appetites.” The young lady accused the college of “invading her privacy,” “violating her civil rights,” and of being “small-minded.” While the suit was the first of its kind in the college’s history, the administration’s action fitted in with a Jesuit university’s president’s maxim of old: “Our moral preeminence is our greatest asset.”

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September 25-27, 1998  
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Earlier, Thomas Aquinas had survived (1994) another secularist challenge, when The Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) directed its president—under a threat of losing accreditation—to diversify its student body, its faculty, and its curriculum, as evidence of its commitment to multicultural education. (In 1990 WASC had placed the Westminster Theological Seminary of San Diego on probation, because its Board of Trustees was all male and all white.) President Thomas Dillon opposed WASC’s “diversity standard” as an unconstitutional effort to impose a political test of a college’s educational effectiveness. More serious for Dillon, however, was the accrediting agency’s unwarranted interference with a private college’s choice of personnel and curriculum, devised by his Board to implement its own unique teaching and learning objectives, previously considered above reproach. The long-range effect of the ruling on the institution’s Catholicity was not overlooked, either.

But the lone stand of tiny Thomas Aquinas College alerted officials of some of California’s most prestigious universities—Stanford and UCLA—to the peril that an ideologically driven accreditor poses to the academe, its necessary freedoms, and its wholesome diversities. WASC backed down. Its investigating official resigned.

By 1997 it was clear that the impresarios of the secular order were using the legal process, especially the court system, denial of funding, denial of accreditation, and unfriendly press coverage, to indoctrinate the country’s culture-shaping institutions into a “politically correct” social morality, excluding by fiat an institution’s self-proclaimed system of education, especially the religious. Government and professional agencies, by then, had arrogated extensive power to “bind and loose” colleges under their supervision: (a) by labeling their conduct as good or evil, and (b) by punishing, in one way or another, institutions who challenged or rejected the secular mores they tried to impose.

Thomas Aquinas came out ahead in both of these confrontations; the lady withdrew her suit, while WASC placed its “diversity” project on the back burner.

## The Secular Catholic Connection

The National Catholic Educational Association, which once affirmed (1935) that Catholicity was as much a culture as it is a creed, looked then upon Catholic higher education as a major artery for disseminating this culture. The Church of that day, though an outsider to the reigning Protestant establishment, nonetheless enjoyed breathing room to maintain its own culture. Catholic college presidents, as well as bishops, recognized the red line that demarked acceptable from unacceptable compromise with the dominant culture. Ministers of the established secularist ideologies, however, are not so generous with disciples of Christian revelation, and modern Catholic leadership tends to obscure the red line.

The following is what an official of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities said to the *L. A. Times* on the very day that Thomas Aquinas made headlines:

“This controversy is not the norm among Catholic colleges. Most Catholic colleges do not monitor student behavior off campus, and few would require students to spend every night on campus,” said Monica Hellwig, executive director of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities.

[Said Georgetown professor Hellwig, former religious and former president of the Catholic Theological Society of America:]

“Usually the college doesn’t go out of its way to make rules for off-campus behavior inasmuch as it’s not getting the college into trouble. I know certain evangelical colleges consider it to be absolutely clear that premarital sexual encounters are not acceptable and a student will be dropped for that reason. I don’t know if it’s happening in another Catholic college.”

What precisely is the responsibility anymore of a Catholic college to protect the Christian moral tone of its campus life? Recently, five Orthodox Jewish students objected strenuously for moral reasons to Yale’s bisexual dormitory where, as freshmen/sophomores, they were forced to live by college decree. The Yale president rejected their complaint—as no business of his.

What about Catholic college presidents? Is sexual

immorality no business of theirs, either? Back in 1972 a “sex manual” appeared in Georgetown University, written by medical students under the supervision of a Jesuit priest. When it came under fire from the Archbishop of Washington as “dangerous to the spiritual welfare” of the university, the Georgetown administration stood its ground: “It’s a medical student product”; “moral questions were not handled because of lack of time and expertise”; “We are a Land O’Lakes university autonomous of the bishops.” The president that year excused himself: “I was not aware that the booklet was being prepared”; and again, “I reaffirm Georgetown’s commitment to Catholic moral principles.” (*Origins*, December 14, 1972).

Twenty-five years later the University of Notre Dame proclaims officially: “We value gay and lesbian members in this community,” at the moment its president vowed “our strong commitment to Church teaching.”

Accounts of mixed dormitories, cohabitation, homosexual clubs, Planned Parenthood meetings, immoral teaching, are numerous enough in the press—and the situations uncorrected—to prompt a question: How Catholic are chartered Land O’ Lakes colleges, mostly members of the Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities (ACCU)?

## What IS Catholic?

**W**hy does ACCU choose to be “autonomous” of Catholic hierarchy in what pertains to authentic Catholicity, but not from the American collegiate overlords in what mutes Catholicity on a campus that bears the Church’s name? Has the sexual revolution, which institutionalized contraceptive sex in the American conscience prior to 1960 (and same-sex coupling by the 1990s), overrun the Catholic community with no self-defense of Christian morality in place, where the faithful, in normal times, found virtue as well as knowledge?

**Did not the patron saint of Thomas Aquinas College proclaim Catholic wisdom when he theologized that untrammelled lust leads, among other things, to loss of faith?**

Few will deny, as the 21st century rolls around, that American culture is awash with sex, much of it asocial, pathological, or crudely hedonistic, most of it sinful. Neighborhood pornography and premarital promiscuity; teenage pregnancy, illegitimacy, and abortion; sexual harassment by men and women; child abuse, marital infidelity, and a high divorce rate; same-sex coupling and the separation of sex from its natural direction toward marriage and family life—are evident everywhere. No one takes credit for this degradation and no secularist at any level dares to interfere with the culture of sinfulness that it has spawned, certainly not the presidents of Harvard or Yale. These one-time religious institutions now represent post-Christianity, sanctuaries where violations of the ten commandments are of no interest to anyone.

What about Christ’s mission to save God’s people from their sins? Is the Catholic college no longer involved in this mission? Catholic campuses are unlikely schools for potential atheists, killers, or bank robbers. But, given the consuming power of the sexual drive over the young, are not Catholic college boards and presidents duty bound, as Catholic educators, to channel those unformed energies toward virtuous exercise within marriage, away also from the sins of lust? Did not the patron saint of Thomas Aquinas College proclaim Catholic wisdom when he theologized that untrammelled lust leads, among other things, to loss of faith? (*Summa Theologica*, II, II, Q. 153, a.5). Or, are Catholic colleges no longer worried about the Catholic faith of their constituency?

