

# Ex Corde Ecclesiae, Again

Gerard V. Bradley

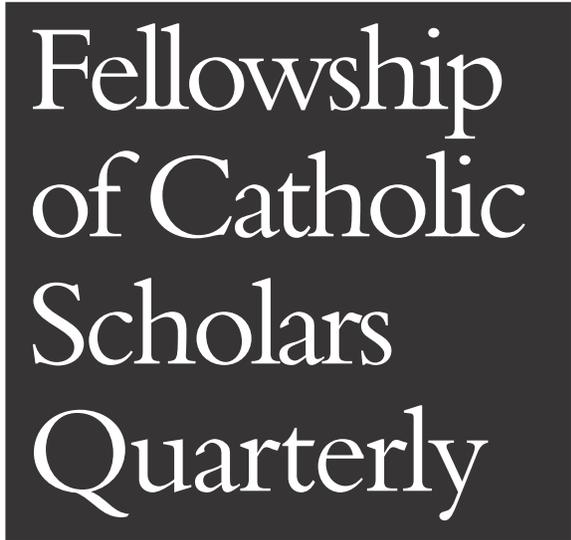
**A** new proposal for implementing *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* has been released. That document was drafted by a Subcommittee chaired by Cardinal Bevilacqua, and was discussed at the NCCB meeting in November. A vote is expected next year.

The Subcommittee is to be congratulated. The high standards and complex vision set out by the Holy Father in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* is one that, in the best of circumstances, would challenge the wisdom and skill of any group charged with implementing it. And the subcommittee worked in difficult circumstances. The vast majority of America's Catholic colleges have no desire to see *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* implemented. The Subcommittee has put together a careful document which is deeply centered in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*. Their work is inspiring and courageous.

The central vision of the new document surely does bring the Catholic university back towards "the heart of the Church." In my view, however, it is vitally important to now complete the work carried forward by the Subcommittee. A couple of clarifications and a couple of amendments are in order. Some examples: the mandate requirement should be clarified to bring it into accord with Canon Law and the document's own vision; the relevant phrase of Canon 810—"probity of life"—should be inserted for the document's "good character"; with regard to both Canon 810 and 812, the way in which the Catholicity of the institution is affected by disregard for the particular norms should be stated clearly. Finally, in accord with their practice of affirmative action for racial and ethnic minorities, Catholic schools which have a minority of Catholics on the faculty should be required to formulate, adopt, and publish a plan of affirmative action for hiring Catholics.

With changes such as these, the implementing document would, I think, earn Vatican approval.

*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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## Sr. Farley Response to Fr. Lamb Article

July 7, 1998

*Fellowship of Catholic  
Scholars Quarterly*  
BOX 495  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

To the Editors:

The recent article by Matthew Lamb, "Catholic Theological Society: A Preliminary Profile," prompts me to question whether writers for Catholic publications ought not to be held to the same standards of journalistic ethics as writers for publications such as *The Boston Globe*, *The New Republic*, and *The New York Times*. We are now all too familiar with the tendency of columnists, reporters, and writers of essays to fabricate material or to distort it by deciding on the position they will promote prior to their research. Recent accusations against writers for these and other publications have brought some careful judgments of failure to meet professional standards. One would expect no less monitoring of material on the part of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*.

Father Lamb has published much of what he says in this article elsewhere, and he has had ample opportunity to take account of efforts on the part of myself and others to correct some of his statements. Though I have long admired the work of Father Lamb, it is difficult for me to understand his present persistence in efforts to undermine American theologians and to denigrate theological studies in Catholic seminaries and universities. Some of the judgments that he makes in this particular article are clear cases of condemnation by innuendo, and others are simply false statements. Still others draw unwarranted conclusions based on inadequate and even inaccurate descrip-

tions of current programs of theological study. Whatever the good intent of Father Lamb, this kind of speculation and reporting serves to divide rather than to upbuild the Church. Because I believe that Matthew Lamb and I seek basically the same goals within the Church, I can only lament his refusal to take account of alternative data.

Let me indicate just some of the statements in the article that are at least seriously misleading, either inaccurate in themselves or suggesting interpretations that distort rather than clarify the issues.

1. The statement that I signed more than a decade ago was neither in favor of abortion nor in support of Catholics for Free Choice. The record shows this in a way that should be clear. Father Lamb has, in another of his personal attacks on me (made as always in order to attack ultimately the CTSA), called for the sort of "recanting" that is reminiscent of the Inquisition in its account of what others have actually said or done.

2. Father Lamb's statistical analysis of the percentage of the CTSA's membership that attends an annual convention needs to be compared with similar analyses of any comparable professional organization's membership and attendance at annual meetings. The implication that the CTSA is being taken over by a particular group without care for the membership as a whole is simply unwarranted. Nor is it unusual for professional organizations to elect their officers and to pass resolutions at an annual business meeting. I cite the Society of Christian Ethics as an analogous case in point.

3. Father Lamb's criticism of Catholic theologians who earn their terminal degrees in other than Catholic institutions is a familiar

refrain by now. This criticism does a disservice both to Catholic institutions and to others. A number of relevant factors must be noted. For example, many theologians whose doctoral degrees are from other than Catholic institutions have already spent years studying for other degrees at Catholic institutions. Also, it is not accurate any more to refer to "non-Catholic" institutions of the sort Father Lamb cites as either "Protestant" or as

"nondenominational." Most of the ones he names are, rather, "interdenominational," "inter-traditional," "ecumenical, or sometimes "interconfessional" institutions. In some cases, the connection between doctoral programs (academically oriented) and professional degree programs (ministerially oriented) is much closer in these schools than in Catholic universities (hence, much more likely to include "formational" elements, including in the Roman Catholic tradition." It is also simply not true to say that in these schools only a few courses here and there are available in the Catholic tradition to students. For example, strengths in patristics and in medieval theology are sometimes as strong or stronger than anywhere in the world. Moreover, far from there being one trend toward the "Protestantizing" of Catholic theology, there are even stronger trends visible toward the "Catholicizing" of Protestant theology. Whether Catholic-sponsored or not, all first-rate theological programs require the kind of linguistic and philosophical skills that Father Lamb values. Many schools, whether Catholic or not, require comprehensive learning in all historical periods; and if dissertations do not represent this, it is due more to the specialization of all learning today than to the lack of background prior to the dis-

sertation. It is certainly the case that graduates of leading interdenominational schools have a clear understanding of the differences between Christian theological traditions.

4. A survey of dissertation topics in the 1996 CTSA Directory will, of course, include the dissertations not just of recent graduates but of all the members (including Father Lamb). It is therefore difficult to draw conclusions from this regarding what topics are being written on today. The lists Father Lamb provides are a bit dated, I am afraid (I doubt there are many students writing on Hartshorne today, or on process theology as such; and of course there is likely to be a connection between human rights and natural law in today's projects; and the Reformation as it is understood today probably includes what

used to be called the Counter-Reformation; and feminist studies are not, of course, without a focus on Christology and the Trinity; etc.).

5. Most students that I have known who study in interdenominational contexts become more, not less, anchored in their own tradition (and certainly do not value their school more than their faith). It is not surprising, in an age of specialization, that priests who are trained scholars are needed in the seminaries and the universities. And it is, unfortunately, inaccurate as well as demeaning to many individuals to offer the kind of anecdotal report that Father Lamb includes regarding the families of lay theologians.

6. Last of all, what Father Lamb calls "dissent" is frequently only theologians doing their job—ques-

tioning, not denying; searching, not advocating. No individuals can claim their own righteousness, nor can any organization bear a flag of perfection. Yet it would be hard to find a more loyal group of Church members, a more faithful community of believers, than the membership of the CTSA.

My own plea is that we try harder to understand one another and to trust one another. 'Ibis letter is written with respect, but the kind of respect that asks for a more mutual conversation. In this, Father Lamb and I might, at least in principle,

Sincerely,

Margaret A. Farley  
President-Elect, CTSA

## Fr. Lamb Response to Sr. Farley

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29 September 1998  
Fellowship of Catholic Scholars  
Quarterly  
Box 495  
Notre Dame, IN 46556

To the Editors:

Providence surprises. When on the Board of Directors of the CTSA, I recommended that discussions be initiated with the theologians in the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. Turned down then by fellow CTSA board members, I was doubly surprised when the complete text of an article partially published in *Crisis* appeared in the *FCS Quarterly*, and then evoked such a long response from Sr. Margaret Farley, President-Elect of the CTSA.

Therefore I gladly join Sr. Farley in her plea that theologians in both the CTSA and the FCS "try harder to understand one another and to trust one another". In this spirit, let

me indicate some of the issues in need of further understanding.

First, I would hope that Sr. Farley's letter is prelude to her supporting a serious and in-depth study by the CTSA - perhaps in conjunction with a similar study within the FCS - of member Catholic theologians along the lines suggested in my article. Such self-studies are often undertaken by disciplines to properly determine where weaknesses in their undergraduate and graduate education exist, and how corrections of emphasis may be needed. For example, it is generally acknowledged that too few Catholics have done doctoral dissertations in traditions and figures making up the first eighteen centuries of Catholicism.

In calling for such critical self-study, I assure Sr. Farley that I am not trying "to undermine American theologians and to denigrate theological studies in Catholic seminaries and universities". The purpose is to

build up Catholic theologians and their studies. If we as theologians do not attend to our formation of the next generation of Catholic theologians, we may well undermine Catholic theology through inadequate graduate theological programs. If we do not specify clearly the very real differences between Catholicism and Protestantism, we do justice to neither. Catholic theologians, unlike Protestant colleagues, do theology at the service of the Church with a magisterium enjoying full apostolic authority to decide definitively and infallibly doctrinal and moral matters.

Any Catholic with a master or doctoral degree in theology should have a set of linguistic skills and sets of intellectual habits placed in the service of understanding the wondrous truths of the Catholic faith. For the truth of faith is the Truth of the Triune God revealed in the missions of the Word Incarnate and the Holy Spirit carried forward in the mission

of the Catholic Church. St. Augustine reminds us that “nothing so enlightens intelligence as the diligent search to understand the truth of the Catholic faith. If the truth dies in a mind, genuine understanding diminishes.”

Second, such a critical self-study would correct any of the inadequacies of the bibliographic profiles in the 1996 CTSA directory. I was glad to see that Sr. Farley in no way could impugn the validity of the figures in my preliminary profile. They are all drawn from the CTSA directory. As for the election of the officers of the society, I would point out that most scholarly associations of the size of the CTSA – over 1500 members – use mail ballots. The Society of Christian Ethics is, I believe, much smaller, so that a greater percentage of its members attend their conventions.

I am neither the only one nor the first to call for such a study. In his 1991 presidential address to the CTSA, the late Fr. Walter H. Principe issued a warning about the overwhelming number of dissertations done on nineteenth and twentieth century themes or figures (89%) during the years of 1979 to 1990. He worried that classical language skills were lacking and he called for a study of ways to promote the study of those philosophical and theological traditions, especially Patristic and Medieval, so central to Catholic intellectual life. Walter realized that many young lay scholars want to acquire the linguistic skills and philosophical habits needed for doing serious doctoral work in the tradition. He complained that few financial resources are available to laypeople, and time constraints often move them to do a dissertation on contemporary theologians.

There is also a hiring problem. As more take on doctoral work in patristics, medieval scholasticism, and

the counter-reformation, will they be hired in our departments and seminaries? There is a tendency to follow a modern prejudice and relegate them to “historical theology”. If our systematic and moral theological sections are to do justice to contemporary issues, they are going to have to hire colleagues with expertise in pre-modern Catholic achievements. Those who have only studied modern and contemporary philosophy and theology do not know the full import of what they have studied. They come into a conversation, as it were, in the late afternoon that had been going on since early morning. Just as we need colleagues in biblical theology to collaborate in systematics and ethics, so we need colleagues from the full range of Catholic theological achievements in wisdom and scholarship.

Third, far from wishing to “divide” the Catholic theological community, the intent of my preliminary study was to call attention to how we are in need of more serious scholarly and spiritual formation. I agree with Sr. Farley that often what she calls “inter-denominational” divinity schools have more pastoral and prayer services than departments of theology at Catholic universities. That is because for a long time most faculties at the latter were religious or clerics. At Boston College, for instance, as recently as 1966 there were 27 full time faculty in theology, and all 27 were Jesuits. Therefore, the routines of the department did not incorporate prayer, liturgy, etc. since that was occurring in the Jesuit community on campus. As far as Catholics getting degrees at the divinity schools, my “familiar refrain” is simply echoing what I hear from our many doctoral students in Catholic programs. They worry that they may not find teaching positions in Catholic faculties, especially those with doctoral programs, since Catholic

departments seem to have a bias in favor of hiring faculty with non-Catholic degrees.

I only wish we were as far-sighted as the Chicago, Harvard, and Yale divinity schools. Many of their faculties are their own students; they hire from the other two sister schools. Ten years ago almost 50% of their respective faculties were their own students. Ten years ago, by contrast, 65% of Notre Dame’s theology faculty, and 55% of Boston College’s theology faculty, had degrees from non-Catholic programs. Today, while the divinity schools have a lower percent of their own students as faculty, Notre Dame has almost 75% of its theology faculty, and Boston College 65%, with non-Catholic degrees. The intellectual habits needed for doing good theology are acquired, not infused. So Catholics may be most devout and holy, but without miracles of the Spirit, they will only appropriate the great achievements of wisdom in the two millennial history of Catholic theology if they study those achievements carefully. To reach up to the great minds in our Catholic tradition is a daunting and most rewarding exercise.

Sr. Farley is right to point out many of the very fine patristic and medieval scholars teaching at divinity schools. We disagree, perhaps, in the ways we would characterize the overall formation in such schools. There is, after all, no “inter-denominational”, or “ecumenical” church as such. Among the factors that influence one’s study of history and texts, as Fr. Bernard Lonergan analyzed in his treatment of dialectics, is the religious faith and practice of the scholar. Now faculties at the divinity schools are overwhelmingly Protestant, and very few have degrees from Catholic programs. I know of no dean at any of the divinity schools who would even want to argue that

their programs are meant to form Catholic graduate students in the Catholic theological tradition. Some of the most exciting scholarship now going on in biblical, patristic, monastic, and medieval studies is indicating dialectical differences between modern Protestant and Catholic retrievals. Is this what Sr. Farley means by stronger trends toward “Catholicizing” Protestant theology? If so, our Catholic departments should be fostering it far more than they are now.

Finally, there is a great difference between “dissent” and theologians questioning and searching. Dissent is saying what is false as if it were true, or what is true as if it were false. Dissent denies the “Catholic truth” which theologians seek to understand ever more fully. In denying the truth, dissent undermines faithful life in Christ and in the sacred realities expressed by the truths of faith. For, as Thomas Aquinas states, the act of faith does not end at a proposition but in the realities affirmed. Fr. Avery Dulles has raised the issue of dissent within the CTSA in his critical essay in *Commonweal* last March.

Regarding my comment that “Sr. Margaret Farley ... signed the 1984 *New York Times* ad in support of the pro-abortion Catholics for Free Choice,” it was not meant as a “personal attack”, but a statement of fact. It is very important, for our mutual understanding and trust, that Sr. Farley tells us just how “the record shows” that the statement she signed “was neither in favor of abortion nor in support of Catholics for Free Choice”. For as far as I know, and others I have consulted, the record shows the exact opposite. Let me state the record as I know it, in the hope that St. Farley will correct any mistakes.

The October 7, 1984 *New York Times* ad lists Sr. Margaret A. Farley as a signer, and “Catholics for a Free Choice” (CFFC) as the organization

that paid for the ad. It affirms “*Statements of recent Popes and of the Catholic hierarchy have condemned the direct termination of prenatal life as morally wrong in all circumstances. There is a mistaken belief in American society that this is the only legitimate Catholic position. In fact, a diversity of opinions regarding abortion exists among committed Catholics. A large number of Catholic theologians hold that even direct abortion, though tragic, can sometimes be a moral choice.*” Is Sr. Farley one such theologian? It would appear so from an article she co-authored in the *New England Journal of Medicine* which finds third trimester abortions in some cases morally permissible: “When are Third Trimester Pregnancy Terminations Morally Justifiable?” (2/23/84).

In private correspondence last January, I was told that at the time she signed the statement, she had no knowledge of either the CFFC or that the statement would appear as an ad. Nevertheless, whatever Sr. Farley’s state of knowledge before the ad appeared, if she now supports neither abortion nor the CFFC, she owes the public a contrary statement. To claim, as she does now that the statement “was neither in favor of abortion nor in support of Catholics for Free Choice” is refuted by the statement itself, which is the official position of the CFFC. Surely she does not mean by “does not favor abortion” that the statement says that abortion) is moral only “sometimes”. Until she publicly disowns the ad, her name supports the CFFC organization that paid for the ad and solicited funds in it.

Nor is this dredging up a forgotten episode. Sr. Farley is one of the so-called “Vatican 24”: the twenty-four nuns who signed the 1984 *New York Times* ad. *Theological Studies* recently (December 1997 page 753) describes the Vatican 24 as “24 women religious who held to their position, as expressed in their ad in the *New York Times*, that there was a diversity of

opinions among committed Catholics in regard to abortion” [emphasis mine]. Obviously, some colleagues believe that Sr. Farley still holds to her 1984 position on the morality of some abortions, and identifies her with the CFFC ad. She would agree with me that this is not a small or incidental matter. As for her reminiscing about the Inquisition, I would remind her that the culture of death recants none of its countless aborted victims. I look forward to Sr. Farley correcting the record on this matter, and I hope that she will add her name to the effort to have a thorough self-study of the membership of the CTSA. It is very important to form Catholic theologians committed to the faith and to the full understanding of the mysteries of the faith. Papal and Episcopal exercise of the apostolic magisterium in preserving Catholic truth in no way stifles genuine scholarship. Orthodox Catholic faith enlightens human intelligence. Dissent weakens both faith and intelligence.

In Christ,

Fr. Matthew L. Lamb  
Professor of Theology  
Boston College

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TO THE EDITOR

Dear Prof. McInerney:

Thank you for publishing my letter in the Summer issue. I must point out, however, a misquotation of it in the last sentence. The printed version reads: “using the riches of modern language,” whereas I wrote the much more sensible phrase: “using the riches of modern knowledge.” I hope this may be pointed out also to puzzled readers.

Sincerely yours,

Jerome Treacy, S.J.  
Clarkston, Michigan

# On Intellectual Poverty

James V. Schall, S. J.

The style of dress or manner of living in which anyone follows the faith that leads to God does not matter to the heavenly city, so long as these are not in contradiction with the divine precepts. Thus, even philosophers, when they become Christians, are not required to change their style of dress or eating customs, which do not impede religion, though they are required to change their false teachings.... With respect to those three kinds of life, the leisurely (contemplative), the active, and the combination of the two, although every one, through sound faith, can lead his life according to any one of them and attain the everlasting reward, what one holds through the love of truth and what one expends through the duty of charity are nevertheless important. Thus, no one ought to be so leisurely that he does not, in his leisure, consider the advantage of his neighbor—neither should anyone be so active that he does not consider the contemplation of God to be necessary.

St. Augustine, *The City of God*, XIX, 19.

**M**other Teresa of Calcutta once remarked that the really poor people in the world are not those materially deprived in the Third World. Rather they are intellectual classes in the affluent West who do not know, do not choose to know the truth, do not want to know any standards of living or reality, even divine ones, that they do not establish by themselves. The implication of Mother Teresa is, clearly, that things worse than physical poverty exist. “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added unto you” is the Scriptural statement of this truth. Disordered minds are more troubling than disordered bodies, even to themselves. Modernity, in its extreme, is having “all these things” and calling them, contrary to the scriptural admonition, the “Kingdom of God.” We will not be free, however, unless we also

know the truth, the truth about ourselves, the truth about God.

Poverty, no doubt, may protect us from many of the vices to which the rich in particular are susceptible. We cannot simply identify material prosperity with moral virtue; the one is not a necessary sign of the presence of the other. History’s greatest criminals or corrupt villains have, for the most part, been rich, not poor. This fact does not, at the same time, deny that certain rich men and women have been saints and martyrs. Likewise many poor folk have seriously sinned—they have abused the rich but more often the poor themselves.

Poverty is not immediately converted into virtue. The Gospel is to be preached to all, rich and poor alike, not just to one or the other. Its essence is a statement of the spiritual and transcendent direction of human life in whatever economic condition one finds himself. Scripture only deals directly with this world insofar as it relates to eternal life. We are to look primarily to experience and the philosophers for how to organize this life in its practical details. The New Testament is not a parallel book to Aristotle’s *Politics* or to *The Federalist Papers*.

Aristotle said, quite wisely, that most people probably need a certain minimal amount of material goods to be virtuous. But he was aware of the classical tradition that the philosopher did not much concern himself with riches even if he could have them. Aristotle even recounted a famous tale of how a philosopher, Thales, on the basis of his knowledge, could become rich if he wanted to—by the age-old method of establishing a monopoly, as it turns out. The philosopher preferred not be bothered by the many obligations caused by the care of vast amounts of material things. This care consumed vast amounts of his already limited time better spent on the pursuit of truth.

The most important things were not economic ones, nor were they political ones, though both

were natural and necessary, in proper proportion, for a full human life. The best things in life were, precisely, free. And it was not freedom that made us free, but truth. Paradoxically, the elevation of political or economic things to the center of human attention — one of the great temptations of the contemporary religious mind — corrupts not only the higher things, but also economic and political things by causing us to expect something from them that they cannot yield. Many a poor man was told by the intellectuals that what he needed most was riches, only to find out, on receiving them, that he was still empty. Modernity advised us to lower our sights from contemplation and virtue, to identify our happiness with the possession of its material substrate and not with the highest things themselves. We live in a culture dominated by the lower sights.

Dostoyevsky held that men would, in the end, choose to live by bread alone — and be told by their intellectual superiors that this bread is all there is, all there can be. Concern for religious and philosophical things were said to deflect us from the really serious things of this world. Plato had said, however, in a remarkable and, today, prophetic phrase, that the worst position in which any human being could find himself would be for him “to hold a lie in his soul” about reality, about what is, especially about one’s-self, about what he is. To hold a lie in one’s soul meant precisely to lie to oneself about what are the most important things, including a lie about one’s own place in reality. All heresy, we know, consists in taking one aspect of a truth and elevate it to the central position from which all else is distorted.

## II.

A commonly used phrase, one that the Holy Father himself often employs, though with considerable nuance, is the “preferential option for the poor.” This phrase is designed not only to call our attention to the plight of the poor, but to instigate solid means of reliev-

ing their needs. The Jerusalem disciples, to recall, asked Paul to be “mindful of the poor,” which he said he was glad to be. But Paul also worked so he would not be a burden. He warned those who would not work that they would not eat. The “preferential option to the poor” should not reduce the poor solely to objects of our exalted care, particularly bureaucratic care, with no input of their own into their own lives.

The purpose of the poor is not to provide the state or the wise with a visible justification for their own activities, institutions, or experimental ideas. This “preferential” admonition is primarily directed to our wills or to our feelings that might blind us. Will and feeling can cause us to look elsewhere when we ourselves walk by a contemporary poor man. We can, no doubt, have a very earnest desire to “opt” for the poor without knowing exactly or even vaguely what we should do to make things better. Many deeds and noble sounding programs, ostensibly directed to aid the poor, in fact have actually harmed them. We are not wholly innocent when this unfortunate result derives from our best-laid proposals. Many a noble sounding idea or concern has turned out to be lethal in practice.

We are quite familiar with efforts to alleviate poverty by providing abortions so that the “poor” would not come to be in the first place, so they would not “suffer” poverty. The really poor are, in fact, those politicians and intellectuals who propose such solutions. In other words, no proportion may exist between our intention and our deeds. Aid to the poor, no matter how well intentioned, without sound intelligence, does them no good and quite frequently makes their lot worse. The purpose of “opting for the poor” is not to make everyone poor, even though certain believers can choose to be voluntarily poor to witness to some human purpose that transcends this world. Some grandiose plans to aid the poor, we think of the history of Marxism end up by making everyone poor and, in addition, prisoners in an absolutist state.

Most serious people thus recognize that ways

offered to help the poor can themselves be either immoral or unworkable. Whatever the romance of Robin Hood, the stealing from the rich to give to the poor, this fanciful method is basically wrong. Likewise, we have seen vast governmental sums poured into what is designed to be “aid for the poor,” the whole superstructure of the welfare state itself, only to see it work to destroy families and to create a dependency and poverty far worse than that it was designed to alleviate. The 20th century has shown, by contrast, that totalitarian regimes can, for a long time, feed and clothe the poor. They have again taught in yet another way that there are worse things than poverty.

In today’s ideologically charged political atmosphere, we must be careful to distinguish between the subjective claim to choose for the poor and the effectiveness of the program that is proposed to implement this choice. Almost every ideology in the last three centuries was proposed as the best way to aid the poor, however these latter were defined. Indeed, the “aiding of the poor” often became a substitute for God as the only worthwhile end or inner-worldly purpose that could be defined for a mankind that rejects any transcendent purpose in its being. As God, supposedly, grew more and more obscure, the poor, usually taken as a mass abstraction, became the most “realistic” human purpose that existed outside the self-centered human person. The poor came to give a touch of nobility in a world deprived of supernatural, natural, or innate nobility.