Few would argue that prudential judgments on how best to protect the Christian way of life vary. Santa Paula, California, is not the nation’s capital, private sins are not public sins, and both public and private sins differ in the injury they inflict on society. Furthermore, the State with its this-worldly concerns is not the Catholic family with its special vocation to holiness. The Church, in important aspects, will always be at odds with every secular society, even when baptized Catholics are

in the majority. And whether a Constantine is running around to avoid a pope, or a Stalin is planning his assassination. The Church expects those who have Catholic teaching and pastoral roles to conduct themselves according to Christian norms, even if they suffer in so doing. If they live as Catholic, they are called upon to witness before all and sundry that the Church, if no one else, holds fast to God's truth and right, as Christ did.

In the public forum of any society, someone's morality always dominates, because some things are singled out as good and other things as evil—always. Thomas Aquinas College would have received high marks if it had expelled a blatant racist, an obnoxious anti-Semite, or a convicted terrorist. Secular morality so decrees, because its practitioners believe that sanctioning such conduct is necessary for public well-being. Catholic morality goes further, and considers fornication, adultery, and sodomy evil because they injure private as well as public well-being. If seculars do not enforce the secular code, it is because they no longer believe in it. If Catholics no longer wish to impose Catholic morality within their own household, they no longer believe it to be true.

Was Thomas Aquinas College substantially correct in asserting that authentic Catholicity must fashion moral character as surely as it does mental

acumen? And around all the ten commandments, not simply a few? How can an authentic Catholic college be satisfied with lending support to “politically correct” morality, but not the “doctrinally correct” morality of its sponsoring Church? Or do its administrators no longer believe it to be true, or binding on them? By what right, therefore, does a college retain, or be permitted to retain, its Catholic identity, if it neglects, resists or is embarrassed by educating the “whole man” within the perspective of the “whole Catholic faith?”

Bishops can expect little cooperation in implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* from their “big” universities, because these are overcommitted to political correctness and its earthly rewards—perhaps to the point of no return. On the other hand, 90 percent of all Catholic colleges are small, 150 of them with an enrollment of under 2,500. These “little” colleges educate three-quarters of the Church's total enrollment in undergraduate studies. Here, perhaps alone, is where the Catholic-faith investment in higher education has a future.

As Thomas Aquinas College demonstrates, piety can go hand-in-hand with academic excellence, as surely as secularity discovers mediocrity in what were once its hallowed halls of learning. ❧

## The Catholic Theological Society of America: *A Preliminary Profile*

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Fr. Matthew L. Lamb  
*Boston College*

**A**t this year's annual convention of the Catholic Theological Society of America there was much obfuscation about just how many belonged to the society. It was impossible for the press to get any definitive numbers from the board of directors, or any breakdown of the percentages, for instance, of female to male members, etc. So the press “guesstimated” from about 1200 to about 1500

members. The president of the society excused the situation by explaining that they were having difficulty with the database. When I returned to Boston, I asked a generous graduate student couple, Matthew and Joy Levering, if they could take the CTSA Directory for 1996 and analyze the number of members and where and when they had obtained their degrees. The following profile emerges from their work, as well as studies I have conducted on the

1996 Directory with Bibliographic Profiles.

As of 1996 there were 1511 members. Of these there are 290 female members and 1221 male members — so women make up 19.25% of the members. The 1511 figure for membership emphasizes how few attend the business meetings, at which all decisions are made in the name of the whole society. Since there are usually no more than 300 members at any business meeting, and only a simple majority decides an election, *the votes of only about ten percent of the membership*

usually elect the leadership of the society. For example, the last June convention had 472 members registered for the convention. Of that only 248 attended the business meeting—less than 17% of the society. At that meeting the vice-president, president elect, Sr. Margaret Farley, who signed the 1984 *New York Times* ad in support of the pro-abortion “Catholics for Free Choice,” was elected with 157 votes. She will have complete authority to plan the annual convention in 1999, what its theme will be, and the major presentations. Or take the much publicized statement on the ordination of women also voted upon at that business meeting. It received 216 votes—14.5% of the membership.

According to the statutes of the CTSA, whatever is done by a majority at the business meeting is done in the name of the whole society. An effort to have ballots for the election of presidents of the society mailed to all the members, as is done in many learned societies, had been voted down at a 1993 business meeting. In a classic sense, then, the CTSA is run by an open yet affluent oligarchy. It is open since in principle all members could come to the convention and all could attend the business meeting. It is not, however, a representative oligarchy since whoever does attend is not formally representing any other members. Given the expenses involved in attending, it is certainly an affluent oligarchy. An oligarchic mindset can be seen, for instance, in the fact that no members who support the Vatican’s full position on the ordination of women were put on

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the committee drafting the above mentioned statement—hardly a commitment to unbiased scholarship.

Of the 1511 members, 1454 are listed with academic degrees. Of these about 80% have degrees from Catholic institutions, with 20% holding degrees from non-Catholic institutions. The trend, however, is for more members receiving degrees from non-Catholic programs. Taking the new members joining in each decade, from its founding through the 1960s, there were only a few new

members receiving a terminal degree from Protestant or state institutions. In the 1970s the number jumped to about 24% of the new members, and in the 1980s it was about 25%. With figures in for only the first half of the 1990s, the trend does not seem to be reversing. The deans of the divinity schools at Harvard, Yale, Chicago, Vanderbilt, Emory, and others would confirm that no student could be given a formation in Catholic theology in their programs. Indeed, they usually insist on the strictly “non-denominational” character of their programs. Students can take some courses dealing with this or that Catholic theologian, but there is no sustained formation in any church-related theological tradition. In this sense the “non-denominational university related divinity schools” — as they are sometimes called — are certainly carrying on a tradition that could be broadly designated as a liberal Protestant orientation.

Moreover, it is evident that members with non-Catholic degrees are disproportionately hired in those departments at Catholic universities which have doctoral programs in theology. At both Notre Dame and Boston College, for example, well over 50% of the faculty have received their doctoral degrees from non-Catholic programs. As I have pointed out elsewhere (“Will There Be Catholic Theology in the U.S.?” *America*, May 26, 1990), there is a clear “Protestantizing” of theology programs at Catholic universities without a corresponding “Catholicizing” of theology at Protestant or state

universities. Thus a study of the graduate theological programs at most Catholic universities would not reveal great differences with those at the Protestant divinity schools. There is no doctoral program in North America with a well-thought-out “ratio studiorum” that offers an integral formation in the doctrinal and theoretical traditions constitutive of Catholic teaching. Few, if any, candidates applying to such a doctoral program would have the linguistic and philosophical prerequisites for such a course of study, given the present state of M.A. and S.T.L. programs in North America.