### III.

**N**ow, I think that the poor can be “opted” for, but only if we keep a clear distinction between the classical ideas of charity and justice, only if we keep in mind a principle of subsidiarity that insists that the poor are largely to help themselves and not be merely objects of help by some all-caring state or state institution that justifies everything in their name. Ironically, we are often very close to reducing all

our social thinking to “charity,” in which we conceive the people to be helped to be in effect themselves helpless but for our own concern. “Bureaucratized social programs,” Jennifer Roback Morse has written,

are no substitutes for the giving from one person to another that is the true meaning of “*in*tas. And the modern state which leads us to believe that there are shortcuts, that we can have the results of charity without the personal reality of charity, this modern state deceives us. Or perhaps I should say, we use the instruments of the modern state to deceive ourselves on these vital matters (“The Modern State as an Occasion of Sin,” *Notre Dame Journal of Law, Ethics & Public Policy* [#2, 1997], 548).

There is a common “guilt” that places the condition of the poor entirely in the hands of the state or the rich, as if that were sufficient. This move thereby gives to the state an identifiable social, even transcendent, purpose, but leaves the poor as merely objects of someone else’s benevolence or philanthropy. The Good Samaritan in the New Testament did not keep the man who fell among robbers forever dependent on him so that he could boast of his good work. Rather he saw to his being taken care of so he could soon return to his work.

But my topic here is precisely “intellectual poverty.” In recent years, our universities have often been structured so that students would be directed to various programs in the city or overseas wherein they could learn, first hand, but still vicariously, what it was like to be poor. This awareness of dire poverty was designed to waken the consciences of economically privileged students so that they would not merely desire themselves to become rich as their sole end in life and their sole purpose in the university. It is not totally clear that the result of these efforts is not to teach the poor that material riches are the most important things in life and the acquiring of which the only thing that such students have to teach. We might call this the “service-oriented” university. Behind this “service” concept, however, is often found an

implicit picture of the world, sometimes Marxist or socialist, often liberal and anti-religious, frequently heavily indoctrinated by environmental and anti-population ideologies. The poor really need none of these things.

Thus this service notion of a university has most often, in practice, been directed by what might be called the “intelligentsia university.” It is quite clear that universities, almost of their very nature, are enclaves of privilege and leisure. They are designed in principle to be havens whereby the relatively young can be protected for a time from the pressures of life, of making a living, so that they can at least become aware of the higher things. The “service-university” is often a thin cover for a kind of activist anti-intellectualism.

The purpose of the university is not, principally, the directing of students to the alleviation of economic or political problems, however noble this purpose might be if something can be found that works to this purpose. Indeed, the university, exists to suggest that if such service or business orientation is the concept that a university has of itself, it will not do what it is designed to do with regard to the highest things, including the things of wisdom and God. Nor, it is my contention here, will such a university really do much for the poor. Before we ask about the ways to opt for the poor, we must deal directly with what we are, what are our relations to God, neighbor, the world itself.

Mother Teresa’s admonition is to be taken seriously. The affluent generally are the poorest of the poor, the most lacking of our kind in what is most important for human reality, beginning with truth itself. If we lack truth, especially if we deny that truth is possible — the relativist position that dominates almost every university faculty today — nothing else that we lack will really matter much. Truth is not the same as, though it is not necessarily opposed to, knowing a lot of useful things. The poor are not poor, as I have often remarked, because the rich are rich. This belief that the rich cause the poverty of the poor is generally based on a finite quantity, distributionist notion of the

wealth in the world. If such “redistribution” were to be put into effect, everyone would quickly be poor. The final wealth of the world does not consist in things, in physical resources, in fixed capital. The wealth of the world consists in knowledge, a spiritual power and its activity, along with the virtue that incites its proper use. Moreover, the principal object of our knowing faculties is not the devising of means to alleviate the poor. Before we can think of the poor, we must first think of what is, of reality. It is a crime against humanity to make the materially poor also spiritually poor, to give them hope of only bread and not every word that comes from God.

We do not live in a world that does not know how to help the poor. Indeed, we live in a world with hundreds of programs about how to help the poor, many of which, however well-intended, won’t work, but many do. We are told on a daily basis, moreover, that there is a radical separation between our private moral lives and our public lives. We can be successful in public life, it is said, but have a moral life that radically deviates from the Commandments, which are said to have no basis in scientific reality. We are secretly comforted when public figures display vices that we would like for ourselves. The great source of public immorality is always private immorality, or to put it differently, there is no such thing as a sin that does not have public consequences, no such thing as a sin that does not require repentance and hence acknowledgement of the intrinsic disorder it puts into the world. Intellectual poverty is rooted in and tends to moral poverty, to an unwillingness to know the truth in action, to recognize the distinction of right and wrong and, more importantly, to live it.

#### IV.

**W**hat is the cause of intellectual poverty? The notion of intellectual poverty does not con- note lack of native intelligence, or lack of material

goods. Intellectual poverty is indeed a lack of something, a lack of truth, particularly what John Paul II has often called “the whole truth about man.” Lucifer, we need often to recall, was among the most intelligent of the angels. Ms sheer intelligence did not save him. Nor did his sin arise from lack of material goods. It was not caused by his intelligence alone. What intellectual poverty does connote is a refusal to ask the fundamental questions of life — about creation, death, freedom, sin, redemption, virtue — together with an willingness to listen to the answers, including the revelational answers found to these questions, The problem is not just in not asking about such notions but in not taking them seriously as vital constituents of our actual living.

And yet, we must wonder, granting that men are what they are, i.e., question-forming beings, why the asking such questions is rejected? Are there things we don't want to know but suspect we can know? Do we avoid them because it would require a change in how we live? This question brings us to a second level of intellectual poverty, namely, its cause. Here I am going to elaborate something I saw in Aristotle, namely, that all intellectual errors are rooted in moral choices, in moral fault. This does not mean that morally good men cannot have erroneous speculative positions. But it does caution us to take at face value any intellectual position that, in its logic, justifies a deviant moral position. When an Anglican bishop at the Lambeth Conference tells us that the sixth commandment is “unscientific” in its requirements, we need look not only at what his concept of science might be, but also at what the logic his theory allows him and his flock to do. Our model here is, no doubt, Augustine, who went through one intellectual position after another in order to justify a way of living that he knew he could not defend. It is amazing, even amusing, to note how furiously modern thinkers politicians seek reasons to justify their deviant ways.

How does this justification work? The philosopher George Steiner, in his *Real Presences*, observes

that one of the reasons that many Jewish thinkers lapse into ideology, into a search for a substitute messiah, is because it has, by their standards, taken so long for the messianic Promise to be fulfilled. Eric Voegelin has made a similar comment with regard to Christians, who fall into similar ideologies because of their impatience with the delay in the second coming, however it is understood. We notice something similar in the Chinese, in their almost absurd borrowing from Marx to modernize their Middle Kingdom. But all of these aberrations suggest a common theme, namely, that an improper understanding of man's final destiny necessarily, yet still voluntarily, sets one off to find more rapidly a kingdom of God on Earth. This search justifies activities that violate the commandments and reason in the name of a greater, more urgent good. Utopians of every sort, I would consider definitely intellectually poor, however sophisticated their developed system. They want to solve mankind's problem by their own means and ways. They are modern Pelagians who do not see any need of grace, who do not see any need of truth by which they might correct their own idea about what the world should be like. And behind all these lofty theories is almost always a sinful, deviant heart bent on rejecting that conversion of soul from which all social reform ultimately derives.

John XXIII was famous for many things, but one of the most important of his insights, one of particular pertinence today, was his explicit rejection of a radical difference between private and public morality. He did not, of course, intend to deny St. Thomas' position that the state cannot command by its laws levels of virtue higher than the generality of men can be expected to be observed. But he did intend to relate private and public virtue. “The same natural law, which governs relations between individual human beings, must also regulate the relations of political communities with one another,” John XXIII wrote in *Pacem in Terris* (#80-81). “... The individual representatives of political communities cannot put aside their personal dignity while they are acting in the name and interest of their countries-, and that

they cannot therefore violate the very law of nature by which they are bound, which is itself the moral law. “ The two moralities, a separate private and a separate public one, a thesis stemming at least from Machiavelli, end by corrupting both private and public morality.

Intellectual poverty is precisely the mind deprived of truth, of knowledge of itself and of the reaches of its thoughts and actions. The first step in this deliberate choice not to know the first things occurs when the mind rejects a standard in reality other than itself. It looks on its own spiritual life as self-constructed, self-composed. It cannot “do” any wrong, for it defines to itself what is wrong. Likewise, it cannot forgive or be forgiven because that would imply a source and measure outside of itself. Intellectual poverty is the real origin of material poverty. This is why classical wisdom has always told us first to look to ourselves, to order ourselves by a standard what we do not simply make for ourselves. When we choose an end that is deviant or corrupting, what happens is that all the rest of our acts are chosen and directed to this end. Our minds work overtime to fit reality into our choices.

The most urgent need today is not attention to material poverty, the alleviation of which, as Augustine told us, will always be the result of the condition of our souls. The real poverty in our society is intellectual. Students attend universities, listen to professors, and come away intellectually poor, even when the university buildings and grounds are well-ordered and charming and they think of doing something good in some far-off land. There is not much difference on this score between private, religious, and state schools. This is not something that can be solved by having more money or building new plants. It is something that must happen in the soul. As Socrates often told the young men who questioned him, they must “turn” and see something that they were not noticing because of the disorder in their own souls. The intellectual poverty of our time, a time of enormous information and technical skills, is what needs to be addressed above all. But this

poverty is in turn rooted in how we choose to live. When we choose to justify ways of life that deviate from the good, our intellectual lives will be nothing less than sophisticated efforts to blind us from seeing what is. This intellectual poverty will allow our disorder of soul to carry itself step by step farther away from what we ought to be and know. This is the history of our times.

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# Humanae Vitae, Veritatis Splendor and the “Civilization of Love”

William E. May

**T**his year of grace, 1998, is the anniversary year of two masterful encyclicals, Pope Paul VI’s *Humanae Vitae* (“of human life”) and Pope John Paul II’s *Veritatis Splendor* (“The Splendor of the Truth”). Both are critically important for the development of a “civilization of love.” I will first take up Pope Paul’s encyclical and then Pope John Paul II’s.

On July 25, 1968, Pope Paul VI signed his great encyclical on marriage and human life, *Humanae Vitae*, and it was made public on July 29 of that year, before the vast majority of today’s college students (and graduate students) were born. In his encyclical Pope Paul reaffirmed the truth constantly taught by the Church that contraception is intrinsically disordered and incompatible with true spousal love. This teaching, so at odds with the conventional wisdom of the day, aroused fierce opposition, ridicule, and dismissal.

The Pope’s critics then- and today- charge that this teaching is rooted in a naive “physicalism” blind to the “personalistic” values of marriage and human sexuality. By a great majority present-day undergraduate and graduate students, like most of their fellow citizens, consider Paul’s teaching antediluvian. After all, almost everyone today thinks that there is nothing wrong with contraception; it is, in fact, the morally obligatory thing to do if married persons have a good reason to avoid a pregnancy- and it is rather obviously the intelligent thing for unmarried lovers to do when they have sex, for it would hardly be prudent, given their situation, to cause a pregnancy.

The widespread acceptance and practice of contraception, however, has by no means proved a panacea to the serious human problems it was supposed to solve; to the contrary, it has been a disas-

ter. In his encyclical Pope Paul expressed his fear that widespread use of contraception would lead to a weakening of the moral life in general and, in particular, would end up facilitating infidelity in marriage and promiscuous sex among the unmarried, and he was ridiculed for voicing this fear. But the thirty years that have passed since his encyclical was written show how prophetic he was. Marital infidelity today is not only widespread but accepted by many as the norm (the Clinton-Lewinsky affair shows this); fornication- today it is euphemistically called “premarital sex”— has become normative for a majority of American youth, and abortion- a backup to failed contraception- snuffs out the lives of more than a million unborn babies a year. In truth, the ideology undergirding the acceptance and practice of contraception has given rise to a “culture of death,” a “civilization of death.”

If one reads it, one discovers that Pope Paul’s encyclical is far more than a reaffirmation of the truth that contraception is immoral. It is, first and foremost, a beautiful articulation of the “integral vision” of human persons, male and female, that is at the basis of this truth. His encyclical provides a brief but masterful account of God’s wise and loving plan for human existence. God has entrusted to husbands and wives the sublime mission of cooperating with him in giving life to new human beings, whom they are to welcome lovingly, nourish humanely, and educate in the service of God and neighbor. Their marital union fittingly symbolizes the life-giving, love-giving union of Christ with his bride, the Church.

In his encyclical Paul reminds us that the marital act, in which husbands and wives “give” themselves unreservedly to one another, is both love-giving or unitive and life-giving or procreative. These two meanings, the unitive and the procreative, are by God’s will intrinsic to the act.

It is utterly incompatible with spousal love for a husband or wife deliberately to repudiate the unitive meaning of the conjugal act and to abuse a spouse sexually. And everyone can readily acknowledge this, as the Pope notes in his encyclical. But it is equally incompatible with spousal love, as Pope Paul likewise points out, deliberately to repudiate its procreative meaning, to close it to the gift of new human life, to say “no” to this great gift from God. After all, did not the Lord say, immediately after speaking about the one-flesh union of husband and wife— “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them” (Matt 19:14)? Yet this is precisely what one does when one contracepts. Should new human life be given despite one’s deliberate measures to prevent it, it comes to be as an “unwanted child.” And how tragic it is for a child to come to be as someone “unwanted”! Contraception is both anti-love and anti-life.

Paul’s great encyclical is at heart a defense of the beauty of marriage and the goodness and beauty of spousal love and of human life as a gift from God, one he wills to be given through the marital embrace. His encyclical provides a blueprint for a “civilization of love.”

Pope John Paul II has sought, throughout his twenty years as Peter’s successor, to deepen the “integral vision of human life” portrayed by Paul VI. He has written eloquently on the “nuptial” or “spousal” meaning of the body and the deep significance of sexual union, which is meant to be a sign of the self-giving love of husband and wife and which is falsified and profaned when it is not truly marital (on this, see his Wednesday audiences collected in the volume *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1997). He has set forth at length the indispensable role that the Christian family must play if the civilization of love is to become a reality and if the “culture of death” is to be replaced by a “culture of life” (on this see, for instance, his 1981 Apostolic Exhortation on the “Role of the Christian Family in the Modern World” [*Familiaris Consortio*], his 1994 “Letter to

Families,” and his magnificent 1995 encyclical “The Gospel of Life” [*Evangelium Vitae*]).

But here I want to note in particular the relevance of his great encyclical on the moral life, “The Splendor of the Truth” (*Veritatis Splendor*) to the “civilization of love.” I do so because 1993 marks the fifth anniversary of this document, which John Paul II signed on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Our Lord, August 6, 1993, and made public in October of that year.

The encyclical is crucially important for the civilization of love. The central theme of this encyclical— which portrayed the Christian moral life as essentially a following of Christ, even to the cross— was a defense of the truth, denied by cultural elites and dissenting Catholic theologians, that there are some moral norms that are absolute, without exception. These are norms proscribing intrinsically evil acts, such as the intentional killing of innocent human persons, adultery, fornication, and, yes, contraception.

These acts are intrinsically evil, as John Paul II shows in this great encyclical, precisely because they are utterly incompatible with love. The norms prohibiting them, while expressed negatively— e.g., “one ought never intentionally kill an innocent human being”— are affirmative and positive in meaning because, as the Pope says, they protect the inviolable dignity of the human person by protecting his *good*, at the level of the various goods intrinsically perfecting him: his life, the marital communion, life in its transmission, etc.

Moreover, as John Paul II was at pains to point out, these moral absolutes go hand-in-hand with inviolable human rights. No human being has an inviolable right to life unless all other human persons have an absolute obligation to forbear intentionally killing him or her. No spouse has an inviolable right to the faithful and exclusive love of his wife or her husband unless husbands and wives have an absolute obligation to forbear putting other women or men in the marriage bed. No child has an inviolable right to parental care and education unless his or her parents have an absolute obligation to provide it and to refrain from

abusing their children.

There is a vast difference between the “integral vision” of human persons at the heart of Pope Paul’s *Humanae Vitae* and Pope John Paul II’s *Veritatis Splendor* and the “civilization of love” that these documents and the constant teaching of the Church undergird and the “disintegrative” vision underlying acceptance of contraception as the solution to human ills. This difference can be shown vividly, I believe, by contrasting a slogan frequently voiced by champions of contraception with a truth at the heart of these great papal encyclicals (whose anniversaries we celebrate this year) and the teaching of the Church. According to advocates of contraception “no unwanted child ought ever to be born”—and if contraception fails to prevent this tragedy, then abortion is a backup

measure. This mentality has given us the “culture of death.”

According to the Church, who speaks to us in Christ’s name through his vicars on earth, “no person ought ever to be unwanted, that is unloved.” And the only way that *all* persons, including unborn children, the “nonproductive,” the senile, the severely handicapped, will be wanted and loved is for men and women to respect God’s wise and loving plan for marriage and the generation of human life. Only in this way can a “civilization of love” be developed.

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## God’s Reasons

Robert P. George

*Remarks at the 1999 American Political Science Assoc. Convention (revised and expanded)*

Appeals to religious authority have their place. That place is plainly not, however, in philosophical debates, including philosophical debates about public policy. Do such appeals have a legitimate place in political advocacy? I think they do, but, at the same time, I have some sympathy with Professor John Rawls’s proposition that such appeals are legitimate only where they are offered to buttress and motivate people, to act on positions that are defensible without such appeals. Like Rawls, I believe that public policy should be based on “public reasons.” And while I believe that Rawls’s own particular conception of what qualifies as a “public reason” is unreasonably narrow—its narrowness in effect stacking the deck in favor of legal abortion, “same-sex marriage,” and other positions held by liberals in contemporary debates over morally charged issues of public policy—the idea that public policy ought to be based on public reasons strikes me as, well, reasonable. (For a fuller develop-

ment of my critique of Rawls’s position, see Robert P. George, “Public Reason and Political Conflict: Abortion and Homosexuality,” *Yale Law Journal*, Vol. 106 (1997), pp. 2475–2504. This article also develops much of the scientific material which I will discuss subsequently herein.)

It is not, however, unproblematic. Anyone who believes that God has revealed that the public policy of a certain polity must be settled in a certain way has, so far as he, can tell, an absolute, indefeasible reason for supporting that way of setting public policy irrespective of whether there are any grounds apart from revelation for the policy. My scruples, or Rawls’s, would—and should—simply cut no ice for a person in this position. And if I happen to be the person in that position or if Rawls happens to be that person, then I, or he, would be irrational in declining to lay aside our scruples. I suppose that when push comes to shove, those of us who hold these scruples believe that it just isn’t the case that God sometimes reveals that public policy ought to be settled in a certain way irrespective of whether there are any grounds apart from revelation for setting policy in this way. Such people either don’t believe in God, or (and this is my view) don’t believe that God operates this way (at least we don’t believe

that He operates this way anymore). It seems to me, then, that our differences with those who don't hold these scruples implicate in this way certain theological judgments.

People who do not hold these scruples may believe either that God (at least sometimes) has no reason for the public policies He commands or (at least sometimes) has no reason He chooses to make available to human understanding. As they see it, God's reasons, if He has any, are (at least sometimes) opaque to us. "Ours is no to question why, ours is but to do or die." But, of course, this understanding of how God operates is one possible theological understanding among others. Many, perhaps most, serious believers in our society have a different understanding. To be sure, they believe—we believe—that God is a God of justice, who cares what the public policy of our society is on morally significant questions—e.g., abortion, euthanasia, and marriage and sexuality, not to mention, capital punishment, civil and human rights, military policy, economic justice, etc. And a great many believers, though not all, believe, as I do, that God wills that the unborn, handicapped, and frail elderly be protected by law, and that the institution of marriage as a permanent and exclusive union of one man and one woman be preserved against what we believe are, the corruptible influences of sexual immorality. But we also believe not only that there are reasons (apart from revelation) for these policy positions, but also that these reasons are (or, at least, are among) God's reasons for willing what He wills. Indeed, it is our view that often the identification of these reasons by philosophical inquiry and analysis, supplemented sometimes by knowledge derived from the natural and/or social sciences, is critical to an accurate understanding of the content of revelation in, say, the Bible or Jewish or Christian tradition.

Perhaps the best example is in the area of marriage and sexual morality, philosophical inquiry is indispensable to the project of fully understanding the meaning and implications of the proposition revealed in chapter two of Genesis and in the Gospels that marriage is a "one-flesh union" of a man and a woman. (See Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Volume Two: living a Christian Life* (Quincy, Ill.: Franciscan Press, 1992), ch. 9.)

Another example is that of abortion, where both philosophical analysis and knowledge obtainable only by scientific inquiry were essential to settling and continue to be essential to understanding the precise con-

tent of, the authoritative teaching of the magisterium of the Catholic Church declaring direct abortion to be intrinsically immoral and a violation of human rights, (See John Connery, S.J., *Abortion: The Development of the Roman Catholic Perspective* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1997).)

In short, many religious people—most informed Catholics and many Protestants and observant Jews—understand reason not only as a truth-attaining power, but as a power by and through which God directs us as individuals and communities in the way of just and upright living. In his formal account of natural law as a participation in what he called the eternal law, Aquinas says that although God directs brute animals to their proper ends by instinct, God directs man—made in God's image and likeness and thus possessing reason and freedom—to his proper ends by practical reason through which men grasp the intelligible point of certain possible actions for the sake of ends (goods, values, purposes) which qua intelligible, provide reasons for choice and action, (See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 91, a. 2.) Where these reasons have their intelligibility not, or not merely, by virtue of their utility in enabling us to realize our other valuable or desirable ends, but also by virtue of their intrinsic value and choice-worthiness, they constitute the referents of the most fundamental principles of practical reason and precepts of natural law. (For a fuller explanation, see Robert P. George, "Recent Criticism of Natural Law Theory," *University of Chicago Law Review*, Vol. 55 (1988), pp. 1371-1429.) Aquinas gives an expressly non-exhaustive list of examples, human life itself, marriage and the transmission of life to new human beings, and knowledge, particularly that of religious truth. (See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 94., a. 2. For an effort by contemporary natural law thinkers to provide a more complete account, see Joseph M. Boyle, Jr., Germain Grisez, and John Finnis, "Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends," *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, Vol. 32 (1987), pp. 99-151.) The integral directiveness of these principles, when specified, constitutes the body of moral norms available to guide human choosing reasonably, viz., in conformity with a good will—a will toward integral human fulfillment. (For a fuller explanation, see Robert P. George, "Natural Law Ethics" in Philip L. Quinn and Charles Taliaferro, eds., *A Companion to Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), pp. 460-465.)

In his contributions to the February 1996 issue of *First Things* magazine— contributions in which what he has to say (particularly in his critique of liberalism) is far more often right than wrong— Professor Stanley Fish of Duke University cites the dispute over abortion as an example of a case in which “incompatible first assumptions— articles of opposing faiths” make the resolution of the dispute (other than by sheer political power) impossible. Here is how Professor Fish presented the pro-life and pro-choice position and the shape of the dispute between their respective defenders:

A pro-life advocate sees abortion as a sin against God who infuses life at the moment of conception; a pro-choice advocate sees abortion as a decision to be made in accordance with the best scientific opinion as to when the beginning of life, as we know it, occurs. No conversation between them can ever get started because each of them starts from a different place and they could never agree as to what they were conversing about. A pro-lifer starts from a belief in the direct agency of a personal God and this belief, this religious conviction, is not incidental to his position; it is his position, and determines its features in all their detail. The “content of a belief” is a function of its source, and the critiques of one will always be the critique of the other.

It is certainly true that the overwhelming majority of pro-life Americans are religious believers and that a great many pro-choice Americans are either unbelievers or less observant or less traditional in their beliefs and practice than their fellow citizens. Indeed, although most Americans believe in God, polling data consistently show that Protestants, Catholics, and Jews who do not regularly attend church or synagogue are less likely than their more observant co-religionists to oppose abortion. (See James Davison Hunter, *Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America’s Culture War* (New York: Free Press, 1994), pp. 104–105.) And religion is plainly salient politically when it comes to the issue of abortion. The more secularized a community, the more likely that community is to elect pro-choice politicians to legislative and executive offices.

Still, I don’t think that Professor Fish’s presentation of the pro-life and pro-choice positions, or of the shape of the dispute over abortion, is accurate. True, inasmuch as most pro-life advocates are traditional religious believers who, as such, see gravely unjust or otherwise immoral acts as sins— and understand sins precisely

offenses against God— “a pro-life advocate sees abortion as a sin against God.” But most pro-life advocates see abortion as a sin against God precisely because it is the unjust taking of innocent human life. That is their reason for opposing abortion; and that is God’s reason, as they see it, for opposing abortion and requiring that human communities protect their unborn members against it. And, they believe, as I do, that this reason can be identified and acted on even independently of God’s revealing it. Indeed, they typically believe, as I do, that the precise content of what God reveals on the subject (“in thy mother’s womb I formed thee”) cannot be known without the application of human intelligence, by way of philosophical and scientific inquiry, to the question.

Professor Fish is mistaken, then, in contrasting the pro-life advocate with the pro-choice advocate by depicting (only) the latter as accordance as viewing abortion as “a decision to be made in accordance with the best scientific opinion as to when the beginning of life ... occurs.” First of all, supporters of the pro-choice position are increasingly willing to sanction the practice of abortion even where they concede that it constitutes the taking of innocent human life. Pro-choice writers from Naomi Wolfe (“Our Bodies, Our Souls,” *The New Republic*, 1995), reprinted with commentaries by pro-life writers in *The Human Life Review* (Winter, 1996) to Judith Jarvis Thomson (“A Defense of Abortion,” in Marshall Cohen (ed.), *The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion* (Princeton University Press, 1974) have advanced theories of abortion as “justifiable homicide.” But, more to the point, people on the pro-life side insist that the central issue in the debate is the question “as to when the beginning of life occurs.” And they insist with equal vigor that this question is not a “religious” or even “metaphysical” one: it is rather, as Professor Fish says, “scientific.” In response to this insistence, it is pro-choice advocates who typically want to transform the question into a “metaphysical” one. It was Justice Harry Blackmun who claimed in his opinion for the Court legalizing abortion in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) that “at this point in man’s knowledge” the scientific evidence was inconclusive and therefore could not determine the outcome of the case. And twenty years later, the influential pro-choice writer Ronald Dworkin went on record claiming that the question of abortion is inherently “religious.” (See Ronald Dworkin, *Life’s Dominion* (Alfred A. Knopf, 1993).) It is pro-choice advocates, such as Dworkin,

who want to distinguish between when a human being comes into existence “in the biological sense” and when a human being comes into existence “in the moral sense. “ It is they who want to distinguish a class of human “with rights” from pre- (or post-) conscious human beings who “don’t have rights.” And the reason for this, I submit, is that, short of defending abortion as “justifiable homicide,” the pro-choice position collapses if the issue is to be settled purely on the basis of scientific inquiry into the question of when a new member of homo sapiens sapiens comes into existence as a self-integrating organism whose unity, distinctiveness, and identity remain intact as it develops without substantial change from the point of its beginning through the various stages of its development and into adulthood. (I explain this point more fully below. Also see Patrick Lee, *Abortion and Unborn Human Life* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995) and Dianne Nutwell Irving, “Scientific and Philosophical Expertise: An Evaluation of the Arguments on ‘Personhood,’” *Linacre Quarterly*, Vol. 60 (1993), pp. 18-46.)

All this was, I believe, made wonderfully clear at a debate at last year’s meeting of the American Political Science Association between Jeffrey Reiman of American University, defending the pro-choice position, and John Finnis of Oxford and Notre Dame, defending the pro-life view. That debate was remarkable for the skill, intellectual honesty, and candor of the interlocutors. What is most relevant to our deliberations, however, is the fact that it truly was a debate. Reiman and Finnis did not talk past each other. They did not proceed from “incompatible first assumptions.” They did manage to agree as to what they were talking about—and it was not about whether or when life was infused by God. It was precisely about the rational (i.e., scientific and philosophical) grounds, if any, available for distinguishing a class of human beings “in the moral sense” (with rights) from a class of human beings “in the (merely) biological sense” (without rights). Finnis did not claim any special revelation to the effect that no such grounds existed. Nor did Reiman claim that Finnis’s arguments against his view appealed implicitly (and illicitly) to some such putative revelation. Although Finnis is a Christian and, as such, believes that the new human life that begins at conception is in each and every case created by God in His image and likeness, his argument never invoked, much less did it “start from a belief in the direct agency of a personal

God.” It proceeded, rather, by way of point-by-point philosophical challenge to Reiman’s philosophical arguments. Finnis marshaled the scientific facts of embryogenesis and intrauterine human development and defied Reiman to identify grounds, compatible with those facts, for denying a right to life to human beings in the embryonic and fetal stages of development. (Finnis’s paper, “Abortion, Natural Law, and Public Reason,” and Reiman’s paper, “Abortion, Natural Law, and Liberal Discourse,” will be published in Robert P. George and Christopher Wolfe (eds.), *Public Reason* (Georgetown University Press, forthcoming, 1999).)

Interestingly, Reiman began his remarks with a statement that would seem to support what Professor Fish said in *First Things*. While allowing that debates over abortion were useful in clarifying people’s thinking about the issue. Reiman remarked that they “never actually cause people to change their minds.” It is true, I suppose, that people who are deeply committed emotionally to one side or the other are unlikely to have a road-to-Damascus type conversion after listening to a formal philosophical debate. Still, any open-minded person who sincerely wishes to settle his mind on the question of abortion—and there continue to be many such people, I believe—would find debates such as the one between Reiman and Finnis to be extremely helpful toward that end. Anyone willing to consider the reasons for and against abortion and its legal prohibition or permission would benefit from reading or hearing the accounts of these reasons proposed by capable and honest thinkers on both sides. Of course, when it comes to an issue like abortion, people can have powerful motives for clinging to a particular position even if they are presented with conclusive reasons for changing their minds. But that doesn’t mean that such reasons do not exist. And the reason the pro-life position is superior to the pro-choice position is precisely because the scientific evidence, considered honestly and dispassionately, supports that position.

A human being is conceived when a human sperm containing twenty-three chromosomes fuses with a human egg also containing twenty-three chromosomes (albeit of a different kind) producing a single-cell human zygote containing, in the normal case, forty-six chromosomes that are mixed differently from the forty-six chromosomes as found in the mother or father. Unlike the gametes (that is, the sperm and egg), the zygote is genetically unique and distinct from its par-

ents. Biologically, it is a separate organism. It produces, as the gametes do not, specifically human enzymes and proteins. It possesses, as they do not, the active capacity or potency to develop itself into a human embryo, fetus, infant, child, adolescent, and adult.

Assuming that it is not conceived in vitro, the zygote is, of course, in a state of dependence on its mother. But independence should not be confused with distinctness. From the beginning, the newly conceived human being, not its mother, directs its integral organic functioning. It takes in nourishment and converts it to energy. Given an hospitable environment, it will, as Dianne Nutwell Irving says, “develop continuously without any biological interruptions, or gaps, throughout the embryonic, fetal, neo-natal, childhood and adulthood stages—until the death of the organism.”

Some claim to find the logical implication of these facts—i.e., that life begins at conception—to be “virtually unintelligible.” A leading exponent of that point of view in the legal academy is Jed Rubenfeld of Yale Law School, author of an influential article entitled “On the Legal Status of the Proposition that ‘Life Begins at Conception,’” 43 *Stanford Law Review* 599 (1991). Rubenfeld argues that, like the zygote, every cell in the human body is “genetically complete”; yet nobody supposes that every human cell is a distinct human being with a right to life. However, Rubenfeld misses the point that there comes into being at conception not a mere clump of human cells, but a distinct, unified, self-integrating organism, which develops itself, truly himself or herself in accord with its own genetic “blueprint.” The significance of genetic completeness for the status of newly conceived human beings is that no outside genetic material is required to enable the zygote to mature into an embryo, the embryo into a fetus, the fetus into an infant, the infant into a child, the child into an adolescent, the adolescent into an adult. What the zygote needs to function as a distinct self-integrating human organism, a human being, it already possesses.

At no point in embryogenesis, therefore, does the distinct organism that came into being when it was conceived undergo what is technically called “substantial change” (or a change of natures). It is human and will remain human. This is the point of Justice Byron White’s remark in his dissenting opinion in *Thornburgh v. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists*, 476 U.S. 747 (1986), that “there is no

non-arbitrary line separating a fetus from a child,” Rubenfeld attacks White’s point, which he calls “[t]he argument based on the gradualness of gestation,” by pointing out that, “[n]o non-arbitrary line separates the hues of green and red. Shall we conclude that green is red?”

White’s point, however, was not that total development is “gradual,” but that it is continuous and is the (continuous) development of a single lasting (fully human) being. The human zygote that actively develops itself is, as I have pointed out, a genetically complete organism directing its own integral organic functioning. As it matures, in utero and ex utero, it does not “become” a human being, for it is a human being already, albeit an immature human being, just as a newborn infant is an immature human being who will undergo quite dramatic growth and development over time.

These considerations undermine the familiar argument, recited by Rubenfeld, that “the potential” of an unfertilized ovum to develop into a whole human being does not make it into “a person.” The fact is, though, that an ovum is not a whole human being. It is, rather, a part of another human being (the woman whose ovum it is) with merely the potential to give rise to, in interaction with a part of yet another human being (a man’s sperm cell), a new and whole human being. Unlike the zygote, it lacks both genetic distinctness and completeness, as well as the active capacity to develop itself into an adult member of the human species. It is living human cellular material, but, left to itself, it will never become a human being, however hospitable its environment may be. It will “die” as a human ovum, just as countless skin cells “die” daily as nothing more than skin cells. If successfully fertilized by a human sperm, which, like the ovum (but dramatically unlike the zygote), lacks the active potential to develop into an adult member of the human species, then substantial change (that is, a change of nature) will occur. There will no longer be merely an egg, which was part of the mother, sharing her genetic composition, and a sperm, which was part of the father, sharing his genetically complete, distinct, unified, self-integrating human organism whose nature differs from that of the gametes—not mere human material but a human being.

These considerations also make clear that it is incorrect to argue (as some pro-choice advocates have argued) that, just as “I” was never a week-old sperm or

ovum, “I” was likewise never a week-old embryo. It truly makes no sense to say that “I” was once a sperm (or an unfertilized egg) that matured into an adult. Conception was the occasion of substantial change (that is, change from one complete individual entity to another) that brought into being a distinct self-integrating organism with a human nature. By contrast, it makes every bit as much sense to say that I was once a week-old infant or a ten-year-old child. It was the new organism created at conception that, without itself undergoing any change of substance, matured into a week-old embryo, a fetus, an infant, a child, an adolescent, and, finally, an adult.

But Rubenfeld has another argument: “Cloning processes give to non-zygotic cells the potential for development into distinct, self-integrating human beings; thus to recognize the zygote as a human being is to recognize all human cells as human beings, which is absurd.”

It is true that a distinct, self-integrating human organism which came into being by a process of cloning would be, like a human organism that comes into being as a mono-zygotic twin, a human being. That being, no less than human beings conceived by the union of sperm and egg, would possess a human nature and the active potential to mature as a human being. However, even assuming the possibility of cloning human beings from non-zygotic human cells, the non-zygotic cell must be activated by a process which effects substantial change and not mere development or maturation. Left to itself, apart from an activation process capable of effecting a change of substance or natures, the cell will mature and die as a human cell, not as a human being.

The scientific evidence establishes the fact that each of us was, from conception, a human being. Science, not religion, vindicates this crucial premise of the pro-life claim. From it, there is no avoiding the conclusion that deliberate feticide is a form of homicide. The only real questions remaining are moral and political, not scientific. Although I will not go into the matter here, I do not see how abortion can ever be considered a matter of “justified homicide.” (The efforts of Judith Jarvis Thomson and other philosophers to defend abortion as “justified homicide” are very ably criticized by Patrick Lee in *Abortion and Unborn Human Life*.) It is important to recognize, however, as traditional moralists always have recog-

nized, that not all procedures which foreseeably result in fetal death are, properly speaking, abortions. Although any procedure whose precise objective is the destruction of fetal life is certainly an abortion, and cannot be justified, some procedures result in fetal death as an unintended, albeit foreseen and accepted, side effect. Where procedures of the latter sort are done for very grave reasons, they may be justifiable. (See John Finnis, “Abortion and Health Care Ethics II,” in Raanan Gillon and Ann Lloyd (eds.), *Principles of Health Care Ethics*, 1994, pp. 547-557.) For example, traditional morality recognizes that a surgical operation to remove a life-threateningly cancerous uterus, even in a woman whose pregnancy is not far enough along to enable the child to be removed from her womb and sustained by a life support system, is ordinarily morally permissible. (See Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus: Vol. II: Living a Christian Life*, p. 502.) Of course, there are in this area of moral reflection, as in others, “borderline” cases that are difficult to classify and evaluate. Mercifully, modern medical technology has made such exceptionally rare in real life. Only in the most extraordinary circumstances today do women and their families and physicians find it necessary to consider a procedure which will result in fetal death as the only way of preserving maternal life. In any event., the political debate about abortion is not, in reality, about cases of this sort; it is about “elective” or “social indication” abortions, viz., the deliberate destruction of unborn human life for non-therapeutic reasons.

A final point: in my own experience, conversion from the pro-choice to the pro-life cause is often (though certainly not always) a partial cause of religious conversion rather than an effect. Frequently, people who are not religious, or who are only weakly so, begin to have doubts about the moral defensibility of deliberate feticide. Although most of their friends are pro-choice, they find that position increasingly difficult to defend or live with. They perceive practical inconsistencies in their, and their friends’, attitudes toward the unborn depending on whether the child is “wanted” or not. Perhaps they find themselves arrested by sonographic (or other even more sophisticated) images of the child’s life in the womb. So the doubts begin creeping in. For the first time, they are really prepared to listen to the pro-life argument (often despite their negative attitude toward people— or “the kind of people”— who are pro-life); and somehow, it sounds more compelling than it did before. Gradually,

as they become firmly pro-life, they find themselves questioning the whole philosophy of life—in a word, the secularism—associated with their former view. They begin to understand the reasons that led them out of the pro-choice and into the pro-life camp as God's reasons, too.

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The following **nine????** paragraphs are reprinted, with minor revisions, from my Yale Law Journal article, "Public Reason and Political Conflict: Abortion and Homosexuality."

Once one recognizes that the scientific evidence establishes that the fetus, no less than the newborn, is a human being, one must logically treat the two the same in assessing the question of their rights and our duties towards them. And

so Peter Singer, a leading advocate of abortion and a recent appointee to a distinguished professorial chair of bio-ethics in my own university, argues that infanticide is sometimes morally justifiable and ought, up to a certain point, to be legally permissible. While Singer's views have caused outrage and made his appointment at Princeton controversial, the truth is that he is merely following the logic of a pro-choice position in light of an honest assessment of the scientific facts. He recognizes that "birth" is an arbitrary dividing line when it comes to the humanity and rights of human beings in the early stages of their development. Hence, if abortion is morally justifiable, so is infanticide. Of course, I believe that Singer is tragically wrong in supposing that abortion and infanticide are morally justifiable; but he is right in claiming that either both of these practices are justifiable, or neither can be justified.

## FROM MONSIGNOR KELLY

# Bishop Austin B. Vaughan: One of a Kind

*by Msgr. George A. Kelly*

Austin B. Vaughan is one of a kind because he is only one of three bishops who ever held the office of president of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Unique, too, because he had an easier time becoming a bishop than he had rising to the top of the theological hierarchy.

Back in the heady days of 1968, when partisans of Charles Curran thought that they had the new Bishops Conference on their towline, they tried to ensconce Curran into the CTSA's presidential chair, too. The vote required a recount, but friends of "Arky" (his nickname) beat them at their own game. Unsurprisingly, Curran succeeded the next year to forge a presidential chain which would have horrified the CTSA's first

president Francis J. Connell, CSSR (1946-1947) no less than future presidents such as New York's Bishop John A. Fearn (1952-1953) or Boston's Lawrence Riley (1959-1960). A scan of the 20 presidents who preceded Curran with the score and more who followed illustrates as well as anything the rise and fall of the American Church in our lifetime.

Fr. Vaughan was ordained in 1951, returned from Rome in 1954 with an S.T.D. degree, at a time when his first pastor, William R. O'Connor, was CTSA president. He went on to become Rector at Dunwoodie, where the CTSA was really born, and a bishop in 1977, when Sr. Agnes Cunningham presided over the CTSA.

A low-key personality by disposition and a man of few words, he did his parish work quietly, taught seminarians and gave spiritual direction to religious for more than ten years with the certainty

and serenity that was commonplace in Church circles at the time. The year 1968 became the cutting edge of his priesthood. By then college and seminary faculties had fragmented into opposing parties, mistakenly called “liberal” and “conservative.” However much these political designations ill-suited the realities, “the battle,” as it was called, was about the truth of Christ’s or the Church’s teaching. ‘Liberation,” for some of that day, meant denying or doubting articles of Catholic faith, or refusing submission to pope and bishops which, according to John Paul II’s new Catechism (no. 2089) often were acts of schism or heresy; “tradition” meant Latin liturgies and old customs to others.

Many seminary and college presidents, ignoring Christ’s challenge “Whoever is not with me is against me” (Mt. 12, 30), had already begun to argue that Vatican II was merely a move away from classic Catholic claims about the Word of God and holiness toward a Church more American than Roman, more open to modern expectations, more secular, more wary of what has been handed down, even from Christ (1 Cor. 15, 3). Charles Curran said yes to this approach to Catholicity; Austin Vaughan, following Paul VI, said no way. The die was cast.

From out of the ashes of Curran’s victory at CUA emerged Bishop Vaughan, the personification of a Catholic apologist in the mold of St. Athanasius. By *Humanae Vitae*, he had read most of what was needed to be read about theology, and remembered it. He was also by that time a public defender of “right thinking” about Vatican II’s recapitulation of Catholic faith and morals. The showdown was not long in coming. Within a month of Paul VI’s famous encyclical (August 18-19, 1968), Bishop Joseph Bernardin, the hierarchy’s General Secretary, arranged a meeting at the Statler Hotel in New York City in the hope of finding a common ground between the NCCB, represented by four bishops, and the CTSA by six dissenting theologians supporting Curran’s public parade against the Pope’s teaching. The common ground never materialized. Some of the dissenters

admitted they wanted to create a crisis in the Church. Others reduced the Pope’s role in the Church, while exaggerating their own. A few hoped that bishops would disagree with the pope. The capstone of the meeting was the threat that, if the bishops used penalties against them, as many as 20,000, including nuns, would leave the Church! Three auditors were allowed into that meeting, one of whom was Austin B. Vaughan, the only non-bishop who sturdily, without equivocation, all his life, endorsed the teaching of Paul VI. Within the next few years, Vaughan’s views, like those of Paul VI, were looked upon as an oddity by the leading spokesmen of his old theological establishment.

The Rector of Dunwoodie was elevated to the episcopacy June 29, 1977, about the time the CTSA acquired ill-fame, courtesy of The Paulist Press, with its publication of *Human Sexuality*, a book which left sexual choices, even the unnatural, to “the interested parties.” In that year, too, the body of bishops was moving to finalize an appropriate *National Catechetical Directory*, to guarantee that young Catholics would learn how to believe and behave like Catholics, at least in Catholic schools. The new bishop had a great deal to say on that subject, reminding his fellow bishops at one point that the Ten Commandments were not ten suggestions. Even then, however, in the councils of bishops, Austin Vaughan remained a solitary figure. His crisp critiques of proposals originating in the Church’s national bureaucracy were rarely appreciated by some of his peers. At times he enkindled laughter among them, some of which was not friendly.

The NCCB Committee on Doctrine and its Chairman were gentle with Curran and company in 1968 when, in response to the challenge, they suggested that the dissenters minimized the role of the episcopal teaching office and were insensitive to the Church’s pastoral care of the faithful. Successive Chairmen of that Committee did strive to invent machinery by which wandering theologians could be brought back into the magisterial fold voluntarily. Finally in 1989, they passed such a

document called “Doctrinal Responsibilities.” Rome objected to the document: its suggestion of equivalency between bishops and academics in teaching, doctrine, and in ecclesial governance, was unacceptable to the Holy See. Catholic apologists, in some quarters, likened it to a “Miranda decision” which protected those who broke the law from those responsible for its enforcement. At that meeting Bishop Vaughan rose to ask the Chair whether the NCCB’s theological consultants to the Doctrinal Committee, chosen to be mediators in disputes between a bishop and an academic, would be required to believe in Mary’s virginity, the doctrine in *Humanae Vitae*, or in a male-only priesthood. The answer to his question was unclear.

After a dozen years in the hierarchy Vaughan remained of the mind that NCCB judgments were regularly preset by their bureaucracy without proper input from bishops-in-the-field. At one national meeting (1988), when the discussion centered on the NCCB’s committee structure, he averred that the Presidents of the national body were “neither distinguished as ecclesiologists’ nor “distinguished by their practice of collegiality.” Thomas J. Reese, S.J. reports Vaughan’s remarks on that occasion:

I would have preferred on that kind of committee, since it is for the defense of the rights of chickens, that a few of the turkeys might have been represented on the committee. It looks a little bit like a committee of foxes [Boos]. No, it was friendly foxes [Laughter]. But friendly foxes can be like friendly human beings around Thanksgiving Day [Laughter, boos]. (*A Flock of Shepherds*, 1992, p. 74)

Earlier (1986), when a Jesuit critic of Roman policies had been appointed Secretary of the NCCB Doctrinal Committee over the objection of two Cardinals, Vaughan jibed again: “It’s a case of the fox guarding the hen house!” This bishop-theologian also thought that “the religious pluralism,” which many Jesuits were advocating, was “the critical problem of our time.” Doctrinal pluralism, he thought, was unhelpful to sound

catechesis because it permitted contradictory expositions of the faith within the Church, making the Christian message too vague to be taken seriously. Such “broadness” of belief, he told one assembly of bishops, led to the breakdown of the penitential discipline, among other things.

Austin Vaughan was still a young bishop when a minor See was vacated. Shortly, a Vatican official enquired who would make a suitable successor to the dead Ordinary. “Bishop Vaughan,” he was told immediately, “would be an appropriate replacement.” What were his qualifications? was the next question. Considering that this diocese was best known for its prominent college, whose president was a longtime protector of doctrinal dissidents, Vaughan’s professional theological competence, besides his personal piety and modest demeanor, was tendered as germane to the Church’s critical needs in that place at that time. It would also send a clear Roman signal to academia and the college president in question, it was preferred, who would tread softly with Vaughan nearby, or on his campus. What were the Bishop’s financial or administrative expertise? was the next question. This poser brought the response that bookkeepers and hands-on office managers could be found, or hired within the diocese. It was his kind of theological expertise and his willingness to defend the Holy See’s policies publicly, even in the presence of a querulous college president, was just what that diocese needed.

Bishop Austin Vaughan remains an auxiliary bishop of the New York Archdiocese, now into his twenty-second year. As he nears the golden anniversary of his priesthood, “Arky” continues to be a worthy successor of Peter and Paul to the end.

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Medicine as a Moral Art  
The Hippocratic Philosophy of Herbert Ratner, M.D.

By Patrick G.D. Riley

~~It may smack of quackery to claim that the medical~~  
profession can protect itself against attacks from within and without simply by returning to Hippocrates, Father of Western medicine, yet that is the thesis of this little study. I propose to support it by examining the philosophy and life's work of Herbert Ratner, a physician who until his death at 90 on December 6, 1997, devoted well over half a century to practicing and promoting Hippocratic medicine.

The claim that Hippocrates can defend the profession from all attacks will seem all the more extreme when one considers their gravity. They fall under three broad and somewhat overlapping headings.

Probably the most pressing concern among physicians today is *subservience to big business*, with threats from government not far behind. Many see not just their income in jeopardy—that may be the least of their concerns—but above all their freedom to follow their professional judgment. If the doctor is not at liberty to prescribe the treatment he thinks best, then he, his knowledge, and his skills are no longer at the service of his patient but in servitude to third parties, namely businessmen.

Yet for decades an even deeper anxiety has been abroad. In starkest terms, it is *whether the physician is to be a killer as well as a healer*. Nothing, obviously, could more directly affect the moral character, the ethos, of medicine. Nor since Nazi days has the pressure on physicians to kill been stronger.

A third concern is *the technological imperative*, to adopt the fashionable term. This is a hardy perennial, springing up every time medicine makes what is perceived as an important advance. At such a moment physicians, perhaps under pressure from patients, may be tempted to resort to the new therapy without a thorough examination of alternatives, including watchful waiting, or for that matter of the new treatment itself.

In cases like that the ethical questions revolve around prudence and proper method. However some techniques themselves raise intrinsic ethical questions, and like complicity in suicide or outright killing menace the very nature of the medical profession. In the 1960s contraceptive medicaments and devices were the focus of such concerns, which in subsequent decades shifted—ironically but perhaps inevitably—to new techniques for overcoming sterility, and for procreation itself. Medicine seems to have had its Promethean side since Renaissance days at

least, but some of these techniques for human reproduction might more aptly be termed Frankensteinian.

Grave ethical questions arise even from encroachments on the medical profession by Wall Street and Washington, such as the failed effort by the Clinton Administration to reorganize medical care under governmental supervision. More recently, the Secretary of Health and Human Services moved to regulate the distribution of donated organs for transplant, giving the most seriously ill patients priority. This was immediately decried as a usurpation of the judgment of physicians, and counterproductive. One result of the rule, it was claimed, would be a long-term decline in the survival of liver patients, predictable because transplants given those in advanced decline are less likely to succeed. Also, transplants under the Federal government's new system would be more expensive.