Going over the 1385 dissertation titles given in the 1996 CTSA Directory, there is a clearly much smaller number of dissertations done on pre-modern theologians (the first eighteen centuries of Catholic theology) than on theologians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—well over 80%. Among the twentieth-century Catholic theologians, studies on Karl Rahner exceed those on Bernard Lonergan, Edward Schillebeeckx, Yves Congar, Hans Urs von Balthasar, M.-D. Chenu, and Henri de Lubac put together. Moreover, if one looks at dissertations, books, and articles listed, there are some noteworthy anomalies. For example, there are more studies on Paul Ricoeur and Paul Tillich than on Gabriel Marcel, Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and Yves Congar put together. There are more studies listed of Karl Barth than of Hans Urs von Balthasar; more on Charles Hartshorne than on Gustavo Gutierrez; more on the Reformation than on the Council of Trent. There are more members who list themselves as studying various aspects of process theology than of Thomism; more listings regarding Wolfhart Pannenberg than listings for Ignatius of Loyola; more on human or civil rights than on natural law. There are more listings on feminism and women’s studies than on Christology or on the Trinity; many more on spirituality (over 400) than on the Holy Spirit (fewer than 40). Themes associated with liberation or world religions far outweigh those dealing with priesthood, magisterium, or the work of John Courtney Murray.

This profile is admittedly preliminary. But it does raise serious questions about the Catholic character of the graduate programs in which Catholics

are getting degrees. The CTSA should undertake a serious and detailed self-study. How many of its members can read Greek and Latin? How many members have had a serious formation in Classical, Medieval, and Modern philosophy? How many of its members have an adequate formation in Catholic theological traditions? For example, how many have studied monastic and patristic theologians, medieval and counter-reformation theologians? How many members know the differences between Catholic and Protestant theological and doctrinal traditions? Indeed, how many of its members have studied the new Catechism of the Catholic Church? These are not narrow and anti-ecumenical questions. One of the major concerns of ecumenically engaged theologians, both Protestant and Catholic, is the need for the coming generation of theologians to know their own ecclesial traditions well.

Few are confident that the CTSA will, in the near term, undertake such a serious self-study. Its present leadership seems bent upon protesting Papal and Vatican teachings and policies. Of the past ten elected presidents of the CTSA, five have their doctoral degrees from non-Catholic programs. Prof. Stanley Hauerwas once observed how doctoral students, after going through the rigors of their degree studies, exams, and dissertations, might well have a stronger affective identification with their alma mater than with their church. Be that as it may, I recall a colleague attending his first CTSA meeting a few years ago. After introducing himself to many members over the course of several days, he told me just before the business meeting: “It makes me nervous that so many laypeople I met do not have children and so many priests are without parishes. Do they have a real apprehension, in Newman’s sense, of the responsibilities of handing on the faith, of tradition?” Once asked what he thought of American Catholics, Conor Cruise O’Brien quipped: “They’re Protestants who go to Mass.” Facile as that is, some wonder just how genuinely “Catholic” the CTSA is as it continues to protest Roman Catholic Church authorities, and elects to leadership members who make no secret of their dissent from authoritative church teachings. ✠

# On the Vanity of the Learned Man

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James V. Schall, S. J.

**B**elloc's *Cruise of the Nona*, his account of skipping his sturdy little boat around England, is a book that I have not read in ages. However, one day a month or so ago, I was coming back to the Rosslyn Metro Station across the Potomac in Virginia. I happened to have with me the collection *Hilaire Belloc's Stories, Essays and Poems* (London: Dent, 1938) which my young friend Gregory Doolan had let me borrow from his fine Belloc collection. This book extracted some twenty-two pages from *The Cruise of the Nona*.

Belloc did everything he did with great zest and great style. His cruises, his walks, his journeys, his accounts of wars and places were, however, ever-filled with philosophic reflection, with wonderment about why and how things happen to our kind. The *Nona*, sailing north in late May out of Holyhead harbor, ran into a swift and unexpected gale at the point of Carnarvonshire going into Bardsey Sound. Belloc was not sure if he was afraid or not, so completely did the storm occupy him. Finally, he and his companion got the battered *Nona* past the Black Rock, the Carrig Dhu, into smoother water away from the surging tide.

Looking about, Belloc saw that he was in a rather famous historical spot. This caused him to wonder about theories of learned men trying to expound the history of where he was. "One of the saddest things I know about the beach near Bideford River is the deadly hatred with which the Dons have devastated poor, dear Kenwith."

What, we wonder, have the Dons done that was so unjust to "dear Kenwith?" Why did they hate it so? Evidently, Kenwith is the place of early Danish landings — "a few boatloads" — in England. The oral tradition and local history all attest to the place where this landing occurred. The learned scholars, it seems, refuse this tradition. They call it a "popular error," and locate the landing some miles away. At this point, Belloc decides that he wants to analyze this tendency of the academics not to believe

local tradition or witness.

"What are their motives?" he wonders of the academics. The thing happens in all countries and in all universities, "but one is puzzled why it should come into being at all." These are the same folks, Belloc recalls, who say that the Gospel of John was not written by John, or that Homer did not write Homer, or that "the Battle of Hastings was not called the Battle of Hastings — although the people who fought it there called it the Battle of Hastings." These same Dons also think that Caesar's *Gallic Wars* was written by his tutor — "and all the rest of the nonsense." No doubt, Belloc's unpleasant experience with the university is reflected here.

This force that causes academic Dons to "make fools of themselves," Belloc thinks, can be reduced to three basic elements: 1) "First of all there is the vanity of the learned man." Since so few other scholars know about the situation, the learned man can get by with false conclusions without too much notice. The vain Don likes to think himself right and all the normal clods wrong. Today there is such a mass of technical evidence that people will swallow almost anything.

2) The second reason for their making fools of themselves is the "love of the marvellous, though it is a love of the marvellous appearing in a very degraded form." Belloc gives this example of how the love of the marvellous works to distort the facts:

Your pedant says: "All the apparent evidence, all tradition, all that you would call common sense, would make out Little Muddipool to be that same Little Muddipool where the treaty of Little Muddipool was signed. It is called in plain words 'The Treaty of Little Muddipool,' and its last words are, 'Made by us at Little Muddipool.' But I tell you that it was not Little Muddipool at all, but a place a hundred miles away with a different name."

The love of the marvellous, the desire of uniqueness, causes the scholar to ignore common sense and his own experience. No one will think it marvellous to learn that the Treaty of Little Muddipool was signed in a place called Little Muddipool. But if you tell everyone that it was signed actually in Liverpool, against all the common-

sense evidence, they will take notice.