Physicians in various parts of the country have banded together formally or informally to offer less fettered if costlier care than pre-paid plans such as Health Maintenance Organizations and Preferred Provider Organizations. The same newspaper, in reporting the disbanding of the California Medical Association's managed care company, California Advantage, said: "...the medical societies of at least a dozen states, and tens of thousands of their physicians, have been forming organizations like California Advantage to manage patient care" ("Doctor-Owned Managed Care Plan Collapses," by Peter Kilborn, June 17, 1998). In eastern Massachusetts, long known for its medical schools and teaching hospitals, physicians are so alarmed that according to the New York Times some 2,000 of them have called for a moratorium "on corporate takeovers of health services and for curbs on the companies' intrusion into doctor's decision-making." The companies have had severe problems, not to say scandals. The largest health care company in the country, Columbia/HCA Healthcare Corporation, has seen wholesale resignations in its top management: by July 1997 its chairman and chief executive, its president and chief operating officer, its senior vice-president and general counsel, and its chief financial officer all had either resigned or declared the intention to do so (*The New York Times*, August 25, 1997, "Columbia/HCA Is Abandoning National Focus and Tough Image," by Kurt Eichenwald).

The same report estimated that "a few thousand" physicians, mostly in California and Florida, "have joined unions to challenge the organizations." In February 1998 the California Medical Association made preparations to vote on creating a union subsidiary for government-employed physicians and residents in training; this, according to the New York Times, would make the Cali-

California Medical Association “the first professional group in the nation to step into the gulf that has traditionally separated organized medicine from physicians unions.” The same report noted that some physicians employed by the state are already represented by the Union of American Physicians and Dentists. This competing group, most of whose members are in private practice, first negotiated contracts in 1972. In August 1977 the union became affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, which is the second-biggest affiliate of the A.F.L.-C.I.O.

One reason why physicians began to organize against constraints and pressures from managed-care companies is that states have held the physician, not the company, accountable for the care of patients. But for several years the political climate has boded to change this. In September 1997, Texas became the first state to recognize the right of a patient to sue a Health Maintenance Organization for medical malpractice, although patients around the country have taken HMOs to court on the ground of broken contract.

By early 1998, popular indignation against the companies had made them a whipping-boy for politicians. In March, a California woman without political experience who ran in a special election to fill her late husband's congressional seat credited her win over an anti-abortion opponent to her concern for health care.

Such a victory hardly indicated that the electorate had grown weary of moral issues. They abound in managed care, though they may not be so manifest as the drive to substitute the petri dish for the marital bed, still less to turn the physician into a killer. The Moscati Institute, a group organized in Duluth, Minnesota, to help guide health profession-

als who are “uncertain about what is negotiable and what is not,” has written in a mission statement:

*Most managed care systems are so structured that patients' illnesses become a liability to their doctors. Physicians are provided with incentives, and typically are rewarded with end-of-year bonuses, predicated on how much money they have saved the insurance companies and health care conglomerates. Therefore, tests and referrals to specialists-constitutive of traditional medical practice -are closely monitored and meagerly assigned.*

In such controlled systems, medical staff and others routinely insist that patients or their families sign “do not resuscitate” (DNR) and “do not intubate” (DNI) orders. They argue that these are necessary to protect patients from “intrusive practices.” But once signed, such orders become a mandate not to treat even treatable illnesses, particularly in geriatric and neo-natal care.

In short, managed care is rationed care, and is unavoidably linked to euthanasia.

Lawmakers are keenly aware of these and other problems seemingly indigenous to managed care. The New York Times reported on May 22, 1997, that the Connecticut legislature had passed legislation outlawing the “gag orders” by which health-care companies forbid physicians to inform patients of the various treatments available. Such restrictions recall the ancient divergence, mentioned by Plato, between the medical treatment of slaves, who were scarcely consulted about their treatment, and the medical treatment of free citizens.

Problems peculiar to managed care may seem beyond the capacities of the more generalized agencies that oversee that industry. In California, where three-quarters of those with

health insurance participate in a Health Maintenance Organization, a special advisory commission appointed by the governor has recommended that the industry be removed from the purview of the state securities regulatory body that has been overseeing it for the past two decades. All regulation of health care, according to the commission, should be consolidated under a single authority with power to adjudicate complaints from patients.

Patients' rights moved to the forefront in legislatures across the country, including the Congress, with the American Medical Association and even insurance groups lobbying vigorously for such legislation. President Clinton urged fast action, and himself took administrative steps to protect beneficiaries of Medicare and to exclude from the insurance market for Federal employers insurers who deny health coverage to the ill. However the specter of a vast and suffocating new bureaucracy, banished with the defeat of Clinton's far-reaching health-care plan in his first term, arose again. The President's vow to rebuild his health-care project piece by piece was recalled, ruefully.

Yet dangers to medicine could be descried not only in what was reported, but in the way it was reported, such as repeated references to patients as “customers” or “consumers.” An internal memo of the Republican National Committee spoke of protecting “consumers” from unfair treatment by HMOs. Such language betrays a tendency to regard medicine as a commercial enterprise rather than a profession, and hence to make it all the more vulnerable to the inroads of business and government.

Insouciant language can also symptomize one of the other perils facing medicine. The New York

Times, just a day after reporting that Connecticut would curtail the power of managed-care companies to deny treatment to their “customers” (the newspaper’s term), unwittingly revealed a deeper debasement of the physician’s role than manipulation by businessmen or harassment by bureaucrats. A front-page report coruscated with indignation at a physician who had patented the correlation between the level of a certain hormone and the presence of a Down-Syndrome fetus. For the medical experts quoted, as apparently for the reporter, the outrage was that “many pregnant women would go without being screened for the defect.”

Nowhere in the account—and this has become the rule—was any concern shown for the principle that had been the bedrock of the medical profession since Hippocrates, namely respect for human life. The hormonal test that physicians may find prohibitively expensive because another physician is making profits is part of a search-and-destroy operation against severely abnormal infants in the womb.

Respect for human life, and with it the Hippocratic ethos, seemed to be fading on other fronts. The voters of Oregon in November 1997 affirmed support for the state’s doctor-assisted suicide law. Although the administrator of the Federal Drug Enforcement Agency, Thomas Constantine, immediately warned that doctors in Oregon could lose the right to prescribe drugs if they assisted in suicide, Attorney General Janet Reno countermanded him the following June.

From early in his career, Herbert Ratner stood in the forefront of opposition to such utilitarian medicine, as to a state-regulated, commercialized, medicine and—not least—to a merely technological medicine. A physician since 1935, he was

founder and editor of the influential quarterly *Child & Family*, and a major contributor to the Encyclopaedia Britannica’s guide to the “Great Books,” the Syntopicon.

As director of public health for the Chicago suburb of Oak Park, he attracted national attention when he refused to dispense free Salk polio vaccine without explaining its risks to parents. The village board threatened him with dismissal—an example of politicians exercising medical judgment. He was promptly vindicated when on May 8, 1955, the U.S. Health Service suspended distribution of the vaccine for reasons of safety.

Dr. Ratner’s critique of the methodology of the supposedly inactivated Salk vaccine, which from 1955 to 1963 contained Simian Virus 40, drew international attention when published in the November 1955 *Bulletin of the American Association of Public Health Physicians*, of which he was then editor. It was corroborated independently by a study of the West German Health Ministry.

As associate clinical professor of family and community medicine at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine, Chicago, he helped in the foundation of the La Leche League for the promotion of breast-feeding. He remained a consultant of the League until his death. Nor did Dr. Ratner’s work for the family go unnoticed in Rome; in 1982 the Holy See named him a consultor to its Council for the Family.

For Ratner, the strongest protection the medical profession can marshal against the technological temptation and against threats from business, government, and utilitarianism is the Hippocratic Oath, and the Hippocratic philosophy of medicine summed up in the Oath but also found in the writings of the Hippo-

cratic school.

Perhaps it should be said at the outset that Dr. Ratner’s hostility to utilitarianism—“the greatest good for the greatest number” at the expense of individual persons—can scarcely be traced to his Jewishness and the role that utilitarian-oriented physicians took in Nazi campaigns against Jews. He was a champion of Hippocratic medicine long before the postwar Nuremberg trials, which revealed how deeply physicians were implicated in Nazi campaigns to kill the unfit, and to subject members of groups deemed inferior to painful and lethal experiments. He found the bases for his Hippocratic philosophy of medicine as a medical student in the ’30s, while reading Hippocrates and the great philosopher of nature, Aristotle. They led him to the study of St. Thomas Aquinas, and eventually into the Catholic Church.

The day the New York Times lamented commercial restrictions on an abortion-oriented technique, I went to Chicago to celebrate, with an overflow crowd, Dr. Ratner’s 90th birthday. I have counted myself a disciple for half a century, from the moment I heard him speak at Catholic University in January 1949, and I probably should make my debt to him clear. His account of the nature of nature, so to speak, and his emphasis on nature as the norm of normality (again so to speak), made an indelible impression. In the intervening decades we became friends, and I continued to learn from him. Like the gift of his friendship, this gift of wisdom is priceless, and the present essay, designed to hand on the wisdom of Herbert Ratner to others, is an act of piety in the classic sense of an attempt to repay what can never be repaid.

Herbert Ratner’s most priceless legacy to a medical profession beset by threats from within and without is

a profound explanation of Hippocratic medicine and its implications, pithily and persuasively expressed. No physician armed with this philosophy—a philosophy articulated by Hippocrates and his school, and since supported by thousands of years of productive tradition, a philosophy responsible in large part for the reverence so long and so willingly paid the profession—no physician so armed need search for rebuttals to the philosophically dated and historically discredited utilitarianism that presents itself, now under this guise and now under that, as modernization.

The Hippocratic physician will repudiate with scorn any suggestion that killing is a part of his profession. While even those laymen who know that Dr. Jack Kevorkian is an aberration may have difficulty articulating why, the Hippocratic physician can unmask Kevorkian as no less a traitor to his profession and those under his care than the physicians who sold out to the Nazis: he need only explain what has preserved medicine as a profession for thousands of years, namely its unshakable ethic, summed up in the Hippocratic Oath.

The Oath has not merely summarized this ethic: the Oath has committed the profession to it, and made it its very soul. Moreover—and this is integral to Dr. Ratner's philosophy—medicine became a profession precisely because of the Oath, for in professing it one became a doctor, that is a teacher (as the Oath required of him), and a healer (as the Oath made him swear to be, and none other).

Doctors who abandoned their sworn Oath at the behest of the Nazi regime were subject to the death penalty at the international tribunal in Nuremberg. Had they remained faithful to their sworn word, not only their patients and their profes-

sion but their own person would have been protected. The principle holds today: a medical profession permeated with the ethic of Hippocratic medicine will stand as a rock against the ethically dubious encroachments, indeed against the most brutal bullying, of big finance and big government alike.

As for the technological temptation, how Hippocratic medicine helps doctors resist that takes some explaining.

The governing principle here as throughout Herbert Ratner's philosophy, which is the philosophy of Hippocrates and Aristotle, is nature. Both the morality and the effectiveness of medicine—not excluding the effectiveness of medical technology—hang upon its respect for nature. Ratner sees nature as the healer as well as the norm. No less significantly, he sees nature as the vicar of God's retribution.

*Plants automatically lead good plant lives [Ratner observes]. They do not have the freedom to do otherwise. They are activated by tropisms which determinatively direct them to the good plant life.... It is through these means that plants, though unknowledgeable of the ends, fructify and flourish and attain their ends.*

Animals other than man also automatically lead good animal lives. They, too, do not have the freedom to do otherwise. They are activated through hierarchized instincts, which reflect the urge of all living things 'to partake in the eternal and divine' in the only way possible to them, by self-propagation.

There Dr. Ratner is quoting Aristotle. It was Aristotle's perception of the role of purpose in nature, its inner drive toward a goal, that guided not only philosophy but theology and physical science until

seventeenth century, when the spectacular successes of empirical science, which depends on description for its method and on prediction for its justification, dealt the concept of intrinsic natural purpose a blow from which it is still reeling.

That tended to return philosophy and all depending on it to their primitive state in the mists of prehistory. Aristotle, giving us a brief account of philosophy before his time, recalls the pioneer thinkers who tried to explain the world in terms of matter and of mathematics, and thus were precursors of the scientism of the nineteenth century, still palely loitering. "Hence when a man spoke of mind in nature," Aristotle recalled, probably referring to Anaxagoras, "he seemed like a sane man speaking among lunatics." A less literate if more literal translation is given by Hugh Tredennick in the Loeb Classical Library series: "...he seemed like a sane man in contrast with the haphazard statements of his predecessors."

In Ratner's scheme of things, learning always falls short of the wisdom of nature. Reliance on what empirical science has taught us leads to disaster when our philosophical understanding of nature has not kept pace with our empirical knowledge of nature, and does not undergird it.

Ratner lays the groundwork for this concept in a passage bristling with characteristic paradox:

Man's free choice is not left to itself. Though he is not compelled by tropisms or instincts, man is not left adrift in directing his natural destiny. He has the natural inclinations of a mammalian and social animal.

There are inclinations which in Pascal would correspond to his 'simple pure ignorance.' These natural inclinations can be confounded by higher education, which gives the

illusion of a high order of intellectual and educational development but which, in reality, falls far short of Pascal's 'learned ignorance.' ...As we have nouveaux riches, so we have nouveaux intellectuals. Such people have been educated out of their 'simple pure ignorance' but unfortunately have not been educated into a 'learned ignorance.'

Pascal's "learned ignorance," in Ratner's scheme, is a hard-won understanding that our natural inclinations have wise purposes demanding respect even if not yet fully plumbed. Such an understanding is only confirmed when the technical or social sciences uncover new functions of what man does by mere inclination. In fact, that is one of the most important roles for those sciences.

The "higher education" deplored by Ratner tends less toward respecting nature than manipulating it. It burdens its students with the stultifying task of mastering nature without first obeying its laws. It is the education that has been offered at most American universities since roughly the turn of the century when they adopted the German model with its emphasis on the physical and social sciences, and on research. The German university and its American counterpart take their character from the rationalist current of the Enlightenment, hence ignore the kinds of knowledge stemming from affinity (such as the "connatural knowledge" of Thomas Aquinas) or from instinct or emotion (such as the "empathy" of Edith Stein and other phenomenologists). For knowledge through empathy, see Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, transl. Waltraut Stein, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1964) ch. IV; also translator's introduction, esp. pp. XVII and XVIII. For a history of the concept in psychology and phi-

losophy, see Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer, eds., *Empathy and Its Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), ch. 2. More traditional education, based largely on the Aristotelian tradition, respects instinct and emotion, and holds that they have much to teach us.

Efforts to restore the broader and deeper education traditionally called "liberal," which predominated in this country until late in the last century, have in isolated instances been brilliantly successful, but Ratner held that on the widespread re-establishment of such education hangs the restoration of medicine, of the ethos, independence, and esteem once characteristic of the profession.

Even the very effectiveness of medicine, paradoxical as it may seem in this day of dazzling technology, also depends on the restoration of liberal education and the philosophy it fosters. The principal reason that such sound philosophy is vital to the effectiveness of medicine is that it grasps the role of teleology—that is, intrinsic purpose—in nature, thereby acknowledging the body itself as the prime healer. Hence technology, whose limitations are revealed with its every advance, that is every time it leaves its previous achievements behind, takes second place.

In conversations on the respective roles of nature and technology, Dr. Ratner illustrated how the Hippocratic philosophy resists the technological imperative.

*Disease can overwhelm nature. A basic principle of the art of medicine is to do for nature what nature would do for itself if it could. But a tendency of physicians is to intervene before intervention is necessary..*

Here he cited obstetrics, which he said "tends to be largely interventionist, because man is impatient, and

nature seems to be too slow." He cautioned:

But interventionist medicine can end up substituting for nature, as for example in Caesarians. If you know how to do a Caesarian, and do it well, you enjoy doing it, so there's an advantage to home delivery. An episiotomy is rarely necessary, but you're tempted to say "Why wait?" You must give nature a chance.

If you put interventionism to one side, he added, you end up with natural childbirth.

*A need for tonsillectomy is rare. The operation becomes commonplace when you take out tonsils for prolonged sore throat. It took a long time to realize that the tonsils are an important part of the lymphatic system, protecting against disease such as bulbar polio. Often we fail to understand the function of a part of the body until we lose that part, as for example when we found that the loss of the thyroid led to myxedema.*

In that, said Ratner, the body is like a great work of art:

Mozart is a good example. It's difficult to know what makes art great because all the parts work together. Imperfect art gives you insights into great art.

Here he cited Beethoven and Brahms as offering insights, by the imperfections of their art, into the perfect art of Mozart. (One need not concur with the examples to grasp the principle.)

Still on the theme of the body as its own healer, he asked why a patient goes to a doctor. His answer: "A distressing symptom."

*The prevailing philosophy is that a doctor has a medication for every symptom. If it's fever, we start with the notion of fighting it, and forget that fever is a curative factor of nature. We don't think of symptoms as curative, but we should bear in mind that they are.*

When the patient leaves the doctor's office with only the advice to wait patiently and get back to him if the symptoms don't disappear, he may think the doctor has done nothing for him. On the other hand:

If he leaves with a piece of paper, he's more likely to feel satisfied. Writing a prescription is the fastest way of getting a patient out of your office. The hardest thing in medicine is to do nothing.

Isn't there a very important role for medicines, and for surgery?

*No question. To help nature you need techniques. You must be competent. This is the premise.*

As a non-surgeon, you must know what surgery might be indicated. I need a surgeon who'll go my way in terms of my clinical judgment.

(This is in accord with the Hippocratic notion of surgery as a secondary art, dependent on the physician.)

But "this day of synthetic drugs," he said, brings its own problems.

*The body isn't constituted to handle them, to detoxify itself of them. They baffle the liver.* This was echoed by an editorial in the *Journal* by Dr. David Bates, an associate professor of medicine at Harvard. According to the *Times*, Dr. Bates speculated that the death rate reported in Dr. Pomeranz's study might be exaggerated because the study focused on large teaching hospitals with the sickest patients. Patients in intensive care, he noted, might receive 20 or 40 drugs. He said that drugs probably save millions of lives yearly. Drs. Bates and Pomeranz agreed that benefits from drugs far exceed risks in the great majority of cases.

He recalled that one of his first practical lessons as a young physician was to remove all medications from a patient who was taking five or six different kinds of pill. He found, for example, that some prescriptions were written to counter the unwanted effects of an earlier prescription, as when an insomniac patient on a sedative is given a stimulant to counteract the resulting dopeyness.

But some prescriptions do damage by their very nature.

*The best example is drugs messing up a woman's hormonal system. When the Pill came out, I told Chris Knott [the late Msgr. John C. Knott, director of the Family Life office of the United States Catholic Conference] that the trouble with it was giving a powerful drug to healthy women.*

This, he pointed out, is diametrically opposed to the Hippocratic philosophy of medicine.

(He observed parenthetically that widespread use of the birth control pill has meant higher concentrations of female hormones in the water supply.)

To ignore the structure and functions of the human body, he held, is to opt for second best at best. As a lifelong advocate of breast-feeding, he went the length of holding that no reform would accomplish more for the future of the nation than the restoration of breast-feeding. (It might, for example, be argued that the trust in others implanted in a child from his earliest days is an effective antidote to the Hobbesian notion of society, which requires a Leviathan-like state to protect men from one another.) In 1957 he helped found the La Leche League for the promotion of breast-feeding, and he was a consultant for the remaining 40 years of his life.

He was fond of pointing out that there seems to be no end to the

nutrition found in mother's milk, including hormones regulating the proper growth of the child. Moreover breast-feeding fortifies the bond between mother and child:

*For example, the newborn baby's focal length is the distance from his eyes to the mother's face when nursing. The peripheral vision is blocked out.... The baby, like the horse on the road, has blinders, so to speak. Nature does this for the baby so that the baby can concentrate on the mother-its rock of refuge from whom the newborn learns trust and fidelity, which will serve him in good stead in future human relations.*

Ratner goes further, holding that to ignore the structure and functions of the human body may be inviting disaster.

*Any fool should know that the vagina is the organ to receive the inseminating organ, and therefore is the repository of the semen. Apart from morals, the physician as biologist should recognize that to put the penis in the anus, and deposit semen in the rectum, is to court medical difficulties.*

*You must realize that everything nature does is exquisite in terms of subtleties, complexities. Semen, which for the most part has held the interest of gynecologists only with respect to the sperm and sterility, is 82 percent plasma. We should realize that the plasma given by nature has multiple functions. I'll mention only one.*

The sperm and the embryo are foreign bodies in the woman, and have to be protected against the woman's immune system, which builds up antibodies against the sperm and the embryo. We've known from clinical experience, and in more recent years through chemical studies, that when a woman is pregnant she's more susceptible to lots of diseases because the semen

suppresses in part the immune system of her body.

What is this substance in the semen that suppresses the immune system? The plasma of semen has the highest concentration of prostaglandins in the human body. You must bear in mind that every secretion is a prescription of nature, and like a doctor's prescription has reasons for every ingredient.

*Beyond that, there's an organ. The vagina is constructed to accommodate this process [of immunosuppression], so that the immune suppressant is modest and modulated. The vaginal wall is thicker than the membrane of the anus. The vaginal membrane is composed of squamous cells, overlapping like shingles on a roof. That manages to produce a mild depressant of the immune system. You know as a biologist that the anus is essentially an outlet, and its thinner membrane is very absorbent since the rectum extracts various things from the waste products. The vagina is essentially an inlet, and absorbs plasma slowly.*

Moral theologians of times past may have been wiser than they knew when they wrote of the *vas indebitum*, the "undue vessel."

Dr. Ratner, remarking that the most prevalent way of contracting AIDS is via the anus, asserted that anal intercourse is not exclusive to homosexual acts but probably accounts for ten or twenty percent of heterosexual intercourse in this country, and a higher percentage abroad.

There are "two major scandals" in what is called AIDS education, he said: first in not making it abundantly clear that the prime way of spreading the AIDS virus is anal intercourse, and then, second, in assuming that all heterosexual intercourse is vaginal.

The Hippocratic physician, Ratner held, counsels his patients not only to respect nature but to

strengthen it as well:

The Hippocratic order of treatment began with a regimen. You got a good sleep, ate well, relaxed after work, and exercised. Then came medicine, and finally surgery. Today the tendency is to reverse the order: the surgeon, then the doctor, then the regimen. Just recently I read that if you follow a good regimen, you can dispense with most drugs for high blood-pressure.

In this context the title given a physician is significant, according to Ratner:

Doctor means teacher. The doctor should educate his patients in conservative ways to maintain health. This is where regimen is the best prescription: rest, eat properly, and exercise.

But fidelity to the name of doctor is not, in Ratner's view, characteristic of medicine today:

*This is an age of iatrogenic medicine, of diseases caused by medical treatment. It's one of the worst periods in history for medicine. A new book by a heart specialist, [Dryden] Morse, holds that medications for heart disease are responsible for 50,000 deaths yearly in this country.*

Dr. Ratner's concern about the technological imperative can be seen in the Ratnerian paradox: "Every advance is a setback...." Pause. Then, mischievously, "...unless you're a Hippocratic physician."

Ratner himself was a protagonist in what is probably the foremost example of a medical advance that proved a setback, the introduction of the Salk Vaccine against poliomyelitis. Dr. Eugene Diamond writes:

On April 12, 1955, there was a nationwide telecast of the results of the 1954 field trials of the Salk Vaccine. It was called "The Medical Story of the Century" and, in terms of the huge promotion and publicity

given to the announcement, that description of the event was not hyperbole.

Herbert Ratner was, at the time, Director of Public Health in Oak Park, Illinois, and the Editor of the Bulletin of the American Association of Public Health Physicians. His questioning of the methodology and the soundness of the science which produced the data is one of the great stories of clinical integrity of the last 50 years.

His position, taken in the face of overwhelming opposition, was soon vindicated by the occurrence of vaccine-induced cases of poliomyelitis. It is a dramatic untold story which is not yet fully played out as scientists continue to question the long-term significance of the contamination of the Salk Vaccine with Simian Virus 40.

Medicine became a profession, Ratner never tired of recalling, precisely because its members professed an oath. Moreover medicine was the first calling to require an oath of its members, and hence was the first profession. The other professions that followed—the learned professions of law and divinity, and the military—all became professions because they too took oaths. Not surprisingly, these oaths are modeled on the Hippocratic Oath of the physician.

Any professional oath, Ratner maintained, is a bulwark against "the vagaries of society." That is why, when such "vagaries" infect a profession, the tendency is to "update" the oath or dismiss it as a quaint relic of a less enlightened age.

Nor was Ratner at a loss for historical examples. In 1972, he published a formal protest made by Dutch physicians during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands against a supervising body that the German authorities were about to impose on the Dutch medical profes-

sion. It read in part:

*We know that you represent a very special philosophy of life. Our knowledge of the German "physicians' ordinance" concerning the task of the physician in which the care for race and nation takes precedence over that of the individual, makes it only too clear to what extent the national-socialistic [nazi] conception of the medical profession differs from ours.*

Although we do not deny that the care of the community and the participation in social hygiene measures constitute part of the task of the physician, we can recognize this duty only insofar as it proceeds from and is not in conflict with the first and holiest precept of the physician, namely the respect for life and for the physical well-being of the individual who entrusts himself to his care....

Knowing ourselves bound by the oath or solemn vow of acceptance of our task as physicians, we consider it our duty to inform you that we shall remain faithful to the high standards which have been the foundation of our profession since time immemorial....

Dr. Ratner observed:

*This protest underscores the raison d'être of the Hippocratic Oath...and the timelessness of that inspired document, which today is undergoing attack from brave new crops of medical students, professors of obstetrics turned sociologists, social ethicist reformers, population engineers, less than thoughtful segments of the women's liberation movement, crusading lawyer-simplifiers of criminal codes, and abortionists and 'mercy' killers....*

*As sensitivities atrophy, and the concept of natural holiness weakens, as the scorn of God and religion intensifies, we should once again ask ourselves,*

*"Who are the victors of World War II?"*

Naturally the question arises whether medicine even remains a profession when the oath becomes little more than a memory, either through institutionalized disregard of its provisions or by dispensing with it altogether. Equivalent to this latter course is the substitution of other "declarations" at the graduation ceremonies of medical schools.

A "declaration" is not an oath, nor is a solemn pledge or a promise. In none of these does the promisor, the pledger, or the declarer swear by some higher power, such as the gods of Greece or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He does not appeal to what he holds most sacred to witness his resolve to keep his word. Neither does he, according to the timeless formula, call down upon himself a blessing if faithful to what he has sworn, and a curse if unfaithful.

Moreover the contents of the various substitutes for the Hippocratic Oath incorporate dilutions or distortions to one degree or another. The so-called Declaration of Geneva, adopted in 1948 by the General Assembly of the World Medical Association in Geneva, was meant to replace the Hippocratic Oath on entry into the medical profession. Its grandiloquent phrases—"consecrate my life to the service of humanity," and "maintain by all the means in my power the honor and the noble traditions of the medical profession"—are but vague substitutes for the hard specifics of the Hippocratic Oath. They can scarcely erect the same moral defenses around the medical profession. Nor has the Geneva Declaration stood fast against agitation to relax its moral demands.

Dr. Ratner recalled that although the Declaration of Geneva was designed to reinvigorate the

medical profession after the disclosures of the Nuremberg trials, pro-abortion and pro-euthanasia forces were already active during its drafting.

*I remember reading in the foreign correspondence of the AMA that originally there was no reference to killing. They were going to get rid of the prohibition. It was the Latin American countries that complained.*

As published in 1948, the Geneva Declaration stipulates: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life, from the time of conception, even under threat." This adds the ethical element of resistance to threat, and the scientific understanding that human life begins at conception, to the Hippocratic requirement that the physician swear: "I will give no deadly medicine to anyone if asked, nor suggest any such counsel; and in like manner I will not give a woman a pessary to produce an abortion." On the other hand the Oath, as can be seen, is more specific in excluding complicity in abortion and suicide.

But agitators have been at work since 1948. Subsequent versions of the Geneva Declaration reveal that, as an artifact of the times rather than a monument of antiquity, it has not been proof against ideology. It has been amended in 1968, 1983, and 1994. The latest version would be labeled in the vocabulary of our times as politically correct. It incorporates the ideologically-battered science promoted by advocates of abortion: instead of pledging to "maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception," it now refers to "human life from its beginning" (whenever or whatever that may be, or may prove to be with the next shift in ideology). Moreover "gender" and

“sexual orientation” (meaning sexual disorientation) have worked their way among the considerations that the physician may not allow “to intervene between my duty and my patient.”

The vicissitudes of the Geneva Declaration since its approval half a century ago support the wisdom of leaving well enough alone. Little wonder that the gods of Greece remained at the head of the Hippocratic Oath throughout the most Christian ages.

A modified oath, taken in recent years by medical students at graduation (if indeed any oath is taken), appears to subsume the Hippocratic Oath’s prohibition of euthanasia and abortion under an undertaking to “perform no operation, for a criminal purpose, even if solicited, far less suggest it.” This of course leaves the purely healing and health-preserving character of the medical profession at the mercy of civil law, for if abortion or euthanasia is legal, then the physician can plead that he is bound by no oath against it. Civil authorities can make the same argument should they demand that physicians commit legally-sanctioned crimes forbidden by the Hippocratic Oath but not by a modified oath.

Even weaker in this regard are the American Medical Association’s “Principles of Medical Ethics,” which merely demand that a physician “respect the law” and “the rights of patients, of colleagues, and of other health professionals.” The AMA’s “Principles of Medical Ethics” make another bow to whatever the civil law may stipulate, possibly at the expense of medical ethics or even of natural justice, in requiring that the physician “safeguard patient confidences within the constraints of the law.” The Oath on the other hand burdens the physician with a fully moral obligation to keep secret

“whatever in connection with my professional practice or not in connection with it” that “ought not to be spoken abroad.” Civil law, far from getting pride of place, does not even enter in.

Where the Geneva Declaration has the physician undertake to “practice my profession with conscience and dignity,” the Hippocratic Oath has him swear not only to practice his art “with purity and holiness” but also to pass his life in that same purity and that same holiness. The Oath seems more realistic in the sense that one can hardly be a pillar of ethics in the clinic and a moral mess at home. Moreover purity and holiness of life are hardly compatible with the abortion that the American Medical Association has not only tolerated, not only promoted, but even attempted to force upon medical schools and their students.

A somewhat mysterious document called the Prayer—or sometimes the Oath—of Maimonides is if anything even more elevated spiritually than the Hippocratic Oath. Rosner traces the adventures of this prayer over a period of almost two centuries, and after an analysis of external and internal evidence concludes that it very probably is “a spurious work, not written by Maimonides but composed by an eighteenth century writer.” But it is in no way an oath, for it does not call upon God to witness the truth of a pledge. Rather it begs Him for light and for strength of body and soul, hence must be considered a prayer. About twice the length of the Hippocratic Oath, it can be described as a detailed petition for the virtues required of a physician.

Two such virtues receive explicit recognition in the Hippocratic Oath: absolute discretion about private matters learned in the practice of the profession, and sexual purity.

In the Oath the physician swears to shun “the seduction of females or males,” whether free or slave. Whereas one modern version of the Oath tendered new physicians demands that they abstain “from the tempting of others to vice,” the AMA Principles of Medical Ethics breathe not a word about sexual misbehavior, which as Ratner often pointed out is an occupational hazard for physicians.

Given the role of the Hippocratic Oath in maintaining the character of medicine as a healing profession, not a killing profession, it’s no surprise that the U.S. Supreme Court, in attempting to justify medically-induced abortion, attacked the Oath. It was not a frontal assault; the opinion fairly glowed with veneration for Hippocrates, but it attempted to cut the historical ground out from under the Oath.

The Court did this by citing an historian of medicine, Ludwig Edelstein, who argued that the Oath incorporated the ethical precepts of a particular philosophical school, the Pythagoreans, and moreover at a particular time, the fourth century B.C. Said the Court:

Dr. Edelstein then concludes that the Oath originated in a group representing only a small segment of Greek opinion and that it certainly was not accepted by all ancient physicians.... But with the end of antiquity a decided change took place. Resistance against suicide and against abortion became common. The Oath came to be popular. The emerging teachings of Christianity were in agreement with the Pythagorean ethic. The Oath ‘became the nucleus of all medical ethics’ and ‘was applauded as the embodiment of truth.’ Thus, suggests Dr. Edelstein, it is ‘a Pythagorean manifesto and not the expression of an absolute standard of medical con-

duct.’

This, it seems to us, is a satisfactory and acceptable explanation of the Hippocratic Oath’s apparent rigidity.

In this way, the abortionist Court was able to wave aside two millennia of medical tradition and, thus unimpeded, launch its assault on the medical profession.

For irony, it would be hard to beat the case of Ludwig Edelstein. He had the foresight to flee Nazi Germany, yet it is an essay of his that has given scholarly color to the campaign against the very tradition that surely, had it been maintained, would have saved many of his fellow Jews. The reason seems to be that he was unaware, like the rest of the world, of the depth of evil then holding sway in Germany. He published his study in 1943, before the depth of the betrayal of German medicine had been made clear.

Moreover according to the editors of the posthumous collection of Dr. Edelstein’s studies on ancient medicine in which the essay was eventually republished, until his death he remained undecided about it. If that last sentence is not clear, neither were the editors, Owsei and C. Lilian Temkin, in explaining Edelstein’s state of mind. Their carefully worded introduction leaves the reader in doubt about the focus of Edelstein’s indecision: was it *where* to include the essay on the Oath in the book, or *whether* to include it?

They write:

*The present volume contains those essays available after his death which Edelstein himself had considered for inclusion. It presents them in the four sections under which he had subsumed them.*

They add in a footnote: “With

the exception of *The Hippocratic Oath*, on which he had not reached a decision.”

In either case—that is, *where* or *whether* Edelstein wanted the essay republished—the inclusion of “The Hippocratic Oath” in *Ancient Medicine* was to lift this momentous essay from the obscurity of a supplement to the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*. With or without his approval, Edelstein’s “The Hippocratic Oath” went before a broader public in 1967, two years after he died. The editors gave it pride of place: It is the opening essay of the book.

On the more likely reading that Edelstein never authorized the republication of his study, we can wonder why he hesitated. We can even wonder whether he did not eventually determine to withhold the work. Why might he do either? Would it be dissatisfaction with the scholarship or argumentation of his essay? Or dread of what uses it might be put to?

In the event, the republished essay not only was cited by the Supreme Court in striking down virtually all laws prohibiting or regulating abortion but was earlier exploited by Laurence Lader in his successful agitation for legal abortion in this country, and was appealed to in France during the equally successful campaign to legalize abortion there.

It is certain that Edelstein would have been appalled by the distortion of his study into a weapon in the worldwide campaign for abortion. He venerated the Oath. We find him in 1956 declaring himself “second to none in my appreciation of this document.” Clearly he recognized that whatever the provenance or original purpose or date of the document—the three points he attempted to establish in his study—none of these, whatever they might

be, could detract from the decisive role the Hippocratic Oath has played in forging the character of Western medicine, hence of Western civilization. Nor could they, whatever they might be, dilute, devalue, or destroy the ethical principles of the Oath, which became, in Edelstein’s words, “the nucleus of all medical ethics.” He writes:

*In all countries, in all epochs in which monotheism, in its purely religious or in its more secularized form, was the accepted creed, the Hippocratic Oath was applauded as the embodiment of truth. Not only Jews and Christians, but the Arabs..., scientists of the Enlightenment, and scholars of the nineteenth century embraced the ideals of the Oath.*

This is not the place to examine Dr. Edelstein’s celebrated study in any detail, but a few more observations may help keep it in perspective.

Edelstein himself, deservedly or not, early had a not altogether enviable reputation for “constant deviation from accepted views” and for presenting his arguments “as cogent demonstrations with inescapable results.”

On a more substantive matter, he betrays a basic if only too common misunderstanding of the nature of medicine, or at least an understanding alien to Hippocrates. He repeatedly characterizes medicine as “a craft,” the physician as “a craftsman.” This is no translator’s error: not only did Edelstein scrutinize and emend all English translations of his work, but he actually delved into Aristotle’s treatment of crafts as indicative of the esteem for medicine in Aristotle’s time, and held that the Pythagorean and Stoic, and the later Hellenistic philosophies, confirmed such esteem by upholding the dignity of the craftsman’s work. For Edelstein’s attention to transla-

tions, see editors' introduction, p.xiii.

Now a significant characteristic of the Hippocratic Oath is to call medicine "the Art." This term is used for medicine throughout the writings of the Hippocratic school, including the Oath itself. To call medicine an art may not seem very helpful since the word has a multiplicity of meanings; unless the meaning of art is historically and contextually clarified, to speak of medicine as an art can and usually does cause confusion.

An etymological approach to the concept of medicine-as-art can only confuse us. First, *art* is the root of *artisan*, and it was Edelstein's apparent error to call the physician a craftsman, that is an artisan. Moreover the Greek word for art, *techne*, gave us our word *technology*. Yet every Hippocratic physician is aware that if his profession becomes mere technology, he might as well hand it over to diagnostic devices and computers.

Moderns who seek the significance of medicine-as-art must look less to linguistics than to Greek philosophy. In the mind of Aristotle, art and science are, both of them, kinds of knowledge: an art is knowledge for the sake of producing something, while a science is knowledge for its own sake. Science finds its fulfilment in knowledge gained, art in a product produced.

Ratner explains the distinction in terms characteristically homely, clear, and memorable:

*Man is a wondering animal. Unlike other animals he cannot live in the world without wanting to explain it. Man is also a making animal. Unlike other animals he cannot live in the world without wanting to improve it. As a wondering animal he seeks the reason behind the fact. His goal is truth. As a*

*making animal he seeks the means to accomplish the end; his goal is the good.*

Both activities are functions of his intellect. Traditionally, these different operations of the mind are distinguished as the work of the theoretical or speculative intellect and the work of the practical activity. The former activity, when perfected, characterizes man as a scientist; the latter, as an artist.

In the case of medicine, the artist finds his fulfilment in producing health, that is in sustaining it or restoring it. In the case of law, the fulfilment is to produce justice, that is, to uphold or restore it. Neither justice nor health, however, can be called an artifact, which is what is produced by the artisan, the craftsman working on inert matter.

If art is simply the right way of making something, and if a single word (*techne*) was used by the Greeks both for a craft and for a fine art, how then explain the transcendental leap from the homely art of the artisan to the ineffable art of a Mozart, a Michelangelo, a Shakespeare? This obviously is a significant question in the attempt to understand what the Hippocratic tradition means in calling medicine "the Art."

To untangle this question we might first clarify how artists in the more rudimentary sense of those who produce something can differ among themselves. Here Aristotle, significantly at the outset of his twelve books of metaphysics, provides us with a hierarchy of distinctions:

*...the man of experience (empeiros) appears wiser than those who just have some power of sensation or other, the artist (technites) than men of experience, the master builder (architekton) than the handicraftsman (cheirotechnes), and the theoretical sciences*

*(theoretikai...epistemai) than the productive (poietikai).*

Aristotle had already met the objection that a man of experience may prove more capable of effective action than the theoretician. There, not surprisingly, he used medicine as his example. He begins:

*...we see men of experience succeeding more than those who have theory without experience. The reason for this is that experience is knowledge of particulars, but art of universals; and actions and the effects produced are all concerned with the particular.*

Aristotle then offers his well-known aphorism:

*For it is not man that the physician cures, except incidentally, but Callias or Socrates or some other like-named person, who is incidentally a man as well. So if a man has theory without experience, and knows the universal but does not know the particular contained in it, he will often fail in his treatment, for it is the particular that must be treated.*

Where does this leave the artist who has a grasp of principles? Aristotle observes:

*Nevertheless we consider that knowledge and proficiency belong to art rather than to experience, and we assume that artists are wiser than men of mere experience...; and this is because the former know the cause, whereas the latter do not. For men of experience know the fact, but not the wherefore; but artists know the wherefore and the cause.*

With such common objections overcome, Aristotle can then claim, as he did in the passage quoted previously, not just the superiority of experience over animal instinct or

sensation, but the superiority of theoretical knowledge over experience.

In that same passage he moves on to two distinct kinds of worker, the master-builder (*architekton*) and the artisan, whose Greek name *cheirotechnes* means literally “hand-artist” and might be rendered “handcraftsman.” He has mentioned them earlier, and has already supported his next claim, that the master-builder is wiser than the handcraftsman, on grounds that master-builders “know the reasons for the things that are done, but we think that the handcraftsmen, like inanimate objects, do things but without knowing what they are doing..., through habit.”

If a knowledge of the reasons for doing things sets the master-builder apart from the handcraftsman, is that same knowledge what sets the sculptor apart from his stonecarvers, or the physician apart from the aides and technicians he may employ? In part, yes, for physician and sculptor alike understand causes that their technically skilled helpers, however intelligent and productive, may not. But the specific difference between the true artist and the artisan, as indeed between the true artist and the master-builder, has to be sought elsewhere. It is found in the material, so to speak, that the true artist works on: human nature itself.

Thus the clearest exemplar of the true artist is the physician. He works on the human being, in cooperation with that purposeful inner activity-or entelechy, to use the Aristotelian term in its more modern, vitalistic sense-which is proper to all living things.

St. Thomas, distinguishing between arts that work upon inert matter, such as wood and stone for the art of building, and arts that work upon “an active principle tend-

ing to produce the effect of the art,” takes medicine for his example of the latter:

*Such is the medical art, since in the sick body there is an active principle conducive to health. Hence the effect of art of the first kind [working on inert matter] is never produced by nature but is always the result of the art; every house is an artifact. But the effect of the art of the second kind is the result both of art and of nature without art; for many are cured by the action of nature without the art of medicine.*

Now in those things which can be done both by art and by nature, art imitates nature.

To fill out the picture a word must be said about other arts such as that of the jurist and those of the composer, poet, painter and sculptor. The last two are manifestly imitative of nature. Since Aristotle’s *Poetics* at least, the notion of art as the imitation of nature has held pride of place, but it has been applied chiefly if not exclusively to the esthetic arts. The *Poetics*, a fragmentary work of which we possess perhaps half, has aided and abetted this narrow view by dealing less with the analysis of principles than with their application to poetry and music, and to the artistic conventions of the author’s day. Yet implicit throughout the book, and explicit often enough, is the principle that the artist of every kind, through what he produces in imitation of human life, aims at affecting human nature.

By their nature, the esthetic arts first affect the emotions, but the classic view, embodied in the civic theater and civic architecture of Athens, and in the cathedrals and morality plays of the Middle Ages, has been that such arts answer their finest calling when they bring the

right emotions to the aid of principle, thus creating conviction. Or perhaps when the physician uses them as part of his therapeutic regimen.

We can see that what constitutes the specific difference between an art in the more inclusive and homely sense and an art in the more exclusive and higher sense is twofold: the artist’s knowledge of the beauty that affects our emotions, and his ability to bring that beauty into being. When a beautifully designed building is directed at our senses, and through them elevates our spirit much as does music or poetry, architecture moves beyond the task of an artisan or even a master-builder to the achievement of an artist. In other words, the transcendental (or “quantum”) leap to pure art is made when the worker knowingly brings his skills to bear on human nature, stimulating and harnessing, so to speak, its powers.

Here we can discern that the concept of art is as important for a right understanding of law as it is of medicine. In the art of the jurist the mind puts our natural thirst for justice, and our rational grasp of the intrinsically right thing, to work in the affairs of men to set them right, thus safeguarding or restoring the health of society. Jurisprudence works with nature in what can be considered its highest activity, namely the production of virtue.

This stands athwart the currently dominant philosophy of law, called Legal Positivism (or sometimes Historicism, a quite similar thing), which conceives law as an artifact produced by and out of the arbitrary will of the lawmaker, or as another variant would have it, of the judge. The Roman jurists, on the contrary, spoke of law as turning the establishment of the intrinsically right thing into an art-*ius redigere in artem*-much as we can say Hippocratic medicine

turns the preservation and restoration of health into an art.

This classic notion of art, needless to say, has just about evaporated from the minds of us moderns. Nor is our understanding of the tradition that law and medicine are arts given much help when we learn that the liberal arts, the study of which is according to Ratner the best preparation for the study of medicine, are really sciences. They are called arts by analogy.

Sometimes the analogy is construed as illustrating that the liberal arts produce educated men, or knowledge that can be considered useful. St. Thomas proposes a closer parallel: The seven liberal arts of grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy are called arts because “they not only have knowledge but a certain product.” Grammar is said to produce a properly constructed sentence, logic correct reasoning, rhetoric a speech, and so forth. For much the same argument see *Summa theologiae* I-II, 57, 3, ad 3. There St. Thomas also holds that they are called “liberal” to distinguish them from “those arts which are ordered to works carried out by the body, which are in a certain sense ‘servile’ insofar as the body is subject to the soul as a servant, and man is free [*liber*] because of his soul.”

In any case, what we get is a mish-mash: medicine, nowadays called a science, is in the classical tradition an art, while the liberal arts, traditionally the best preparation for medical studies, are sciences in the classical sense.

An essay called simply “The Art” (“Peri Technes”) is one of the better-known writings in the Hippocratic corpus. For the Hippocratic physician, medicine is the art par excellence. Yet so firmly locked in the modern psyche is a notion of art

as a knack perfected by practice, or as a preternatural gift given a Mozart or a Michelangelo, that translators of the essay—not a work of Hippocrates, by the way—actually changed title and text alike to conform with the notion that medicine is, in their term, “an exact science.” Moreover they twist and turn to avoid the word-play that opens the essay: “Some there are who have made an art of vilifying the arts....” The translators wrestle this into banality: “There are men who have made a business of abusing the sciences.”

Misreadings of the nature of medicine are practically the rule. In the past two centuries and more, since the “scientific” side of medicine revealed its wonders and began its triumphal march, medicine has been progressively abandoning its Hippocratic self-understanding. That means, chiefly, retreat from *nature* in its manifold functions: first, as the prime healer, to be aided by the art of the physician; then as the standard of normality, to be aimed at by the physician in his art; and last though by no means least as the standard of ethics, to be defended by him as if the very life of medicine depended on it. And so it does, for if medicine is no longer a moral art, it is no longer a living profession.

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## NOTES

.*The New York Times*, March 25, 1998, “Patients’ Lives on the Line in Battle Over Transplants,” by Sheryl Stolberg.

.Letter of Mark R. Tonelli, M.D., in *The New York Times* of March 31, 1998.

.See, for example, “A Medical Resistance Movement,” by Reed Abelson, in *The New York Times*, March 25, 1998.

July 1, 1997, “Doctors Organize to Fight Corporate Intrusion,” by Peter Kilborn.

During the past decade, the number of physicians working for managed care companies has grown by about half. Surveys by the American Medical Association indicate that by 1997 more than 90 percent of physicians had contracts with at least one managed care provider, up from less than 60 percent in 1989 (“A Medical Resistance Movement,” by Reed Abelson, *The New York Times*, March 25, 1998).

.”Doctors’ Group Considers Forming Union in California,” by Andrea Adelson, February 22, 1998.

.See “Texas Will Allow Malpractice Suits Against H.M.O.’s,” by Sam Howe Verhoven, *The New York Times*, June 5, 1997.

.The victory of Lois Capps over State Assemblyman Tom Bordonaro, a Republican who emphasized his pro-life convictions, had been widely taken as a sign that the abortion issue had played itself out. For Mrs. Capps’s own explanation, see “Voters’ Anger at H.M.O.’s Plays as Hot Political Issue,” by Peter T. Kilborn, *The New York Times*, May 17, 1998.

.The board of the Moscati Institute includes Bishop Raymond Burke of La Crosse, Bishop Roger Schwietz of Duluth, Msgr. William B. Smith of the New York Archdiocesan Seminary at Dunwoodie, Yonkers NY, and the Editor of this review.

Its address is 301 West First Street, Suite 526, Duluth MN 55802; phone (218) 728-5991, fax (218) 724-7528.

.*The New York Times*, Jan 6, 1998, “Panel Seeks H.M.O. Overseer For the Bellwether California,” by Todd Purdom.

.*The New York Times*, respectively June 27, 1998, “White House Adds Broad Protection in Medicare Rules,” and July 7, 1998, “Clinton to Punish Insurers Who Deny Health Coverage.” Both reports are by Robert Pear.

.See, for example, the report of Sam How Verhoven cited above, and *The New York Times*, May 22, 1997, “Connecticut Votes to Restrict Denials Under Managed Care,” by Jonathan Rabinovitz.

.*The Weekly Standard*, July 27, 1998, page 3.

.The Natural Institution of the Family Challenged, *Journal of the North American Montessori Teachers’ Association*, Vol. 19, No. 2 (Spring 1994), p. 121.

.*De anima*, II, iv.

.*I Metaphysics* iii, 984b15-17.

.*The Natural Institution of the Family Challenged*, *Journal of the North American Montessori Teachers’ Association*, 19,2, p. 122.

Dr. Ratner is quoting from Fragment 327 of Pascal’s *Pensees* in the Everyman’s translation by W.F. Trotter. It reads in part:

...The sciences have two extremes which meet. The first is the pure natural ignorance in which all men find themselves at birth. The other extreme is that reached by great intellects, who, having run through all that men can know, find they know nothing, and come back again to that same ignorance from which they set out; but this is a learned ignorance which is conscious of itself. Those between the two, who have departed from natural ignorance and not been able to reach the other, have some smatter of this vain knowledge, and pretend to be wise. These trouble the world and are bad judges of everything."