3) The third reason is negative. It is the “perpetual substitution of hypothesis for fact.” This tendency Belloc finds to be “the greatest mark of Dons today.” With this attitude of mind, Dons find that they cannot “weigh the proportion of evidence.” Hypotheses make all sorts of results possible in spite of the evidence. The “certain, the probable, and the absurd” can thus be no longer distinguished. And to show how modern Belloc is, he recalls a case in his time at Oxford of a Don who claimed that he had “discovered any number of classical passages containing concealed anagrams, furnishing the most astonishing information; for instance, that Euripides, when he was a little boy, wrote the plays of Aeschylus.” Were this so, of course, the Oxford Don, as Belloc put it, would be responsible for a “miracle.”

Fortunately, Belloc recalls, this sort of nonsense was put a stop to by another gentleman writing to *The Spectator* who pointed out that he had used the anagram method on the said Don’s name, only to discover that it was but “a thinly concealed anagram in the opening lines of the *Iliad*.” This proved, on his own theory, that the Oxford Don must have written the *Iliad* not merely when he was a little boy, “but long before he was born.”

Belloc’s amusing conclusion of these reflections on learned men, while he is tied up in little shallows in Bardsey Sound, is “and so much for that.”

What perhaps makes this witty account of the foibles of the academic Dons rather pertinent is Belloc’s perception that “the certain, the probable, and the absurd” are today difficult to distinguish because we no longer easily know how to distinguish hypotheses from facts. Belloc thought that the common man living near Kenwith, insisting that the Danes landed near Kenwith, as their ancestors had handed it down, or that the Treaty of Little Muddipool took place at Little Muddipool, is generally close to the truth. The hypotheses of the Dons prove something approaching the absurd because they marveled at their own theories more than the facts. The greatest mark of the Dons today does indeed seem to be the “substitution of hypothesis for fact,” the systematic reduction of *what is* into what might be and the subsequent difficulty in discovering any difference between the two. ❧

## Requiescat in Pace

John J. Farrell

*Members of the Fellowship have special reason to mourn the death of John Farrell. John and his wife Eileen were benefactors of the Fellowship and inaugurated the prestigious Cardinal Wright Award which they continued to fund. Until very recently, they both were present for the ceremony and added their personal congratulations to the recipient. Let us remember him in death as he remembered us in life. The following obituary appeared in the Chicago Tribune, March 14, 1998.*

John J. Farrell of Oak Brook, who served on many Chicago-area church boards and councils and worked to include more black Catholics within those organizations, died Tuesday in Columbia-LaGrange Memorial Hospital. He was 87.

Mr. Farrell was president of the Chicago Catholic University Club from 1942 to 1944, a member of the Cana Conference of Chicago and the Catholic Interracial Council of Chicago from 1960 to 1965, and a board member of the Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice from 1962 to 1964.

“Years ago, many Catholic groups were almost exclusively made up of all white males,” said his son John P. Farrell. “My father championed the cause that this was wrong and needed to be changed. He worked to open these groups up to more people in general.”

A former longtime resident of Oak Park, Mr. Farrell was a member of the board of directors of the Oak Park Housing Center from 1973 to 1978. He was also president of the Serra Club, West Suburban Area, from 1975 to 1976; governor of the Chicago district of Serra International from 1980 to 1981; and a member of the Family Life League from 1975 to 1979.

Mr. Farrell was also the recipient of the St. Vincent de Paul Medal conferred by St. John’s University, Jamaica, N.Y., in 1984.

The son of Irish immigrants, Mr. Farrell was a longtime member of the Irish Fellowship Club, which helps coordinate the St. Patrick’s Day parades on Chicago’s South Side and downtown.

In addition to his son, survivors include his wife, Eileen; another son, Joseph; a daughter, Eileen Kisselburg; a brother; and six grandchildren.

Mass will be said at 9:30 a.m. Saturday in Ascension of Our Lord Catholic Church, 16<sup>th</sup> Street and Summit Avenue, Oak Brook Terrace.

—Joan Giangrassie Kates, Tribune Staff writer.

## From the Vatican

September 15, 1997  
N. 419.083

Dear Cardinal Hickey,

I am pleased to communicate the following message:

“The Holy Father has been informed that you will be present at a Convention to mark the Twentieth Anniversary of the founding of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, and he asks you kindly to convey his warm greetings to all present. His Holiness prays that the members of the Fellowship will ever grow in faith and holiness, and so draw from their spiritual life incentives for the great challenge which faces Catholic scholars at the approach of the Third Millennium, namely, that of fostering the dialogue between faith and culture in order to enable more and more of the faithful to relate the perennial truths of the Gospel message of salvation in Jesus Christ to the complex questions raised by contemporary thought and behavior. As a pledge of strength and joy in serving the Church’s intellectual apostolate, His Holiness cordially imparts the requested Apostolic Blessing.

Cardinal Angelo Sodano  
Secretary of State”

Thanking you for your kind assistance, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Cardinal James A. Hickey  
Archbishop of Washington  
Archdiocesan Pastoral Center  
5001 Eastern Avenue  
P.O. Box 29260  
Washington, DC 20017

## Remarks on Receiving the FCS Cardinal Wright Award

James V. Schall, S. J.  
Georgetown University, DC

In an appendix to the 1995 Fellowship *Proceedings*, Msgr. George Kelly gives a “short history” of the Fellowship. In it, he recalls that its founding arose from a question that Gabriel Cardinal Garonne, then Prefect of the Congregation of Catholic Education, asked about whether the National Catholic Educational Association was the only voice of Catholic education in America. Msgr. Kelly mentions the Holy See’s difficulty at the time with a rather recalcitrant American Catholic educational bureaucracy. On this occasion of my receiving the annual Cardinal Wright award, for which I am most grateful to the Fellowship, I think it only fitting that I begin my brief comments—Professor Bradley said ten minutes—with the following quotation from Msgr. Kelly about the source of opposition to the Holy See’s initiative: “Although Notre Dame’s Fr. Theodore Hesburgh was often a prominent spokesman for their independence, the chief antagonists of the Holy See on this issue were the Jesuits.” This is all I intend to say on this topic.

As most of you know, I am a great believer in the therapeutic effects of reading Boswell’s *Life of Samuel Johnson*. In 1764, Johnson was fifty-five years old. On this occasion, it seems, he visited the parents of his young friend Bennet Langton in Linconshire. The Langtons were a landed family and knew the distinguished reputation of

Johnson. They were honored to have him as their guest. However, as young Langton later told Boswell, “old Mr. Langton, though a man of considerable learning, had no little allowance to make for his (Johnson’s) occasional ‘laxity of talk,’ that, because in the course of discussion he (Johnson) sometimes mentioned what might be said in favor of the peculiar tenets of the Romish church, he (old Langton) went to his grave believing him (Johnson) to be of that communion.”<sup>1</sup> One might conclude from this quaint passage that anyone who even tries objectively to state what are in fact “the peculiar tenets of the Romish church” will be assumed to maintain them, so that it is dangerous even to try.

But if Johnson was thought to be a Catholic because of his own “laxity of talk,” we need not be too surprised that the talk of those of us who happen to maintain the truth of these very same “tenets of the Romish church” will be met with even greater incomprehension than that of old Mr. Langton in his grave in Linconshire. We sometimes wonder about this. We are all mostly liberals on this score. We assume, whatever the evidence to the contrary, that you only have to present the truth and its arguments for it to be accepted. We have a kind of Platonist streak in us to suggest that virtue is knowledge, no matter what our lives look like in practice. On the knowledge front, it is a simple matter of presenting the facts, “just the facts,” as a famous detective once said.

Many of you have heard me say that what is peculiar about our time is the fact that the Romish church, with all its tenets, has never been intellectually stronger or culturally weaker. In the extreme form, we

can say that the war between revelation and science is over and revelation won. This does not mean that the victory of revelation has done away with science, but rather that the questions and issues that revelation addressed to reason made reason more honest, more aware of human knowledge and its sources, more attentive to *what is*, so that the same things that enable us to affirm the reality of things enable us to affirm the credibility of revelation.

The members of this Fellowship have, I think, lived in extraordinary times. I often cite the famous passage of Leo Strauss who said that we are lucky if we are alive during the time in which one or two of the greatest minds who have ever lived are alive. And even if we are alive during their time, we will be lucky to recognize them. We can say, with some astonishment, however, that we have lived during the time of one of the very greatest of Popes in that long string of extraordinary men. Indeed, we have never had a more kindly, more perceptive and intellectual Pope.

The writings and homilies of John Paul II have simply re-presented to us “the peculiar tenets of the Romish church” in a clear, profound, and startling way. Let us simply acknowledge this in our own souls. He is the great blessing that God has given to our troubled times. It is dangerous to read John Paul II with an open mind. He charms as well as moves. He has covered most everything, been most everywhere. What are we to make of his reception among us? I think that in fact he has been given to us as a sign of contradiction. One has to will to reject him. And many so will. Yet, as a friend of mine at Cambridge in England remarked after the Pope’s visit to Paris, even

the French left, with no clue of its own why, has to acknowledge that he knows how to talk to the youth of our time.

With that kind, clear gaze of his, John Paul listens to the “arguments” offered against his positions. As a good follower of St. Thomas, he knows them for what they are better than their proponents. In stating unpopular truths, the Pope is fearless as few others before the hostile media and politicians of our time. He has courage. But if we know the arguments proposed against him and compare them to what John Paul himself says in response, he has invariably the better argument.

The opposition to the Pope always comes from the world, within or without the Romish church, to keep Boswell’s phrase. It comes from modern thought imposing itself on the Church as the only criterion of order. We have a Pope who has understood and examined these modern movements, praised what he could, and calmly explained why and in what sense their teachings were wrong and dangerous to our kind. In short, we have been living during the time of one of the great minds. We cannot help but be grateful to have had him about while we were about.

The last thing I want to ask is “where to begin, if we want to begin?” Some friends of mine recently gave me a very useful book about children’s books. I know that you will be relieved to find out that Schall is spending his declining years reading children’s books. The book in question is *Books That Build Character*, edited by William Kilpatrick and Gregory and Suzanne Wolfe. Their first few chapters explaining their project are really a first line of defense of our imagination, begin-

ning in childhood, against the distorted images that flood daily into our lives from all angles.

But what I want to recall, a very Platonic and Christian passage really, is a comment that is cited from William Golding about his famous novel, *The Lord of the Flies*. “The theme (of *The Lord of the Flies*),” Golding remarked, “is an attempt to trace the defects of society back to the defects of human nature. The moral is that the shape of society must depend on the ethical nature of the individual and not on any political system however apparently logical or respectable.”

Now “the peculiar tenets of the Romish church” do not maintain that with the Fall our nature is totally corrupt. But they do point out that something very basic is wrong with us and continues to be wrong with us until attended to. Golding’s proposition indicates both why we cannot despair in even the worst social situations or be overconfident in the best. Chesterton said much the same thing near the end of *Orthodoxy*, when he wrote that “The primary paradox of Christianity is that the ordinary condition of man is not his sane or sensible condition—that the normal itself is an abnormality. That is the inmost philosophy of the Fall.”<sup>2</sup> This too is a peculiar tenet of the Romish church, the awareness of which, as Chesterton also said, is the only secure defense of democracy, the only reason we have for not trusting our leaders when they tell us that what is against these peculiar tenets is the law of the land, when sociological studies of fallen normality become the sole criterion of our actions.

In conclusion, let me say that I tried to find out if John Cardinal Wright, in whose honor I receive

this medal, is listed under <http://www.yahoo.com>. The first time I tried, he did not appear. The net did bring up John Henry Cardinal Newman, John Cardinal O'Connor, and John Cardinal Calero, who seems to be a Silesian from the Argentine. On a second try, however, Yahoo referred me to Alta Vista with a John Cardinal Wright entry. It turned out to be a citation in a *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* essay in December, 1996. The entry read, "Cardinal John Wright wondered, following Vatican II, how our loss of humor happened?" How indeed?

If I might be so bold to answer Cardinal Wright's question, I think that humor's loss happened because we dropped, as active guides for our

lives, "the peculiar tenets of the Romish church." At the very end of *Orthodoxy*, as you recall, Chesterton, after talking about the abnormality of our normal condition, after the Fall, as it were, remarked that the only thing Christ concealed from us while He was on earth was His "mirth." Beneath everything else, this joy is what lies behind "the peculiar doctrines of the Romish church," the joy of that to which we are destined if we choose to accept it — which we need not do.

In a remarkable address to the Catholic Theological Society, Msgr. Robert Sokolowski, in commenting on how the whole canon of the Mass is directed not to ourselves or to our inwardlooking community but out-

ward to the Celestial Banquet, recalled how one of his colleagues, who was a member of the Orthodox Church, had been asked by a student whether there would be a Eucharist in Heaven. My friend responded, "There won't be anything else."<sup>3</sup> Perhaps our loss of humor results from our failure to appreciate the Canon of the Mass and the joy to which it points. ✠

<sup>1</sup> *Boswell's Life of Johnson* (London: Oxford, 1931), I, p. 319.