.Probably the most frequently cited passage from Aquinas on connatural knowledge is from the *Summa theologiae* II-II, 45,2:

"...Right judgment...can occur in two ways: one, by the perfect use of reason; the other, because of a certain connaturality with those things about which one has to judge. Just as he who has dedicated himself to moral science judges rightly by rational enquiry those things pertaining to chastity, so, but through a certain connaturality to those things, does the man with the habit of chastity judge rightly about them."

To grasp St. Thomas's point, we must bear in mind that habit, for him, is a kind of second nature. The least that can be said here is that the "second nature" of the virtue of chastity steadies a man's judgment about the rightness or wrongness of genital behavior. St. Thomas is supplying a reason for the Aristotelean dictum that if you want to know the right thing to do, consult the just man.

.A study published April 15, 1998 by the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that more than 100,000 patients a year die in U.S. hospitals from drug reactions. That would make adverse reaction to medication a leading cause of death in America.

An author of the report, Dr. Bruce Pomeranz, said: "We want to increase awareness that drugs have a toxic component." He told the *New York Times* of April 15 that drug reaction was underreported as a cause of death because it is rarely reported on the death certificate, which might list stomach hemorrhage as the cause of death without mentioning that the hemorrhage was caused by a drug. He estimated that there were from 76,000 to 137,000 deaths from medication a year, while the number of deaths attributed to that cause on death certificates in 1994 was 156.

Dr. Pomeranz, a professor of neuroscience, and his colleagues at the University of Toronto combined the results of 39 smaller studies in a technique called meta-analysis, which gives researchers the possibility of drawing statistically significant conclusions. The method has its critics, and the authors noted that the results of their study should be taken viewed with caution.

.*The Natural Institution of the Family Challenged*, Journal of the North American Montessori Teachers' Association., p.143.

.Editor's Note in *Nature, the Physician, and the Family* (Rockford, Illinois: TAN Books, 1998), the collected works of Herbert Ratner.

. "Dutch Physicians' Protest against Nazi Regulations," *Child & Family*, Vol 11, No. 2, 1972.

The review, edited by Dr. Ratner, said the statement was "reprinted from *Repression and Resistance* — *The Netherlands in Time of War*, Vol. II, p. 352," and that the translator was Conrad W. Baars, M.D.

.Ibid.

.Reproduced in Healthline, March 1995.

.As well as being a physician, Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was a philosopher and theologian highly regarded by Christian theologians of the Middle Ages. St. Thomas quotes him often, under the name of Rabbi Moses.

According to a study by Fred Rosner ("The Physician's Prayer Attributed to Moses Maimonides" in *Legacies in Ethics and Medicines*, ed. Chester Burns [New York: Science History Publications, 1977]), this prayer "first appeared in print in a German periodical in 1783," with the note: "From the Hebrew manuscript of a renowned Jewish physician in Egypt from the Twelfth Century." Seven years later it appeared in a Hebrew translation from the German. Half a century later it was published in an English rendering of the Hebrew.

.*Roe v. Wade*, 410 U.S. 130, 93 S.Ct. 705 (1973), at 132.

.Edelstein, L., *Ancient Medicine*, eds. Owsei Temkin and C. Lillian Temkin, transl. C. Lillian Temkin (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1967), p. xii, Editors' Introduction.

.Prophetically, one might think, Edelstein held that two stipulations of the Oath "seem to point to the basic beliefs underlying the whole program," namely renunciation of complicity in suicide and in abortion" (op. cit., p. 8). Hence he held that they could "provide a clue for historical identification of the views embodied in the Oath of Hippocrates," and based his study and his conclusions on that clue.

.Op. cit., p. 327, in "The Professional Ethics of the Greek Physician." This lecture was first published in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 1956, vol. 30, pp. 391-419.

.Op. cit., p. 63, in "The Hippocratic Oath."

.Ibid.

.Editors' introduction to *Ancient Medicine*, p. ix.

.*Ancient Medicine*, passim.

.Op. cit., pp. 327-328, in "The Professional Ethics of the Greek Physician."

.An article in the *New York Times*, Dec. 16, 1997, "New Way of Doctoring: By the Book," discusses attempts to harness the medical research available on the internet, and to base treatment on it. It is termed "evidence-based medicine." The writer, Abigail Zuger, quotes a comment by Dr. Sandra J. Tanenbaum of Ohio State College of Medicine that "no one thing works for everyone all the time," adding that that's where the art of medicine comes in.

To this Dr. David L. Sackett, director of

the Centre for Evidence-Based Medicine in Oxford, England, responded, "art kills." He added:

"It was the art that gave us purging, puking, leeches, the gastric freeze, all that sort of stuff...There's a science to the art of medicine." "The Oath—V. Why?" *Child & Family*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1971, p. 290. This is the fifth in a series of six articles by Dr. Ratner on the Hippocratic Oath.

.*I Metaphysics* I, i (981b29-982a1).

.Op. cit. (981a14-18).

.Op. cit. (19-24).

.Op. cit. (24-30).

.Op. cit. (981b2-5).

.*Summa contra gentiles*, II, 75,15.

.*Poetics*, iii, 4, begins as follows:

"It is clear that the general origin of poetry was due to two causes, each of them part of human nature. Imitation is natural to man from childhood, one of his advantages over the lower animals being this, that he is the most imitative creature in the world, and learns at first by imitation. And it is also natural for all to delight in works of imitation.... The explanation is to be found in a further fact: to be learning something is the greatest of pleasures not only to the philosopher but also to the rest of mankind, however small their capacity for it..." (1448b1-5).

(I have followed the translation of Ingraham Bywater because its rendering of *mimemai* and its cognates in terms of *imitation* rather than *representation* not only fits the text better but more fully substantiates our point.)  
.In *Boetii de Trinitate* V, 1, ad 3.

.Chadwick, John, and W.N. Mann, *The Medical Works of Hippocrates* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950), p. 81.

## Discorso del Santo Padre ai Vescovi degli Stati Uniti d'America, in Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum", 30.05.1998

DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AI VESCOVI DEGLI STATI UNITI D'AMERICA (REGIONI DI CHICAGO, INDIANAPOLIS E MILWAUKEE), IN VISITA "AD LIMINA APOSTOLORUM"

Pubblichiamo di seguito il discorso di Giovanni Paolo II al gruppo di Presuli della Conferenza Episcopale degli U.S.A. (Regioni ecclesiastiche di Chicago, Indianapolis e Milwaukee), incontrati oggi e ricevuti in questi giorni - in separate udienze - per la Visita "ad Limina Apostolorum":

Dear Cardinal George,

Dear Brother Bishops,

1. In the course of this series of ad Limina visits, the Bishops of the United States have again borne witness to the keen sense of communion of American Catholics with the Successor of Peter. From the beginning of my Pontificate I have experienced this closeness, and the spiritual and material support of so many of your people. In welcoming you, the Bishops of the ecclesiastical regions of Chicago, Indianapolis and Milwaukee, I express once more to you and to the whole Church in your country my heartfelt gratitude: "God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the Gospel of

his Son, that without ceasing I mention you always in my prayers" (Rom 1:9). Continuing the reflection begun with previous groups of Bishops on the renewal of ecclesial life in the light of the Second Vatican Council and in view of the challenge of evangelization which we face on the eve of the next millennium, today I wish to address some aspects of your responsibility for Catholic education.

2. From the earliest days of the American Republic, when Archbishop John Carroll encouraged the teaching vocation of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and founded the new nation's first Catholic college, the Church in the United States has been deeply involved in education at every level. For more than two hundred years, Catholic elementary schools, high schools, colleges and universities have been instrumental in educating successive generations of Catholics, and in teaching the truths of the faith, promoting respect for the human person, and developing the moral character of their students. Their academic excellence and success in preparing young people for life have served the whole of American society.

As we approach the third Christian millennium, the Second Vatican Council's call for generous dedication to the whole enterprise of Catholic education remains to be more fully implemented (cf. *Gravissimum Educationis*, 1). Few areas of Catholic life in the United States need the leadership of the Bishops for their re-affirmation and renewal as much as this one does. Any such renewal requires a clear vision of the Church's educational mission, which in turn cannot be separated from the Lord's mandate to preach the Gospel to all nations. Like

other educational institutions, Catholic schools transmit knowledge and promote the human development of their students. However, as the Council emphasized, the Catholic school does something else: "It aims to create for the school community an atmosphere enlivened by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity. It aims to help the young person in such a way that the development of his or her own personality will be matched by the growth of that new creation which he or she has become by baptism. It strives to relate all human culture eventually to the news of salvation, so that the light of faith will illumine the knowledge which students gradually gain of the world, of life, and of the human family" (*ibid.*, 8). The mission of the Catholic school is the integral formation of students, so that they may be true to their condition as Christ's disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.

3. Catholic education aims not only to communicate facts but also to transmit a coherent, comprehensive vision of life, in the conviction that the truths contained in that vision liberate students in the most profound meaning of human freedom. In its recent document *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, the Congregation for Catholic Education drew attention to the importance of communicating knowledge in the context of the Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture and of history: "In the Catholic school there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained but also

values to be acquired and truths to be discovered” (No. 14).

The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the United States today, and the greatest contribution that authentically Catholic education can make to American culture, is to restore to that culture the conviction that human beings can grasp the truth of things, and in grasping that truth can know their duties to God, to themselves and their neighbors. In meeting that challenge, the Catholic educator will hear an echo of Christ’s words: “If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free” (Jn 8:32). The contemporary world urgently needs the service of educational institutions which uphold and teach that truth is “that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished” (Veritatis Splendor, No. 4).

To educate in the truth, and for genuine freedom and evangelical love, is at the very heart of the Church’s mission. In a cultural climate in which moral norms are often thought to be matters of personal preference, Catholic schools have a crucial role to play in leading the younger generation to realize that freedom consists above all in being able to respond to the demands of the truth (cf. Veritatis Splendor, No. 84). The respect which Catholic elementary and secondary schools enjoy suggests that their commitment to transmitting moral wisdom is meeting a widely-felt cultural need in your country. The example of Bishops and pastors who, with the support of Catholic parents, have persevered in leadership in this field should encourage everyone’s efforts to foster new dedication and new growth. The fact that some Dioceses are involved in a program of school building is a significant sign of vital-

ity and a great hope for the future.

4. Almost twenty-five years have passed since your Conference issued *To Teach as Jesus Did*, a document which is still very relevant today. It emphasized the importance of another aspect of Catholic education: “More than any other program of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be . . . oriented to Christian service because it helps students acquire skills, virtues and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others” (No. 106). On the basis of what they see and hear, students should become ever more aware of the dignity of every human person and gradually absorb the key elements of the Church’s social doctrine and her concern for the poor. Catholic institutions should continue their tradition of commitment to the education of the poor in spite of the financial burdens involved. In some cases it may be necessary to find ways to share the burden more evenly, so that parishes with schools are not left to shoulder it alone.

A Catholic school is a place where students live a shared experience of faith in God and where they learn the riches of Catholic culture. Taking proper account of the stages of human development, the freedom of individuals, and the rights of parents in the education of their children, Catholic schools must help students to deepen their personal relationship with God and to discover that all things human have their deepest meaning in the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Prayer and the liturgy, especially the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Penance, should mark the rhythm of a Catholic school’s life. Transmitting knowledge about the faith, though essential, is not sufficient. If students in

Catholic schools are to gain a genuine experience of the Church, the example of teachers and others responsible for their formation is crucial: the witness of adults in the school community is a vital part of the school’s identity.

Numberless religious and lay teachers and other personnel in Catholic schools down the years have shown how their professional competence and commitment are grounded in the spiritual, intellectual and moral values of the Catholic tradition. The Catholic community in the United States and the whole country have been immeasurably blessed through the work of so many dedicated religious in schools in every part of your country. I also know how much you value the dedication of the many lay men and women who, sometimes at great financial sacrifice, are involved in Catholic education because they believe in the mission of Catholic schools. If in some cases there has been an eroding of confidence in the teaching vocation, you must do all you can to restore that trust.

5. Catechesis, either in schools or in parish-based programs, plays a fundamental role in transmitting the faith. The Bishop should encourage catechists to see their work as a vocation: as a privileged sharing in the mission of handing on the faith and accounting for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pt 3:15). The Gospel message is the definitive response to the deepest longings of the human heart. Young Catholics have a right to hear the full content of that message in order to come to know Christ, the One who has overcome death and opened the way to salvation. Efforts to renew catechesis must be based on the premise that Christ’s teaching, as transmitted in the Church and as authentically interpreted by the

Magisterium, has to be presented in all its richness, and the methodologies used have to respond to the nature of the faith as truth received (cf. 1 Cor 15:1). The work you have begun through your Conference to evaluate catechetical texts by the standard of the Catechism of the Catholic Church will help to ensure the unity and completeness of the faith as it is presented in your Dioceses.

6. The Church's tradition of involvement in universities, which goes back almost a thousand years, quickly took root in the United States. Today Catholic colleges and universities can make an important contribution to the renewal of American higher education. To belong to a university community, as was my privilege during my days as a professor, is to stand at the crossroads of the cultures that have formed the modern world. It is to be a trustee of the wisdom of centuries and a promoter of the creativity that will transmit that wisdom to future generations. At a time when knowledge is often thought to be fragmentary and never absolute, Catholic universities should be expected to uphold the objectivity and coherence of knowledge. Now that the centuries-old conflict between science and faith is fading, Catholic universities should be in the forefront of a new and long-overdue dialogue between the empirical sciences and the truths of faith.

If Catholic universities are to become leaders in the renewal of higher education, they must first have a strong sense of their own Catholic identity. This identity is not established once and for all by an institution's origins, but comes from its living within the Church today and always, speaking from the heart of the Church (*ex corde Ecclesiae*) to

the contemporary world. The Catholic identity of a university should be evident in its curriculum, in its faculty, in student activities, and in the quality of its community life. This is no infringement upon the university's nature as a true center of learning, where the truth of the created order is fully respected, but also ultimately illuminated by the light of the new creation in Christ.

The Catholic identity of a university necessarily includes the university's relationship to the local Church and its Bishop. It is sometimes said that a university that acknowledges a responsibility to any community or authority outside the relevant academic professional associations has lost both its independence and its integrity. But this is to detach freedom from its object, which is truth. Catholic universities understand that there is no contradiction between the free and vigorous pursuit of the truth and a "recognition of and an adherence to the teaching authority of the Church in matters of faith and morals" (*Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, No. 27).

7. In safeguarding the Catholic identity of Catholic institutions of higher education, Bishops have a special responsibility in relation to the work of theologians. If, as the whole Catholic tradition testifies, theology is to be done in and for the Church, then the question of theology's relationship to the teaching authority of the Church is not extrinsic ? something imposed from outside ? but rather intrinsic to theology as an ecclesial science. Theology itself is accountable to those to whom Christ has given responsibility for overseeing the ecclesial community and its stability in the truth. As the discussion on these questions deepens in your country, it must be the Bishops' aim to see that the terms used are

genuinely ecclesial in character.

In addition, Bishops should take a personal interest in the work of university chaplaincies, not only in Catholic institutions but also in other colleges and universities where Catholic students are present. Campus ministry offers a notable opportunity to be close to young people at a significant time in their lives:

"...the university Chapel is called to be a vital center for promoting the Christian renewal of culture, in respectful and frank dialogue, in a clear and well-grounded perspective (cf. 1 Pt 3:15), in a witness which is open to questioning and capable of convincing" (Address to the European Congress of University Chaplains, May 1, 1998, No. 4). Young adults need the service of committed chaplains who can help them, intellectually and spiritually, to attain their full maturity in Christ.

8. Dear Brother Bishops: on the threshold of a new century and a new millennium, the Church continues to proclaim the capacity of human beings to know the truth and to grow into genuine freedom through their acceptance of that truth. In this respect, the Church is the defender of the moral insight on which your country was founded. Your Catholic schools are widely recognized as models for the renewal of American elementary and secondary education. Your Catholic colleges and universities can be leaders in the renewal of American higher education. At a time when the relationship between freedom and moral truth is being debated on a host of issues at every level of society and government, Catholic scholars have the resources to contribute to an intellectual and moral renewal of American culture. As you work to strengthen Catholic education, and as you promote Catholic intellectual

life in all its dimensions, may you enjoy the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom. On the eve of the Feast of Pentecost, I join you in invoking the gifts of the Holy Spirit upon the Church in the United States. With affection in the Lord, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing to you and to the priests, religious and laity of your Dioceses.

- \* Le Udienze
- \* Discorso del Santo Padre ai Presidenti delle Regioni e delle Province Autonome Italiane
- \* Rinuncia dell'Arcivescovo di Cotabato (Filippine) e nomina del Successore
- \* Nomina del Vescovo Coadiutore di Moyobamba (Per?)
- \* Nomina del Prefetto della Congregazione delle Cause dei Santi
- \* Nomina di Consultore della Congregazione per la Dottrina della Fede
- \* Nomina di Membro della Pontificia Commissione per l'America Latina
- \* Avviso di Possesso Cardinalizio
- \* DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE AI MOVIMENTI ECCLESIALI E ALLE NUOVE COMUNITA'

## A Report from the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy

by Riccardo Pozzo

Bertrand Russell remarked that his participation to the First World Congress of Philosophy (Paris 1900) changed his life because he met there the Italian logician Giuseppe Peano who talked with him about the German logician Gottlob Frege, according to Russell the greatest philosopher of his age. By the end of the twentieth century, the list of the World Congresses of Philosophy the U.S. hosted the Sixth (Boston 1926) has grown to twenty. And the Twentieth, which took place in Boston from August 10 to 15, 1998, with more than 3,000 participants, was the largest gathering of philosophers ever. Following an invitation by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, Jaakko Hintikka and Robert Neville as co-chairmen together with Alan Olson as executive director, proposed as a theme a return to the Socratic origins of philosophy, Paideia: Philosophy Educating Humanity.

The first one to sketch a philosophical evaluation of the twentieth century in philosophy was Georg Henrik von Wright, the successor of Ludwig Wittgenstein at Cambridge. Analytic philosophy has been the main philosophy of a century dominated by science and technology. Wittgenstein himself experienced the passage from the problem of truth to that of meaning, i.e., from science to the reflection on science. As a matter of fact, in the last decades, analytic philosophy has aban-

doned scientism getting closer to speculation and to metaphysical thought. This is not bad. It is a sign of our time, given that philosophy, as Hegel said, is its time apprehended in thoughts. The globalization of analytic philosophy has produced relevant changes, some of them rather uninspiring, for example, the multiplication of eclectic approaches following Heidegger's crossing the Atlantic twenty years ago. On the other side, some relevant results have been reached applying analytic philosophy to the interpretation of the thought of ancient and modern philosophers.

It was impossible not to notice that von Wright did not even mention postmodernism. Kenneth Schmitz, speaking from the point of view of the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition, conceded that from the mid-eighties no philosopher has been immune from the criticism of the postmodernists. It has been, however, a respectful and genuinely Socratic kind of criticism in so far as it has problematized the philosophical discourse and led it back to its origin as fundamental research on ontology. John Caputo, the author of a striking comparison between the ontology of Aquinas and Heidegger, added that to his feeling Catholic thought has never been at ease in modernity: if holds that modernity is secular, it holds also that postmodernism is post-secular, and this explains the interest of some Catholic thinkers in postmodernism.

Dale Jacquette proposed an analysis of postmodernist philosophy of language. While acknowledging the practical utility of deconstructing texts for providing new interpretations, Jacquette also stressed that, from a theoretical point of view, deconstructionism appears to be incomprehensible because it presupposes inaccessible semantic resources,

and because the exchange of opposites produces undecidable concepts and therefore undermines the objectivity of every conceptual distinction. Rodolphe Gasché, a Derrida-scholar and one of the few postmodernists speaking at the congress, replied that deconstructionism is not the same as Friedrich Nietzsche's criticism of ontology and causality. The reference to Nietzsche he held to be a distortion due to Hans-Georg Gadamer's interpretation of postmodernism. The truth is that Jacques Derrida was critical of Nietzsche and one needs to acknowledge the originality of his position.

In a further intervention on postmodernism and the problem of truth, Daniel Dennett lamented the loss of sense of the concept of truth in face of the fact that postmodernist philosophers apparently choose an epistemology with the same seriousness of someone who goes to the tailor to get a suit *demier ci*. The vegetarian concept of truth of the postmodernists is moreover dangerous because it teaches to the third world that western science is just one among many traditions and that the belief in its efficacy is nothing but a colonial imposition. However, Dennett's main objection referred to praxis: how can a research physician possibly know how to diagnose if he does not know what is true? Replying to Dennett, the sociologist Steven Fuller reported the results of a *cyber-conference* on the understanding of science and technology. The majority of the participants from third world countries did not have anything against technology and considered science just as a particular way of understanding technology. Postmodernism is eventually right, concluded Fuller, in so far as the third world actually accepts technology while remaining diffident with

regard to the science accompanying it. What evidently blocks cross-cultural exchange is, concluded Fuller, the metaphysics at the foundation of western science.

The most representative living philosopher of ecology, John Passmore, insisted on the role played by the environment within philosophical discourse. Passmore gave examples concerning the moral obligations we have with respect to future generations, to plants, animals, and the atmosphere. At the same time, he asked if it is true the rule of law is limited to human relations. At the root of everything is a metaphysical problem: what gives man the right to consider himself supernatural? What makes it difficult for him to consider nature as an entity of which he is himself a part? Evidently, it is necessary to distinguish between an anthropocentric environmentalism, which cares for the environment on behalf of mankind, and a geocentric environmentalism, which cares for the environment on behalf of the environment itself.

Alasdair McIntyre argued against moral relativism and for moral pluralism, proposing some medieval dialogues among Christian, Jewish and Islamic philosophers as examples of rational disagreement. John Wippen intervened on the subject of metaphysics from Avicennas to Sigier of Brabant, while Robert Sokolowski offered an illuminating definition of transcendental phenomenology as the mind's self-discovery in the presence of intelligible objects. The phenomenological attitude goes beyond the natural attitude in so far as we do not limit ourselves to think the objects, but we think ourselves thinking the objects. From the point of view of transcendental phenomenology, it is the mind that actualizes intelligibility. On some technical questions

regarding the methods of the historians of philosophy Jorge Garcia confronted the extremes of the conceptual history of and of the sociological history of philosophy. Both are inaccurate and unjust with regard to the free individuality of the various thinkers, Garcia maintained. The objective of the historian of philosophy ought rather to be directed to the determination of the truth-value of any specific philosophical position.

The Word Congress found its culminating event in the round table organized by Peter Caws, the current editor of the *Library of Living Philosophers* founded by Paul Schilpp. It does not happen every day that one sees come together the greatest living philosophers, although Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Paul Ricoeur, Paul Weiss and Georg Henrik von Wright could not make it to Boston. The first to speak was Willard Van Orman Quine, who however preferred to suspend his judgment on the question expressed by Caws, What have we learned from philosophy in the twentieth century? Peter Strawson suggested the ambiguity of the subject we. If understood collectively, it is difficult to find an answer, but if understood individually it is certainly not difficult. Some results of contemporary research are nonetheless worrying. For instance, there is no doubt that Plato and Descartes are the founders of ancient philosophy and of modern science respectively. To be charged today of Platonism or Cartesianism is, however, no trifle. This is a mistake to which we have to remedy by means of a correction of our historical perspective. Donald Davidson considered the last sixty years, beginning when he went to Harvard in the thirties. He especially remembered the fertile interdisciplinarity made possible thanks to the conspicuous grants devoted to the re-

search on cognitive science in the fifties and sixties. It is not easy to say where contemporary philosophy is going. What is sure is that it has expanded extraordinarily. It has attracted a very large number of people, barriers have gone down, and its boundaries are broader. Besides, information science, the usage of English, the near universal right of travelling have led to a globalization of philosophy. Nonetheless it is true, admonished Davidson, that there still are endangered and embattled philosophers, for instance in today's Serbia. Marjorie Greene said she was less optimistic, mostly because subjectivism is more than ever playing a leading role. Subjectivism comes from Cartesianism and it requires all our attention, as we can see from the fact that we are going out of the century with a lot of sloppy mysticism. Karl-Otto Apel, the unique representative of the European continental philosophical tradition in the round-table, pointed out to the great turns provoked in Europe by Heidegger, Gadamer, Wittgenstein and Peirce in the fifties and sixties, which Apel synthesized in his own standpoint of transcendental semiotics. Apel remarked that today contemporary philosophy is suffering an important deficit with regard to the usage of reflection. He did not

refer to psychological reflection, as regressus, and also not to logical reflection, as metalevels, but meant speculative reflection, i.e., the capacity to account for negation and thus also for alterity. The last to speak was the youngest, namely Seyyed Hossein Nasr, the greatest American scholar of Islamic philosophy, who pointed out another ambiguity in the question posed by Caws. It rather means, What have we learned from western philosophy in the twentieth century? The problem is, precisely, that there are many other traditions. One just needs to mention the four great Asian schools of Islamic, Chinese, Indian, and Japanese philosophy to realize that one is not speaking of minor schools. It is true that English has become a global language, but it is also true that, for instance, scientists from India have in recent years populated departments of universities all over the world without giving up the pursuit of their own philosophical tradition. To complicate things, moreover, is the fact that it is impossible to translate some terms of western philosophy such as objectivism and subjectivism in languages such as Arabic. Finally, the results coming from the interaction of the diverse traditions are not to be underestimated, as one can see from the diffusion in the western world of meditation and discovery of one's spiritual interiority. The connection between philosophy and modes of being is one of the perspectives to be elaborated in the twenty-first century.

The next World Congress of Philosophy, scheduled for 2003, will be the first of the new millennium, but it will be preceded in the summer of 2000 by an international conference of philosophy in Belfast. The proceedings of the Twentieth World Congress will be printed in 1999. It is not easy to give a synthetic conclusion. At the end of the century western philosophy appeared, after all, in great form; but non-European philosophies were also doing well. Against expectations, postmodernism was strongly on the defensive and played a marginal role, relegated as it was in the thankless position of permanent criticizing. Historians of philosophy in its various fields were present with valuable research, and philosophers from the Catholic tradition did also well. Of course one should remind Steven Fuller that without metaphysics there would be neither philosophy nor science and John Passmore that the problem of man's supernaturalism can easily be solved by studying the relationship of philosophy and theology. It is nice to think, though, that among the participants to the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy there had been a young researcher like Bertrand Russell, whose life was marked by this experience in such a radical way as to lead him to open up new adventures of thoughts.

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Rev. Thomas F. Dailey, OSFS  
Executive Secretary

As evidenced in Denver, in interest in the work of the Fellowship continues to be strong. In fact, we've already received several new applications for membership from folks who attend the annual convention.

On the topic of membership, history has shown us that personal contact is the best recruitment tool. If you know someone who is or may be interested in joining our ranks, please let me know. I'll be happy to send materials directly to that person or to you. To become a powerful force in the Catholic intellectual world, we need to enlist more good members.

And speaking of lists, work on the Membership *Directory* continues. If you have not already done so, please send me a note with the following information about yourself:

- name, position, and institution
- mailing address
- phone, fax, and email numbers
- academic degree and area of study

Hopefully, we'll be able to publish a full *Directory* by the time of the 1999 annual convention in Chicago.

Members of the Fellowship are involved in a variety of worthwhile activities. Here are just a few highlights:

**F.F. Centore**, one of the major presenters at this year's convention, has recently published a book entitled *Confusions and Clarifications: An Introduction to Philosophy for the Twenty-First Century*. The text is available from the University Press of America.

**Fr. John Crossin, OSFS** has been

named the Executive Director of the Washington Theological Consortium. The Consortium schools, a group of eight Protestant and Catholic theological institutions in the Washington, DC area, have been collaborating since 1967 in providing graduate theological education for their students and in advancing ecumenism.

**Eugene D. Genovese** has announced the formation of *The Historical Society*, a group of some 250 historians from across the political spectrum who want to rescue their profession from what they see as increasing conformity, nihilism, and obscurantism. Unlike similar associations, this new society focuses on serious history and requires only that participants start from plausible premises, use reason and logic, appeal to evidence, and willingly exchange criticism with those of differing points of view.

**Fr. John Harvey, OSFS**, past recipient of our Cardinal Wright award, celebrated his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. To mark the occasion, a festschrift of writings on moral and pastoral theology is in the works. Several members of the Fellowship are contributors.

**Fr. John Kobler, CP** continues his work on the phenomenology of the Second Vatican Council. A recent article, entitled "Vatican II as a Program in Applied Philosophy," is published in *The Modern Schoolman*, volume LXXV (May 1998), pp. 315-327.

**Edward J. O'Boyle**, professor at Louisiana Tech University, has just published *Personalist Economics: Moral Convictions, Economic Realities, and Social Action* (Kluwer Academic Press). This book, as well as a collec-

tion of essays appearing in the *International Journal of Social Economics* (volume 25, number 11/12), is inspired by, and offers an interpretation of, the social encyclicals and personalistic philosophy of Pope John Paul II.

**Fr. Anthony Zimmerman**, retired professor at Nanzan University in Nagoya (Japan), announces the publication of his book, *Evolution and the Sin in Eden*, which will be available from the University Press of America later this year.

So that we can continue to share our scholarly work in this Fellowship, please inform me of your activities and publications. You can keep in touch by mail, fax, or through our FCS web site on the Internet (<http://www4.allencol.edu/~philtheo/FCS>).

Finally, elsewhere in this issue are published the minutes from the 1998 Business Meeting of the membership. One major item is the first ever revision to our By-Laws. These new By-Laws have been published on our web site (<http://www4.allencol.edu/~philtheo/FCS/By-Laws.html>). If you would like to receive a printed copy of them, please let me know.

## An Unscientific Postscript on Catholicism in an Age of Science

Address to the 1998 Conference of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Denver, September 26, 1998

by Archbishop George Pell

### I. Science and the changing value of human life

Three great women made the headlines last year. St Teresa of Calcutta died having poured out her life in low-tech care for the most needy and abandoned of our planet. Princess Diana of Wales died at the hands of more sophisticated science, that of high speed glamor and glitz, the motorcar and flash photography. And Dolly the Sheep was born.

Dolly got less coverage in the newspapers and magazines than the other two ladies, and much of it was undoubtedly hype and hysteria. But is also reflected the growing realization that we are at the beginning of a biomedical revolution more significant than industrialization, nuclear power or the computer. Recent advances mean we are fast acquiring the power to modify and control not only the world around us, the world which humanity must inhabit, but also humanity itself, the when and how and what of people's lives and deaths and much in between. Some of these means are already in use or at hand; others will be in the near future. All this presents some very exciting new opportunities and some very difficult new challenges for the Catholic Church and for Western society which is marked by a very adult science sadly all too often hitched to a rather childish ethic and spirituality.

The cloned sheep was not the first headline-grabber to hail from Edinburgh in Scotland. From there came the proposal a few years ago that brain-dead women might be utilized as surrogate mothers (they used the word "incubators") for others who could not carry their own children, or did not want to do so (pre-natal nannies). The next creative proposal from technologists in that city was that eggs of aborted girls might be used for IVF programs, so that the dead unborn children would be the genetic mothers of children created for other people. Perhaps Scots scientists should stick to perfecting malt whiskeys.

The Scots wanted to use their cloning technique to create some special animals for medical research; but meanwhile Australian IVF scientists have been cloning cattle (by a different method) for big profits on the open market. Both assured us that human cloning was not on their drawing board. But the world was far from confident. After all, Australia's leading cattle cloner, Alan Trounson, is also that country's leading human IVF technician. At his hands and those of others like him, perhaps 100,000 test-tube babies were born around the world since 1978. Children for the infertile sounds great, at least until you learn a little more about the intrinsic immorality of the processes used, the risks to those involved, the thousands of embryos killed in the past few years

or left in limbo in frozen storage. But what about artificial insemination and surrogacy for "gay" couples; pregnancies for octogenarians; taking sperm from recently deceased men so the widow can have a child; men carrying babies; cloned human beings used for spare parts; animal-human hybrids; genetic tests for unborn children's sex, coloring, likely shape, longevity, athletic and other physical potential; more genetic tests (and perhaps abortion) for unborn children's part-genetic behavioral dispositions such as schizophrenia, substance dependency, depression, aggressiveness, homosexuality, religiosity....

At the other end, we may soon be able to extend life to 120 years or so for those who want to live for much longer here on earth; or offer a quick medical injection for those who are sick of it. Until then we can help people live healthier lives, in greater comfort, though at some considerable cost. Further improvements can be expected, not only in life-extension and health-improvement, but in medically-delivered "quality of life," such as cures of chronic conditions such as arthritis, sight and hearing problems, and various changes to body shape, color, texture and so on. Cindy Jackson, who runs London's thriving 'Cosmetic Surgery Network,' recently made headlines by writing up the nine years, 37 operations, and hundreds of thousands of dollars she has so far spent on having herself surgically remade in the image of the Barbie Doll. And the big field for the future will be the scientific control of human capacities such as strength, agility, reflexes, emotion, memory, imagination, desire, libido, aggression, thought, choice, speech and action. Heroin, anabolic steroids, Prozac, these are only the tip of the pharmacological iceberg of the fu-

ture. The possibilities in bioscience are tremendous!

Yet as Pope John Paul has noted: “The development of science and technology, this splendid testimony of the human capacity for understanding and for perseverance, does not free humanity from the obligation to ask the ultimate religious questions. Rather, it spurs us on to face the most painful and decisive of struggles, those of the heart and of the moral conscience.”

In a series of encyclicals culminating in the apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* Pope John Paul II has challenged the Church and humanity, on the eve of a new millennium, to take stock of where we are going: like the prophets of old crying out to Israel “look at how you treat the widows, the orphans, the refugees,” like Our Lord asking “how did you treat the least of these my brethren... hungry, thirsty, naked, lonely,” like Leo XIII proposing in *Rerum novarum* that how workers are treated is the test of our whole economies, so *John Paul now points to abortion, euthanasia and the reproductive technologies- how we treat the youngest and the oldest, the most vulnerable of people- as the litmus test for our civilization at this turning point in our history.*

Humanity today offers us a truly alarming spectacle, if we consider not only how extensively attacks on life are spreading but also their unheard-of numerical proportion, and the fact that they receive widespread and powerful support.... The twentieth century will have been an era of massive attacks on life, an endless series of wars and a continual taking of innocent human life.... On the eve of the Third Millennium, the challenge facing us is an arduous one: only the concerted efforts of all those who believe in the value of life can prevent a setback of unforeseeable

consequences for civilization.

Greeting *Evangelium vitae* enthusiastically, Paul Johnson in *The Spectator* agreed with the Pope as to what is ultimately at issue: “Crueler things were done [during the totalitarian 20th century], on a larger scale, and with more devilish refinement, than ever before in the sad story of mankind... Still, the totalitarian century is behind us.” He then continues, “But it is already evident what we shall have to fear. In our own century, we allowed vicious men to play with the state, and paid the penalty of 150 million done to death by state violence. In the 21st century, the risk is that we will allow men- and women too- to play with human life itself.”

Johnson agrees with John Paul that there is much more at stake here in the great controversies over biotechnology than is commonly appreciated: in one of the most memorable phrases of his pontificate, the Pope declares that humanity at the turn of the millennium is in the midst of a dramatic conflict between the “culture of death” and the “culture of life.” And he pulls no punches as to its causes, both outside and inside the Church: a wrong notion of freedom, the “eclipse of the sense of God,” a radical undervaluing of human life, all contributing to “a social and cultural climate dominated by secularism.” This practical atheism has its impact upon science as elsewhere:

Once all reference to God has been removed, it is not surprising that the meaning of everything else becomes profoundly distorted. Nature itself, from being *mater*, is now reduced to being *matter*, and is subjected to every kind of manipulation. This is the direction in which a certain technical and scientific way of thinking, prevalent in present-day culture, appears to be leading when

it rejects the very idea that there is a truth of creation which must be acknowledged, or a plan of God for life which must be respected.... by living *as if God did not exist*, man not only loses sight of the mystery of God, but also of the mystery of the world and the mystery of his own being.

Amidst his critique of the hidden violence in supposedly peaceful modern societies, the Pope acknowledges the contribution of science, where there is so much that is “positive for the unborn, the suffering and those in an acute or terminal stage of sickness.” Science also allows couples to exercise responsible parenthood through advances in natural family planning. And various agencies are making the benefits of advanced medicine available in the developing countries; a considerable blessing.

On the other hand, in a society in which violence against the youngest and the oldest is increasingly condoned, the wonderful “new prospects opened up by scientific and technological progress” are turned into “new forms of attacks on the dignity of the human being.” Far from supporting the weak, scientific research in fertility and embryology becomes “almost exclusively preoccupied with developing products which are ever more simple and effective in suppressing life.”

The various *techniques of artificial reproduction*, which would seem to be at the service of life and are frequently used with this intention, actually open the door to new threats against life. Apart from the fact that they are morally unacceptable, since they separate procreation from the fully human context of the conjugal act, these techniques...expose human embryos to very great risks of death..., embryos are over-produced... and [subsequently] destroyed

or used for research which, under the pretext of scientific or medical progress, in fact reduces human life to the level of simple 'biological material' to be freely disposed of.

So prenatal testing, instead of being for diagnosis and treatment, all too often becomes a tool for "eugenic abortion," and handicapped babies even after birth are increasingly at risk. "In this way, we revert to a state of barbarism which one hoped had been left behind forever."

Christ's Gospel of life proposes an alternative to this reversion to neo-paganism. "Human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable. The meaning of life is found in giving and receiving love, and in this light human sexuality and procreation reach their true and full significance. Love also gives meaning to suffering and death; despite the mystery which surrounds them, they can become saving events. *Respect for life requires that science and technology should always be at the service of man and his integral development.*"

Science needs more than big grants, big labs, big kudos: as its power and potential for both good and ill grow exponentially every minute, it more desperately than ever needs moral wisdom and democratic constraints. If we are to be improved and remade by science, Barbie should not be the model.

### II. The eclipse of the sense of God

The scientific developments I have outlined make quite clear that this human remaking is not to be constrained to the realm of the body. The aspiration seems to be for the *total* remaking of man, to alter not only the individual's personality and character but- if such a thing were possible- his soul. We have noted that prenatal testing and abortion are already used eugenically to prevent

the birth of children who are in any minor way "defective"; bearers of the genes for diseases such as diabetes or cystic fibrosis. Professor James Watson, one of the scientists who discovered DNA, recently argued for the extension of this approach if we ever discover a gene for homosexuality. What if scientists could manage to isolate the gene which gives rise to the troublesome human need for meaning, or the gene that accounts for our yearning for God? Eugenics is now poised to move to an altogether more sophisticated level, no longer mopping up nature's mistakes by abortion, but preventing their emergence by modifying and remaking human nature.

Today none of this is far fetched. One critical consideration is that the remaking of man has not emerged incidentally to the general direction taken by contemporary science, but now constitutes one of its major objectives. We are so used to this that many do not appreciate the novelty of the development. There are factors beyond the advance of science which are also at work to facilitate this reshaping. The absence of legislation, or government disinterest, together with the eclipse of God an diminished respect for any normative version of human nature all mean that for some, or many, scientists, the major constraint on human biological experimentation is the fear of catastrophic unforeseen consequences.

We all know of Nietzsche's infamous declaration that "God is dead." In making this claim Nietzsche is sometimes linked to Dostoyevsky, who in his major novels argued that if there is no God, "then everything is permitted." For both writers, but especially for Nietzsche, the more important dimension of this argument is not so much what it becomes possible to do

in the wake of the death of God, as what it becomes possible to *think* and *desire*. In Nietzsche's view, Christian revelation, with its insistence on a higher and greater reality beyond the reality of human life constrains the possibilities of human existence, not least by constraining what it is possible to imagine ourselves doing. For example: attempting to fertilize human ova with the spermatozoa of a rat, or an orangutan, continues to be "unthinkable" in an important sense to faithful Christians- and to many other people. These are not ideas that would normally or spontaneously occur to us, and if and when they did occur, they are not ideas that we would entertain with anything other than horror. But when the sense of God has been eclipsed, this very gradually ceases to be the case. What was once morally repugnant becomes scientifically interesting. The horizon which revelation once placed around existence falls away, leaving man surrounded by "the roar of the boundless." This risks bringing catastrophe and terrible human suffering. But for Nietzsche and those like him, the death of God means a new and exhilarating freedom- to think and do what it was not possible to think and do before.

This wrong and ultimately unsustainable notion of freedom continues to have a powerful appeal for many moderns. We see it clearly in the notion common to many of our disenchanting young people that a rich and fulfilled life is one where the individual has *experienced* as much as possible, irrespective of the nature of those experiences and the harm they may do physically, morally and spiritually. But it is among intellectuals and scientists in our society that Nietzsche's concept of freedom has also been most influential, even when Nietzsche's authorship is not recognized. The hostility of a signifi-

cant group of intellectuals and scientists towards orthodox Christianity, perhaps particularly in the United States, flows in part from the steadfast way in which the Church has resisted this spurious notion of freedom and insisted that science and all scholarly endeavor must be subordinated to the service of authentically human values. But I also suspect that the roots of the animosity between the new class elites and the Church go even deeper than this.

Writing in 1971, when Communist oppression still flourished in Europe and the USSR, George Steiner remarked on “the brain-hammering strangeness of the monotheistic idea.” The concept of the Mosaic God is a unique fact in human history, without parallel in any time or place. It combines an injunction to almost impossible transcendence with a system of moral demands unequalled in history. On the one hand, brain and conscience are commanded to vest belief, obedience, love in an abstraction purer, more inaccessible to ordinary sense than is the highest of mathematics.

In addition to this, there is the moral demand of monotheism. As Steiner says,

Because the words are so familiar, yet too great for ready use, we tend to forget or merely conventionalize the extremity of their call. Only he who loses his life, in the fullest sense of sacrificial self-denial, shall find life. The kingdom is for the naked, for those who have willingly stripped themselves of every belonging, of every sheltering egoism. There is no salvation in the middle places.

It is Steiner’s controversial and daring contention that Western man, recognizing the supreme value of this idea, but filled with self-reproach from his inability to realize it, turned

on the original bearers of the message of the Covenant— the Jews— in a way which ultimately culminated in the Holocaust. “The summons to perfection” which monotheism “sought to impose on the current and currency of Western life” enforced “ideals [and] norms of conduct out of all natural grasp.” Impossible to realize they nevertheless weighed heavily on individual lives, building up in the subconscious deep loathings and murderous resentments. “The mechanism is simple but primordial”:

*We hate most those who hold out to us a goal, an ideal, a visionary promise which, even though we have stretched our muscles to the utmost, we cannot reach, which slips, again and again, just out of the range of our racked fingers— yet, and this is crucial, which remains profoundly desirable, which we cannot reject because we fully acknowledge its supreme value.*

This provocative analysis might help explain the compulsive hostility among new class elites towards the orthodox monotheistic religions which refuse to compromise the hard teachings. I certainly believe it helps explain the systematic attempt of the communists to eradicate Christianity. In a different way it also enables us to identify some of the psychological sources of the opposition and personal hostility to the arguments for design in molecular biology, explained so lucidly to us yesterday by Dr. Michael Behe. As Sir Hans Kornberg, a distinguished British biologist, remarked at a seminar in Boston this week, “For scientists teleology is like a lady of ill repute. No one wants to be seen with her in public, but many use her by night.” Even in the age of science, where the sense of God has been eclipsed or weakened for many Westerners, the claims of monotheistic revelation

continue to trouble and annoy those who would wish to be free of its demands, to escape successfully from their guilt. Our task in this situation must be to keep the reality and central importance of the one true God in the public mind, in spite of the constant hostile pressure among the elites and the cheerful and careless agnosticism of others. Many of our own young Catholics will need to be given good reasons for believing in God’s existence and shown this love in our practice. In doing all this, we must recognize that we cannot hope for easy approval. But if science and technology are to serve human life rather than dominate it, we have no choice. The mistaken individualistic notion of freedom so influential in our age must be opposed by authentic freedom linked to truth and producing real human service. Science and society will benefit from this in the long run, although the working out of these tensions over the generations will be a fascinating struggle, with the *Brave New World* of Aldous Huxley seeming a likelier immediate destination than the grim constraints of George Orwell’s *1984*.

### III. What is to be done?

A pamphlet of Lenin in 1902 was entitled *What is to be done?* This remains the crucial question, although mapping the territory and analyzing the situation are essential prerequisites for action, and I still wish to say a few words about the crucial group in this discussion, i.e. Generation X, those born between 1963 and 1980 and their children.

They take for granted the fact that they live in a scientific-technological world, and find it difficult to imagine living without the advantages of such a world. They would be dimly aware that 95% of all scientists in human history are now living ( still a small minority of the genera-

tion), but a little vexed by the origins of the universe, the neurochemistry of consciousness, genetic planning of the species or the nature of matter, much less by any moral or theological problems attendant on such scientific work. In fact most have never been involved in a church, or even a Sunday school (this is certainly true in Australia; perhaps less true in the United States); they have watched 5000 hours of television by the age of five. Many have suffered from the divorce of their parents and are reluctant to make life-long commitments, while inclined to delay child-bearing. Feminism is no longer a burning issue, because male and female equality is taken for granted and it is assumed that women should be church ministers. At least in Australia, motherhood has replaced homosexuality as a topic that should not be discussed. The educated among Generation X are also seriously tempted by post-modernism; inclined, like us, to the easier short-term solutions, to relativism, to avoiding the examination of grand themes on the meaning of life. Some of course insist that there are no such truths.

The overwhelming majority of Generation X still identify themselves as Christian; a bigger majority are monotheists. In times of public crises many turn to the Christian churches. Interestingly enough, the irreligious minority does not like to be described as neo-pagan (which it certainly is), probably because it senses that majority opinion is opposed to paganism.

A preliminary conclusion is that it will take much wise and persevering effort and more than a touch of luck and grace to enlist majority support among Generations X and X + 1 to oppose the Culture of Death on abortion and euthanasia, although the struggle to defend heterosexual

marriage should be less difficult. In the democracies, religious leadership to inform public opinion and legislative struggle and political activity will be needed to constrain the more grotesque forms of experimentation touching humans, (with some hope of success) and we should be able to achieve continuing majority belief in the One True God, provided we realize that this, and more particularly the Divinity of Christ within the Catholic community, will be severely contested.

A couple of small personal reminiscences will help explain my approach in listing my recommendations.

My work as a priest and then a bishop has meant that I have travelled a lot by air, both within Australia and internationally. I always travel in uniform, dressed as a priest, because it pays to advertise. During long flights most in the next seat do not want to talk much, but there are some exceptions. One was an Australian businessman who seemed prosperous, was certainly confident and wanted to talk, indeed philosophize. He had some land he thought the Church might be interested to buy, etc., etc. He then explained that the secret of success in life and in business was to identify what are the few key issues, and find the right answers to these few. If these right solutions are found, generally the multifarious secondary problems fall into place.

My second reminiscence draws on many years as a junior school football coach, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Experience taught me that when the game started to flow against my young team, many players became rattled, did strange things like attempting the most basic procedures. The only way to play against strong opposition was to remember and follow our basic ground rules.

When those were in place, then we could afford to be more adventurous: we did not always win, but we generally used our strengths to best advantage.

Church people can often be more like my young football players than my business acquaintance. They can forget the fundamental point that our success and failure can only be judged in Christ Our Lord's terms.

My first recommendation is about ways and means; to encourage every variety of Catholic teacher to do two things: to use all available technology and so reach out beyond the Catholic community, as well as instructing committed and cultural Catholics. It has often been remarked that the Protestant Reformation would have been impossible without the invention of printing. Luther was a master publicist. It was the Lutherans who first invented catechisms, while the Catholics were hampered by their use of Latin, and by poor and infrequent popular teaching.

We were behind the play then technologically, but risk having learnt that lesson too well by too much reliance now on printed media (books and Catholic newspapers) and speaking only to the Catholic community, in an age of radio, television, videos and the Internet, and many interested, uncommitted outsiders.

In the Western world there will continue to be an exodus from faith, or at least from regular practice. But if we face outwards in our parishes and agencies through service, and use technology and the secular media to explain our morals and our faith (something the Holy Father does so outstandingly), there should be a balancing stream of converts and returnees, many of them damaged by contemporary society and others, while very successful in the eyes of the world, still personally empty and

dissatisfied.

The regular practice of religion now parallels the patterns of employment across generations since the Industrial Revolution. Once generations of men in the one family had the same type of job. With the rise of prosperity, migration and social mobility, many sons held jobs different from their fathers, but often for a lifetime. Now many women and men have a variety of jobs in one lifetime, and too many have no jobs or long periods of unemployment. Being a committed Catholic will be more like this, with many committed parents seeing their children drift from practice, and individuals shifting position across their lifetime; all of this because of the steady flow of news and views hostile to Christian belief and practice, and because of the weakened sense of tradition in the West. This is another reason to reach beyond the churchgoers.

As a digression, I am inclined to think that in this age of fast, scientifically induced change, we should make an explicit and regular appeal, counter-cultural as it is, to tradition, "the democracy of the dead," pointing out the advantages of knowing where we come from and of knowing the wisdom that has sustained men and women for millennia. I believe there is a religious market for tradition, especially among the young!

Whatever of tradition, when I preach each Sunday in my cathedral I reach some hundreds of believers, who need encouragement and information. With articles or interviews or a few paragraphs in a secular newspaper, or even some minutes on television or the radio, we reach tens or hundreds of thousands. Recently an elderly priest writer in Sydney launched his own website on the Internet, accompanied by good press in our national newspapers. He

claimed 32,000 hits in the first 36 hours, and 50,000 hits by the end of the first week!

Second level consequences also follow from the involvement of Catholic teachers in public debate and discussion on issues important to us or society. Churchgoers are generally heartened by these signs of life and Catholic youngsters are reminded of our claims, of where they should belong.

Such activity also focuses on where the basic tension should be, i.e. between the Church and the world, and not between Catholics. Public differences among Catholics are sometimes necessary in these times of division; but they are unfortunate, never more than a second best.