<sup>2</sup> G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Image, 1959), p. 158.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Sokolowski, "The Eucharist and Transubstantiation," A Paper given at the Catholic Theological Society of America, Minneapolis, June 6, 1997.

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## Follow Me

The Most Reverend

William E. Lori

Homily—Feast of St. Matthew  
Cathedral of

St. Matthew the Apostle  
Washington, D. C.  
September 21, 1997

Your Eminence, Msgr. Jameson,  
Brother Priests and Deacons,  
Officers and Members of the  
Fellowship of Catholic Scholars,  
Knights of St. Gregory,  
Parishioners of St. Matthew's  
Cathedral, and all dear  
Friends in Christ:

Great is the cultural gap between the ancient Near East and late 20th-century America. However, those two diverse societies have this in common: neither society can be said to like taxation. We are only too familiar with our country's cyclical tax cuts and tax hikes. Periodically impassioned pleas are made to banish the IRS and to simplify how we

support government services.

But taxation was an even more neurologic issue in ancient Israel. Tax collectors were agents of an occupying force, the Roman Empire. They were seen as enriching a foreign power at the expense of their countrymen. What's worse, they tended to get rich in the process.

To say the least, it took courage for Jesus to invite Matthew, a hated tax collector, to become His follower. His invitation to Matthew was in a word, "politically incorrect." A political operative, a media advisor and a personnel director probably would have advised Jesus against picking Matthew to be His disciple. But the Spirit of God that moved Jesus to say to Matthew, "Follow Me" — also prompted Matthew to leave his post, to abandon his financial security, and to follow Jesus into an uncertain future.

The scene described in today's Gospel must surely be heartening to each one of us. By calling St. Mat-

thew to follow Him, Jesus is sending a signal across the centuries to each one of us. He is calling us, each in our chosen professions, to become His followers. He calls us not because we are perfect; not because we are entirely free of unholy compromises and sinful behavior; no, He calls us because He can see in us possibilities we've never dreamt of. He can see what we'd be like if only we'd allow Him to free us from the wages of sin. He can see what we'd be like were we completely clothed in His grace and glory. Truly, truly, it is Jesus, the Son of God, made Man, Who reveals us to ourselves and brings to light our most high calling.

The same Holy Spirit that prompted St. Matthew to heed Jesus' call, is prompting us as well to follow Him. To answer Jesus' call, all of us will have to leave something behind. It may not be a tax collector's table, but instead, an excessive attachment to wealth, luxury and possessions. Perhaps the

Lord is asking us to forsake an inordinate love of power or sinful habits and lifestyles we've never seriously addressed. We can be sure of this: the invitation, "Come follow Me" is costly. To answer, it requires God-given faith, God-given trust and God-given generosity. It also requires a leap into the unknown.

That is true for all persons and professions, including the persons and professions represented here today by the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

Dear Friends in the Fellowship:

You have dedicated your lives to academic pursuits of various sorts. Some of you are theologians. Others are philosophers, lawyers and historians. You represent a wide array of academic disciplines and a wondrous pool of talent. But you have also received another call from the Lord and from the Church: the call to be a *Catholic* scholar - a call to pursue your chosen field in communion with the Holy Father and the bishops - and in fidelity to the living Magisterium of the Church. While maintaining the highest standards of scholarship, you are to show how the truths and values that flow from our Catholic faith can transform our contemporary culture into a true culture of life. You dedicate your life to bringing forth the true richness of our Catholic intellectual Tradition, convinced that this tradition will light the way to a new century and a new millennium.

Your call from the Lord, dear friends, is costly. Not all your peers in the academy understand the commitment you have made and the mission you have embraced. Not all of your contemporaries think that such a commitment and such a mission are desirable or necessary. Yet in the midst of your academic

pursuits comes the voice of the Lord, saying to you: "*Follow Me!*"

The same is true for the other professions and occupations. Parishioners of St. Matthew's and those of you who are visiting from other places embrace nearly every occupation imaginable. Indeed, some of you may be tax collectors! Whatever your profession, allow yourselves to hear the Lord calling you in the midst of your daily routine. Know that He says to you, as surely as He said to St. Matthew, "Come follow Me.

Your task and mission (and mine) is to leave behind whatever is sinful, whatever compromises your faith. Your task and mission is to help make St. Matthew's, or whatever parish you attend, a strong community of faith, worship and service, a living sign of the presence of Christ in our world. United with Jesus and the Church, you are called to go forth day after day to bear witness to the truth of the Gospel by word and example in your homes and places of work. You are called to engage in the task of bringing the Gospel afresh to a society that is collapsing under the weight of its own secularity. Make no mistake: Jesus Christ calls each person to follow Him. And He calls each one of us to be instruments in extending His invitation to others.

Dear Friends, in today's Gospel we read that after Matthew became Jesus' follower, he invited Jesus to his home for a banquet. Jesus came and dined with Matthew and his guests. At this very moment, the Lord is knocking at the door of our hearts. He is asking us to open wide the doors of our hearts. If we do, the Lord Jesus shall enter, there to share with us not mere earthly food, but the rich banquet of His holy Word and the banquet of His sacri-

fice. His Body and Blood, His Soul and Divinity received under the appearance of bread and wine. Let us welcome Him! Let us follow Him!

Through the prayers of St. Matthew, may the Lord bless this great Cathedral parish, its Rector, its priests and deacons, its parish leaders and staff, and each of its members. Through the prayers of St. Matthew, may the Lord bless the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, that through their work we may know more deeply the life-giving truths of our faith. And through the intercession of St. Matthew, may all of us take the Gospel to heart, live it faithfully, and so come to share in life eternal. St. Matthew, pray for us! ✠

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## Person, Community and Education: Who Are the Benefactors of Humanity?

History was described by Greco-Roman culture as the "Teacher of Life" (*Magistra Vitae*), and the Bible presents it as the interpretative key to understand man and his position in the cosmos. Inspired by the biblical view, or the typically Western fusion of Greco-Roman culture and Judeo-Christian tradition, Lord Acton, the renowned British historian, once described history as the march of mankind toward freedom. Humanity is no longer fatally chained to a perpetual succession of cycles, but engaged in a process of liberation from all the evils that have shackled and enslaved man since the beginning of mankind.

However, contrary to the naive

progressivism fashionable in the 19th century, which believed in the establishment of a paradise on earth, this march toward freedom has shown itself, as St. Augustine pictured it in the *City of God*, as a totally unpatterned and unpredictable struggle between good and evil, freedom and enslavement, through all ages and cultures.

Among the many philosophical discoveries we owe to Greco-Roman culture is what the Greeks called *synderesis*, which literally means “protection,” and which they referred to as the first principle of human behavior, namely “do good and avoid evil.” This is a self-evident principle that no one has ever questioned. What is open to enquiry is not the principle itself but the actual identification of what is good and what is evil. This enquiry is the content of ethical (a Greek term) or moral (a Latin term) philosophy, and it has led philosophers to reach out for the ultimate, namely to metaphysics or the probe into reality or *being* as such.

This reality or being has revealed itself to man as thoroughly mysterious and ineffable, as Marcel, Heidegger and Wittgenstein, among others, have emphasized in our time, but not unintelligible. It is a mystery, not a problem, or a riddle, or an enigma. It is not mind-boggling, but dazzling in its radiance. As Aristotle put it, man confronting being is like an owl confronting the sun.

Thus, being reveals itself to man as mysteriously one and many. Its oneness cannot be sacrificed to its multiplicity.

Being reveals itself to man as mysteriously attuned to and molding the human mind, and thus liberating it from the shackle of ignorance. This revelation is what the Greeks called *aletheia*, or unveiling what was

concealed, the unveiling of a mystery, which is precisely the Greek term for “something concealed.” The Latin term for *aletheia* is *veritas*, and the English is “truth.”

But the mystery of being reaches its crucial point when all the infinite content of being coalesces into the perfection of being: what the Greeks called *aqathon* and the Latins *bonum*—the good.

And through the full radiance of unity, truth, and goodness in symbiosis and harmony, being reveals itself to the whole man as the mystery of beauty: *kalon* in Greek, *pulchrum* in Latin. Thus, beauty holds a metaphysical and epistemological primacy. The experience and creation of beauty is the royal road to being and knowledge, to the whole enterprise of education.

But the ethical question remains central: what is good and what is evil? Good is the perfection of being without gaps or defects; the perfection of unity in plurality; the perfection of truth without error or ignorance; and the perfection of beauty without any deformity or hideousness or impropriety.

“Goods” for human behavior, therefore, are what are now more generally called “values” or goals worth living for or pursuing, also called ideals.

And parallel to these values rooted in the transcendental properties of being (one, true, good, beautiful), we can identify the counter-values or “evils,” namely fragmentation, division, separation, error, ignorance, falsehood, deficiency, ugliness, hideousness, and so forth.

Using economic jargon, in the competition of good and evil, good can put evil out of business only by outdoing it in the quality of its products. In the struggle between good and evil, values and counter-

values (remember that the term “value” is originally economic), the ethical challenge is, therefore: be a benefactor (literally “one-who-does-good” and not a malefactor (“one-who-does-evil”). For this you must have a good will, in Latin *benevolens*, hence “benevolence” as a social virtue. For Confucius and Aristotle, this is the highest social virtue. And the opposite is a “bad will,” in Latin *malevolens*, hence “malevolence” as a social vice. Behold, therefore, the moral or ethical challenge: “overcome evil with good,” as St. Paul writes to the Romans (12:21), an exhortation which the Blessed Josemaria Escriva paraphrased as “drown evil in abundance of good.”

Why this insistence on the power of good to overcome evil, with the implication that fighting evil with evil only compounds it (violence escalates by its own nature)? Because in the last analysis evil is nothing in itself, but rather the *absence* of good, that *privatio boni* which finally convinced St. Augustine, listening to St. Ambrose, of the irrationality of his erstwhile manicheism or belief in the independent existence of evil. If evil is nothing but the absence of good, then the way to fight it is by overwhelming it with good. Hence the evil of the sins of omission, which permit evil to prosper.

The whole field of humanity is therefore thirsty for the sowers of the good seed. who must not fall into an irresponsible slumber, both within themselves and in society. The fictitious being of evil-doing can triumph only if there is not enough good to drown it and overcome it.

Who are then the benefactors of humanity? Those who spread values, and thereby drive away counter-values. And who are the malefactors

of humanity? Those who spread counter-values and thus block the spread of values. The former enhance and enrich human persons (“bearers of values”), who are the individuals led by a love of self-giving to others, which is the true love that is self-fulfilling: those who think in terms of duties primarily, and of rights for the sake of duties, those who are givers, rather than receivers, in the community. A person, as distinct from an individual, is a being-for-others, as Maritain, Buber, Marcel, Levinas and many others have endeavored to show in our time.

Here is a list, not exhaustive, of benefactors, who can turn malefactors if instead of spreading the values inherent to their position in society, spread the opposite counter-values:

1. Teachers as benefactors would spread the truth and knowledge, and as malefactors would spread error and ignorance and superficiality, philistinism, and barbarism.

2. Health-care workers as benefactors would spread health (physical and mental), and drive away sickness and death. This is the “culture of life,” now threatened by the “culture of death” (John Paul II). If they turn malefactors through the latter, the evil they can spread is incalculable.

3. Lawyers and legislators as benefactors would spread order and justice, and drive away oppression, as long as they conform positive law to natural law, as Aquinas so masterfully showed in his classic definition of law as “the rational ordering for the common good by whoever is in charge of the community, and duly promulgated.”

4. Engineers and architects as benefactors would spread material safety through properly applied technology, and drive away dangers and insecurity, as long as they do not succumb to selfish interest.

5. Scientists and technologists as

benefactors would spread knowledge of the physical world through observation, experimentation and quantification, and drive away magic and superstition, as long as they do not separate science from conscience (John Paul II).

6. Artists as benefactors would spread beauty, and so lift up the human spirit and drive away deformity, cacophony, chaos, and incongruity, as long as they do not succumb to market forces, self-seeking and materialism.

7. Statesmen and public servants as benefactors would spread peace and unity in diversity by protecting human rights under the law, and drive away strife and hatred, as long as they put the common good above all selfish interests.

8. Entrepreneurs as benefactors would spread prosperity, and drive away indigence, as long as they suffuse business and economics with ethics by abiding always by social justice, and as long as they are not stifled by unwise taxation.

9. Housewives (the most important “professionals”) as benefactors would spread culture and provide the basis for civilization, and drive away barbarism and moral decadence, as long as husbands fulfill their sacred duties towards them in loving marital fidelity and dedication to their parental education.

10. Philosophers (literally “lovers of wisdom”) as benefactors would spread the supreme treasure of the human spirit, namely wisdom or comprehensive knowledge, and drive away ignorance and folly, the ultimate bane of humanity. But they could be the greatest malefactors, as “the corruption of the best is the worst” as the Scholastics said.

All these benefactors, however, will remain so, and not turn malefactors, only as long as they place the ethical dimension at the center of

their life, thus building up the *common good*, “common” because it is for all, not just for the majority, and “good” because it is the accumulation of all values, health, justice, freedom, fraternity, solidarity, truth, unity, beauty, peace, happiness....

Who will predict the outcome of the competitive struggle between good and evil? This is the mystery of human free choice and human liberation. Only God knows this outcome and it is up to man to cooperate with God as the fullness of good and creator of all reality, not of evil. Evil is nothing but the absence of reality, brought about by the failure of the intelligent creature, whether angelic or human, to act in accordance with the truth, which is the good of intelligence.

By making man in his own image and likeness, God has manifested his will to *associate* man with his work of educating mankind for a liberation or salvation from all enslavements. In this sense, educators are the benefactors of humanity. Selfishness is man’s enemy, as it substitutes the autonomous individual self for God, and thereby draws away from the ultimate origin and source of being, unity, truth, goodness, and beauty.

The happiness of man and the future of humanity both this side of death and beyond, lie only in the total and unconditional surrender, freely given, of every human person to God.

This is the core of the philosophy of education and of all institutions committed to it, such as the University of Asia and the Pacific.

*A lecture given by Fr. Joseph M. de Torre on University Day, 28 November, 1997, at the University of Asia and the Pacific. Father Torre is the University Professor of Social and Political Philosophy at the university, which is located in Pasig City, Philippines.*

**Our Sunday Visitor's Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine,**

Edited by Russell Shaw

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*Reviewed by Kenneth D. Whitehead*

Russell Shaw correctly describes this book in his Introduction as a companion volume to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*:

...it does not take the place of the *Catechism*, but it does make reading it a more fruitful enterprise. It expands on points of doctrine the *Catechism* discusses more or less briefly. It draws together matters whose treatment is scattered in several different places. It provides important historical background and pastoral insights that the *Catechism*, given the sort of document it is, does not undertake to provide. It is written in language that English-speaking readers may find more familiar and accessible. And it provides, as resources for readers engaged in independent study, extensive cross-references and lists of suggested readings on many topics. All this, along with the obvious fact that the encyclopedia introduces readers to a large number of highly qualified contributors, men and women of faith—bishops, priests, religious, and laity—whose love of the Church and her teaching shines through their words and is deeply edifying.

All this is true, and, if anything, this characterization of the book by its editor is even something of an understatement. The concise articles in the book, arranged in alphabetical order, do expand very intelligently and in appropriate depth for a one-volume encyclopedia on the principal doctrines of the Catholic faith

which the *Catechism* systematically presents. The book also treats many other subjects which impact on Catholic doctrine today. And it is indeed written in clear, readable, and understandable English.

Members of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars will immediately recognize most of the names of the contributors, a number of whom, in fact, are active members of the Fellowship. Whether it is Dr. Jude P. Dougherty writing on such topics as St. Thomas Aquinas or Thomism, Fr. Ronald Lawler, OFM Cap, on Conscience and the Magisterium, Moral Principles, or the Ten Commandments, Dr. Patrick Lee on Freedom or on the Natural Law, Dr. Joyce A. Little on Creation or on the Trinity, Dr. William E. May on the Apostolate, Dr. Stephen F. Miletic on Catechesis, the Old Testament, or the New Testament, Dr. Janet Smith on Contraception, Homosexuality, or Education in Sexuality, Fellowship members easily count among the most prominent and outstanding contributors to the volume. The other contributors measure up to the same standard as those named, and the articles mentioned represent only a small sampling of what the book contains.

The editor has been able to include exceptional contributions from some members of the hierarchy as well: Archbishop John P. Foley on the Media, Cardinal Francis George on the Knowledge of God, Bishop James T. McHugh on Population, and Bishop John J. Myers on Vocations.

The quality of the contributors and their contributions to this volume especially stands out when we consider what is currently available in this type of reference book. There is, for example—unhappily—Fr. Richard McBrien's misnamed *Catholicism*, which the bishops'

doctrinal committee has tried, apparently in vain, to get corrected. Then there is the volume found in the reference section of the public library in this reviewer's home town, namely, *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, and Dermot A. Lane and published in 1988. I quickly counted up more than a dozen open, public dissenters in the list of contributors to that particular volume.

By contrast, the Shaw volume intends to adhere faithfully to the Church's magisterium in all of its articles, and—as far as I could judge—it succeeds in doing this. At the same time, the contributors do not limit themselves just to restating official teachings but, time and time again, they succeed admirably in illustrating what Chesterton called "the romance of orthodoxy" in the treatment they give to their assigned topics. The day when this Shaw volume will replace the other currently available reference books on Catholic doctrine on library shelves, as well as in personal libraries, cannot come too soon.

This *Our Sunday Visitor's Encyclopedia of Catholic Doctrine* is thoroughly grounded not only in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, but also in the Documents of Vatican Council II. In some ways, it is as much a short commentary on Vatican II as it is on the *Catechism*, and this, in the opinion of this reviewer, is a huge plus, since even after some thirty-five years, we still have not yet properly assimilated the teaching of Vatican II into the life of the Church. Moreover, since this is a book about *doctrine*, it properly tends to highlight just how doctrinal a Council Vatican II really was, especially with its Constitutions on the Church and on Divine Revelation, at a time when too many

disgruntled traditionalists are still trying to dismiss Vatican II as merely a “pastoral council.”

Another marked virtue of this volume is the quality of the mostly unsigned shorter articles on topics not thought to warrant more expanded treatment—such as, for example, Agnosticism, Assisted Suicide, Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit, Holy See, Idolatry, Rash Judgment, or the Cardinal Virtues and the Theological Virtues (the latter rate individual entries for the virtues in question, while the former do not). These shorter entries are clearly and crisply written, thus providing a quick, accurate reference source for anyone using the volume; if they are the work of the editor, then the quality of his writing shows up as readily as that

of his editing.

The editor’s choice of what topics to include generally also responds well to the needs of today. There are, inevitably, a few omissions concerning things important to Catholic faith and doctrine. One notable omission: there is no article on Feminism (although there are two very good articles by Joyce Little on Women and on Women, Ordination of). Considering the ravages radical feminism has wrought within the Church today, more attention needed to be given to this contemporary phenomenon; from a doctrinal point of view, we need only recall the fact that an apparent majority of America’s principal Catholic theology society is currently accepting of dissent from a teaching concerning female non-

ordination which the magisterium of the Church has declared to be definitive and, indeed, infallible.

However, most of the topics of importance today are covered; indeed the choice of topics is generally excellent. This volume should remain current and useful for many years to come, and it should henceforth be found next to the *Catechism* on everybody’s bookshelf. If it pertains to Catholic doctrine, “you can look it up.”

Russell Shaw and the Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division have done the Church in English-speaking countries a great service by bringing out this excellent reference volume on Catholic doctrine in such an attractive and permanent hard-bound volume.

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