Last year a coalition of all the Christian leaders in my state of Victoria objected to the exhibition in our government-financed state art gallery of a blasphemous photo of a crucifix in urine. As Catholic Archbishop I also lodged a legal objection in our Supreme Court. Predictably we lost the law case, but unexpectedly the entire show, consisting almost entirely of pornography and blasphemy, was closed down and withdrawn.

The moral of the story for present purposes is that I received overwhelming Catholic support, public prayers for our campaign in a Jewish synagogue, and letters of endorsement from the Moslem community and from some religious congregations not usually listed among my public admirers.

More idiosyncratically my second recommendation in this age of science is to insist that priests are thoroughly formed, not just in sound Catholic doctrine, but more importantly in the practice of prayer and an understanding and love of Christian spirituality. We need God-centered

priests.

In this Vatican II age of the laity such a high priority for priests might be politically incorrect, even hazardous. But Our Lord himself was quite explicit about the need for fishers of men, for shepherds and for workers in the harvest (although this final reference is capable of wider meanings).

As the pressures against full Catholic living continue from outside and within the Catholic community, we shall continue to need a network of local leaders who know that the central external challenge is against God; who cannot be knocked off balance into believing the threats are elsewhere, much less inveigled into believing the answers to our problems will be found by "improving"/softening up Christ's teachings.

Regular prayer is necessary for this steadiness as well as a clear head, accurate knowledge of the tradition and personal and intellectual self-confidence. To achieve this every priest needs a sound formation in philosophy, with Thomism as a significant constituent, and a goodly number of years in an updated version of the Tridentine seminary, which was the greatest gift to the Church from that long, difficult but profoundly important Council that promoted the Counter-Reformation.

Whatever the gains and losses might be in the future in the Catholic universities and universities more generally; whatever the consequences of the convulsive changes in religious life, decline, disappearance and vigorous new life (often in canonically hybrid communities), the parish network has to survive. And its leaders have to be prepared for the bleakest winter as well as for the springtime.

Many other things might be said, particularly on the difficulties of

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a community who finds its truth in a two thousand year old apostolic tradition; whose Redeemer and Founder lived at the beginning of our era. All this in an age geared to the future, to progress and innovation.

But enough is enough.

A final word about the importance of maintaining Catholic self-confidence, a worthy sense of identity as the human framework for the flame of faith, for personal conversion.

### IV. Conclusion

We should not be daunted by our situation, remembering the Christ we follow and the saints, martyrs and writers of two millennia who fire our imagination. As G.K. Chesterton reminded us, "It was no flock of sheep the Christian shepherd was leading, but a herd of bulls and tigers, of terrible ideals and devouring doctrines." May the good God preserve an increasing number of us from the tyranny of personal consciences shaped by metaphysical muddle, fear of public opinion and an all too easy hedonism.

May the same good God preserve more and more of us from the pathetic illusions that religious vitality can be repurchased without duty, discipline and explicit faith; that our guilts can be banished without repentance and God's forgiveness.

The only way forward is to embrace the love, the steel and the

romance of orthodoxy. With the grace of God, prayer, learning and hard work, it is not beyond our capacity to have "the equilibrium of a man behind wildly rushing horses, seeming to stoop this way and to sway that way, yet in every attitude having the grace of statuary and the accuracy of arithmetic." We must never forget the orthodox church was never respectable, never took the tame course.

Let me conclude with that famous and inspiring passage from Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*.

To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom— that would indeed have been simple. It is always simple to fall; there are an infinity of angles at which one falls, only one at which one stands. To have fallen into any one of the fads from Gnosticism to Christian Science would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling and erect,

even and especially in an age of science.

### NOTES

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, 1.3
2. *Evangelium vitae*, 17, 91.
3. *The Spectator*, April 4, 1995. 22.
4. *Evangelium vitae*, 50.
5. *Ibid.*, 21.
6. *Ibid.* 22-23.
7. *Ibid.*, 26.
8. *Ibid.*, 97.
9. *Ibid.*, 4.
10. *Ibid.*, 13.
11. *Ibid.*, 14.
12. *Ibid.*, 81.
13. George Steiner, *In Bluebeard's Castle*. London, 1971. 36.
14. *Ibid.*
15. *Ibid.*, 39.
16. *Ibid.*, 38-42.
17. *Ibid.*, 41.
18. Website address is: [www.costello.au.com](http://www.costello.au.com)
19. G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (1908). New York, 1990. 100.
20. *Ibid.*, 100-01.
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# “Alpha and Omega: Reconciling Science and Faith

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Charles J Chaput, O. F. M. Cap.

## 1. THE VOICE FROM THE WHIRLWIND

First of all, I want to thank you for having me as your guest tonight. I’ve admired the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars for many years. I know many of you personally and consider you friends, so this isn’t a routine official welcome. I want you to know you’re most welcome here in Denver, and you have my best wishes and prayers for a very fruitful conference.

So far today we’ve heard three outstanding presentations on cosmology and biology. Now, to quote the great English theologian John Cleese, it’s time for something completely different. By training, I’m neither a scholar nor a scientist. But I am a pastor. As a pastor, I deal with the practical effects of this theme—faith and science—everyday. My job is to preach and teach the truth about the human person. The United States in the late 1990s is the premier scientific power in the world. American culture is dominated by technology – the child of science — in a way which is unparalleled in history. And Americans are the greatest pragmatists and toolmakers in human experience. That’s part of our national personality. We’re inquisitive. We’re innovative. We like results, and science is a profoundly useful tool. So to the degree that faith and science are perceived to differ about the nature of the human person, every pastor faces a challenge in his ministry.

I believe the Holy Father is right when he says that no fundamental

conflict can exist between science and religious faith, whatever the appearance to the contrary. Truth can’t contradict itself, and both science and faith are means to discovering truth about creation. But their estrangement is often still very real, and that’s what I’d like to reflect on tonight. Why is there a “disconnect” between them, and how do we fix it?

In trying to answer that, I’m going to observe the good scientific principle of parsimony and keep my thoughts simple and short. In fact, I have only three basic observations, and then perhaps we can open the floor to questions and general discussion, because I came here as much to learn as to teach. But I want to approach my first point in a round-about way. We heard earlier this afternoon about the cosmological order and biological reductionism. I’d like to talk instead about the theology of B movies.

How many of you remember what a B movie is? How many of us here tonight were born in the 1940s or earlier? A good number. Those of us who are in the general vicinity of 50 have something uniquely in common: We’re the first generation of the atomic era. Our memories are conditioned by that. Some of you will recall the air-raid drills of the 1950s. Remember how we would climb under our desks at school, hoping they’d protect us from a nuclear blast?

And some of you may also remember the films. I don’t mean the big-screen, Cadillac releases like *Ben Hur*. I mean the low-budget, black and white titles like *7-the Blob*, which starred a giant, man-eating

amoeba; *Them*, which starred giant, man-eating ants; and *The Attack of the 50 Foot Woman*, which starred a giant, taxi-crushing Amazon. I’ve always believed that painting, music, literature, architecture – each of these is a window on the psychological and spiritual state of a people. The popular media, like B movies, serve exactly the same purpose. They’re clues to our hopes and anxieties – crude ones, it’s true, but sometimes amazingly accurate. In most of the B movies of the 1950s, a scientific accident — usually involving radiation — triggers an out-of-control monster who’s defeated only by luck, or by an even more ingenious scientific countermeasure. Each of these movies points to a deep popular ambivalence toward science. We desire the power science brings. But we also fear its consequences, because deep-down we instinctively realize that we lack the ability to control what we unleash. Like Pandora, we’ve opened a box filled with surprises — and not all of them are welcome. We’ve released a whirlwind of change that threatens to unhinge all our notions of coherence.

The main value today of most of these old B films is curing insomnia on late night cable TV. But I mention them because one of these films stands out as a very interesting anomaly. How many of you have seen *The Incredible Shrinking Man*? Does anyone remember the ending? It’s pretty unusual.

Here’s the plot: The hero is an average, innocent, middle-class fellow who, one day, gets hit by a random burst of cosmic radiation. That’s all the explanation we ever get. A few days later, he notices that his clothes are a bit loose. Gradually he discovers that he’s actually shrinking. He goes to the doctor. The doctor does tests, gives him a shot

and reassures him that science will find a cure. But it doesn't. He continues to shrink until he's the size of a mouse, and then an insect. At this point he has a fairly standard, B-movie, life-and-death struggle with a house spider — which now seems the size of an elephant, by his scale. He kills the spider, but the effort exhausts him. He falls into a deep sleep, and when he awakes, he has evaporated to virtually nothing. In the movie's final scene, he drags himself to a basement window and looks out — and then upward — through a forest of grass, to a night sky blazing with stars. And this is what he says:

"I looked up, as if somehow I would grasp the heavens. The universe — worlds beyond number, God's silver tapestry — spread across the night. And in that moment, I knew the answer to the riddle of the infinite. I had thought in terms of man's own limited dimension. I had presumed upon nature. That existence begins and ends — this is man's conception, not nature's. And I felt my body dwindling, melting, becoming nothing. My fears melted away, and in their place came acceptance. All this vast majesty of creation had to mean something — and then I meant something too; yes, smaller than the smallest, I meant something too. To God, there is no zero . . . "

Now, I certainly don't want to invest a low-budget science-fiction film with the moral gravity of the ages. Nor do I usually have the time to watch anything on TV, let alone *The Incredible Shrinking Man*. But the message of this strange little story is almost unique among its genre: Life has meaning, no matter how battered or small; God is good, and the universe reflects His design; and creation is infinitely more vast and mysterious than our ability to control

or even understand it. It sounds familiar, doesn't it? Let me remind you where we've heard that message before: Job 38 and 40.

"Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind: ... Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? ... Have you commanded the morning since your days began, and caused the dawn to know its place... ? Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like His ... ?"

And this is my first point. The appropriate posture of man and woman before God, and science before God's creation, is humility — the virtue which Bernard of Clairvaux called *verissima sui agnitio*, "the truest knowledge of oneself," and Newman described as the "reverential spirit of learners and disciples." Even for those who do not know God or do not believe in Him, the lesson is the same: Science uninformed by modesty in the face of its own limitations will end by dehumanizing the humanity it intends to serve.

Pride, including scientific pride, kills the human spirit. The evidence of this century is irrefutable. We are not gods. We will never be gods. And to be in right relationship with nature, we must never seek to be gods. It may not be intentional, but it's certainly very curious, that the shrinking man of our 1950s movie only discovers truth and peace as his former self literally melts away.

### 11. THE BEGINNING OF WISDOM

The first point leads to my second: Human happiness is not a function of worldly knowledge, including scientific knowledge. Knowledge sometimes creates as much misery as comfort. We all know hundreds of facts which really add nothing to our lives. Does it help you to know that

the surface temperature of Venus will boil lead? Unless you're an exobiologist, probably not. No, happiness flows from meaning, the discernment of which requires wisdom.

Let me share with you another story. Most of us know Taylor Caldwell through her novel about St. Luke, *Dear and Glorious Physician*. But she wrote many other things, and one of her lesser known but most intriguing novels is a book called — if I remember it correctly — *Dialogues with the Devil*. The structure of the book is simple. It's an exchange of letters between two polite but estranged brothers — in this case, the archangels Lucifer and Michael — who argue over the policies of their Father, who is, of course, God.

In one of his letters, Lucifer describes a room in the afterlife reserved for scientists who have knowingly and willfully rejected God. It has no demons. No fires. No instruments of torture or discomfort of any kind. In fact, just the opposite. Every tool of scientific inquiry is immediately available. So is every reference book. So are unlimited data about anything which any scientist would ever hope to know. Only one thing is missing— purpose. In rejecting God, they've rejected the One Being who gives context and meaning to all knowledge; the Whole who completes all the fragments of information which science laboriously acquires and studies. That's their eternity. They know everything ... and yet they also know it's empty without the one priceless piece they've thrown away forever.

That's an unflattering portrait of some scientists, I admit. My only defense in using it is that I'm sure the room set aside for bad archbishops is even worse. You get the idea, though: Human happiness may be enriched or advanced by scientific

knowledge, but it's not finally about knowledge. It's about who we are, and why we're here. Science can't address that. Despite all its power, science has some very severe limits. Quantum physics can predict that certain particles will behave in a certain way with a superb degree of reliability ... but it really has no idea why they behave that way. Science can't even attempt to answer the ethical questions it raises, because of the moral neutrality it enforces upon itself

Ironically, it was the great scientist Pascal who observed that "the heart has its reasons which reason cannot know." Science is fundamentally - by its nature - inadequate to the hungers of the heart. Poetry and art and religious faith speak to those hungers, and those hungers are very real, no matter how many attempts are made to explain them away as biochemically based projections or neuroses. You see, we can live without a lot of data. But we can't live without a purpose. And science has no competence to provide one. That in itself is tremendously revealing of the kind of creatures God designed us to be.

I have one final, cautionary thought about science, and it has to do with its bloodline. "Science" is an interesting word. It traces itself back to the Latin verb *scire* (to know) and the Latin noun *scientia* (knowledge). Science, defined in popular terms, is knowledge covering general truths or the operation of general laws - especially as obtained, tested and refined through the scientific method. What science has done in the 500 years since Francis Bacon lived and wrote, is to provide living proof for his claim that "knowledge is power." Bacon is the earliest salesman for today's "knowledge societies." Knowledge works. It's useful. American technology is a global

witness to it. Scientific knowledge has brought us many tremendous benefits, from antibiotics to electric lights. But the spirit of utility at the heart of applied science is something with which none of us should feel entirely comfortable. Knowledge may be power, but it's not the same as moral character, joy, love, freedom or wisdom - the things that sustain the human heart. Today's science and technology, in fact, have an ambiguous family history. In *The Abolition of Man*, C. S. Lewis reminds us that, "The serious magical endeavor and the serious scientific endeavor are twins: One was sickly and died, the other strong and thrived. But they were twins. They were born of the same impulse. . . "

I'm not sure many scientists would welcome the idea that Great Grand Uncle Albert may have been a sorcerer. But Lewis, who was an impeccable scholar, makes a pretty strong case. "For the wise men of old," he says, "the cardinal problem had been how to conform the soul to reality, and the solution had been knowledge, self-discipline and virtue. For magic and applied science alike, the problem is how to subdue reality to the wishes of men: The solution is a technique; and both, in the practice of this technique, are ready to do things hitherto regarded as disgusting and impious . . . " If this sounds alarmist, let's remember that eugenics; partial birth abortion; physician-assisted suicide; cloning; cross-species experiments; and genetic manipulation were all just crazy ideas for low budget, B-grade horror films when C. S. Lewis was writing 40 or 50 years ago. Now they're here. Now they're real.

When you go home tonight, or back to your hotel room, open your Bible to Psalm III or to Sirach, chapter 1. They're very similar. Listen to these words of the Psalmist, which I've

taken at random from the text: "Great are the works of the Lord ... full of honor and majesty is His work ... holy and terrible is His name! ... Blessed is the man who fears the Lord. . . " because "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . . " And then listen to these verses from Sirach, 1: 11 and 12: "The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing./ The fear of the Lord delights the heart, and gives gladness and joy and long life."

It is natural for the human heart to find joy in the fear of the Lord." And by fear I mean the awe we instinctively feel in the presence of something great, mysterious and beautiful. The universe is more than dead matter and impersonal equations. Wisdom enables us to see this. And wisdom is what we lack when reason separates itself from faith. It's a kind of poverty, for too many scientists, that their vocabulary for understanding truth covers only one dialect.

### **111. I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA**

If you have a spare summer day when you've visiting Denver sometime, here's a suggestion: Get up at 4 am and drive west on Interstate 70 about an hour until you reach U.S. Route 6. Take 6 west to the top of Loveland Pass. Park your car, wait for the sunrise, and then hike north along the Continental Divide trail. Every great artist has a "signature," some habit of craft that's unique and which everybody immediately recognizes. For Van Gogh, it's probably his brush strokes in a painting like *Starry Night*. The high Rockies at sunrise - that's God's signature. Anyone who comes away from a moment like that without sensing that nature is somehow sacramental, something sacred which

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hints at Someone even greater than itself, just doesn't have a pulse.

I began my comments tonight by asking why the estrangement between science and faith still persists, and how we might fix it. I suspect that religious believers sometimes make matter worse by expecting too much from Scripture and tradition.

To quote C. S. Lewis again:

“Christians ... have the bad habit of talking as if revelation existed to gratify curiosity by illuminating all creation so that it becomes self-explanatory and all questions are answered. But revelation appears to me to be purely practical, to be addressed to the particular animal, Fallen Man, for the relief of his urgent necessities - not to the spirit of inquiry in man for the gratification of his liberal curiosity. We know that God has visited and redeemed His people — and that tells us just about as much about the general nature of creation, as a dose given to one sick hen on a big farm tells it about the general character of farming in England.”

In his statements on Galileo, evolution, and in a hundred different other environments, Pope John Paul II has recognized the legitimate autonomy science must exercise in its pursuit of truths about creation, and as recently as his Wednesday audience of Sept. 16, he stressed again that the Church is the friend of any sincere and ethical human research. This merely echoes what Vatican II taught so articulately in its Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et Spes*):

“... [M]ethodical research in all branches of knowledge, provided it is carried out in a truly scientific manner and does not override moral laws, can never conflict with the faith, because the things of the world

and the things of faith derive from the same God. The humble and persevering investigator of the secrets of nature is being led, as it were, by the hand of God in spite of himself, for it is God, the conservator of all things, who made them what they are” (36).

From the perspective of science, of course, the rationalist-materialist prejudices which scientists inherited from the Enlightenment continue to drive many of them away from the deeper truth found in religious faith. But as others at this conference have already noted, times are changing as the “argument from design” has gained new strength. Anyone who hasn't seen the August 1998 issue of *Scientific American* should pick up a copy and browse through the article entitled “Beyond Physics: Renowned Scientists Contemplate the Evidence for God.” While the writer certainly doesn't take a Catholic approach to these issues, listen to the following quotations from the article:

“There is a huge amount of data supporting the existence of God,” asserts George Ellis, a cosmologist at the University of Cape Town and an active Quaker ... “The science of the 20th century is showing us, if anything, what is unknowable using the scientific method — what is reserved for religious beliefs,” [adds] Mitchell P. Marcus, chairman of computer science at the University of Pennsylvania. “In mathematics and information theory, we can now guarantee that there are truths out there that we cannot find ...

“The inability of science to provide a basis for meaning, purpose, value and ethics is evidence of the necessity of religion,” says Allan Sandage [one of the fathers of modern astronomy] — evidence strong enough to persuade him to give up

his atheism late in life. [Meanwhile, George] Ellis, who similarly turned to religion only after he was well established in science, raises other mysteries that cannot be solved by logic alone: “The reasons for the existence of the universe, the existence of any physical laws at all and the nature of the physical laws that do hold — science takes all of these for granted, and so it cannot investigate them.”

“Religion is very important for answering these questions,” Allan Sandage concludes.

This brings me to my final point. The way science will regain its soul, the way science and faith will begin one day to work together to serve the truth and advance real human dignity, is through the witness of intelligent women and men of faith, like yourselves. The Fellowship of Catholic Scholars has come a long way in a short time. Believe me when I say that God is using all of you as missionaries to a new *areopagus*, where people have a desperate need for God but don't have the language to even ask for your help,

Your faith in Christ Crucified — as scholars and writers, teachers and scientists — is a very powerful form of evangelization. You preach the Christ who is Alpha and Omega, the beginning and end of all things—the One in whom the natural and the divine, the spiritual and the material, science and faith, are reconciled. I mentioned earlier that poetry, like art and religious faith, is one of those things that speaks to the hungers of the human heart. I'm not much good at reading poetry in public, but there's a poem by Rainer Marie Rilke — it's called “Evening”— which captures so beautifully some of the things we've been talking about tonight. I encourage you to read it and reflect on it. Listen just to

the final verse:

To you is left (unspeakably confused) your life, gigantic, ripening, full of fears, so it, now hemmed in, now grasping all, is changed in you by turns to stone and stars.

This is the human predicament: part clay, part glory; a story told crudely in low budget films and elegantly in high poetry; studied and measured by science; redeemed by God's son ... and lived by each of us. The reconciliation of faith and science, I suspect, takes place first in our own hearts. And it begins when we say "I believe" — and we mean it.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

#### ADDENDUM

#### EVENING

Slowly now the evening changes his garments held for him by a rim of ancient trees; you gaze: and the landscape divides and leaves you, one sinking and one rising toward the sky.

And you are left, to none belonging wholly, not so dark as a silent house, nor quite so surely pledged unto eternity as that which grows to star and climbs the night

To you is left (unspeakably confused) your life, gigantic, ripening, full of fears, so it, now hemmed in, now grasping all, is changed in you by turns to stone and stars.

Rainer Marie Rilke

## Remarks by Kenneth D. Whitehead on Acceptance of the John Cardinal Wright Award of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

Denver, Colorado  
September 26, 1998

I am deeply honored by the receipt of this award from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, most of all because the Fellowship is an association which places ahead of everything else in its service to Christ the defense and illustration of the truths of the Catholic faith—the authentic deposit of faith as it has been handed down and interpreted by the Magisterium of the Church. For the Fellowship, the truth which is Christ comes ahead of mere academic and scholarly attainments, however laudable they might otherwise be.

This work of the Fellowship, the defense of Catholic truth, is especially important today. We live in an era that has seen and is seeing the most thorough-going and extensive dissent from and denial of Catholic truth since Arian or Reformation times. The fact that the Church has been through it all before does not make today's task for the Fellowship any easier.

In the year 359 A. D., the pope, Liberius, had been pressured to accede to the demands of the Arian emperor, Constantius II, to approve a Creed from which the *homo-ousios*, or "one in being" ("consubstantial"), of the Council of Nicaea had been deliberately excised. Open bribery

having failed, Pope Liberius was physically abducted by night on imperial orders and removed from Rome, brow-beaten in person by the emperor, possibly tortured, and finally exiled; although later allowed to return to Rome, he was nevertheless effectively marginalized and silenced.

Meanwhile, except for a handful of bishops such as St. Hilary of Poitiers who were in exile—and St. Athanasius of Alexandria who was hiding in the Egyptian desert after having escaped from the imperial soldiery who forced their way into his Church at Vespers in an attempt to capture him—all the bishops of the Catholic Church in both East and West were summoned by the Arian emperor to appear at one of two "councils" convoked by the latter in Rimini in Italy and Seleucia in Asia Minor. At these two councils the Catholic bishops were all obliged by the emperor to subscribe to an Arianizing creed.

The bishops were not allowed to leave either Rimini or Seleucia to go home until they had subscribed to the creed put before them by the imperial officers. History records, sadly, that virtually all of the bishops signed it, thus, in effect, officially repudiating Nicaea. From his hiding place in the desert, St. Athanasius denounced and condemned all these proceedings in the steady stream of polemics which did not cease to issue from his pen (and on which much of our knowledge of the whole affair is based).

The Catholic Church had apparently now come completely under Arian control as far as her existing leadership was concerned; the authentic faith was outlawed. A disinterested observer would have reasonably concluded that the Catholic faith was finished for all practical purposes. Perhaps the only thing that

could be salvaged from the whole disastrous affair was the fact that, owing to the marginalization and silencing of Pope Liberius, at least the Roman see was not compromised by any involvement in the disgraceful false councils of Rimini and Seleucia, the outcomes of which the pope would surely have been powerless to affect in any case.

The lesson of the year 359 for defenders of the faith today is surely this: don't give up. The Church has been there before. The defense of Catholic truth, even by those with little immediate influence or power, remains important, whatever the immediate prospects for success. Christ did promise that the gates of hell would not prevail, all right, but in this particular instance it is not clear *how* they would have failed to prevail if it had not been for the courage and determination of St. Athanasius and his scattered allies—who came to include even Pope Liberius again, after the death of the emperor Constantius in the year 361. The “Arian Catholic Church” did not prevail, in fact, beyond the lifetime of the Roman emperor who attempted to impose it by force.

The problem today, of course, is not anything like the soldiery of an Arian emperor attempting to impose an alien faith on the Church, but rather the power of today's all-pervasive secular culture, which both undermines Catholic truth and provides enormously tempting worldly alternatives to it. In today's subjectivist culture of “choice,” even many Catholics evidently follow the culture instead of the Church, and have apparently now come to believe that they do not have to profess the faith in the sense in which the Church still understands and teaches it; rather, they believe they can profess it in the sense in which *they* understand and accept it. The teachings of

the Magisterium have become inoperative for huge numbers of them; now it's what the individual decides upon “in conscience.”

What is this except Protestant “private judgment” in a new guise? In theological circles today it goes by the name of “dissent.” It is endemic among Catholics since the culture decided so massively in 1968 that the Church was simply wrong about birth control. But if the Church could be wrong about birth control, she could be wrong about other things as well; and few have failed to grasp the compelling logic of this. Once Catholics began to dissent from Church teachings against birth control, they inevitably moved on—and soon—to dissent from other Church teachings as well.

Fr. Andrew Greeley tells us that no more than 10 to 12 percent of American Catholics accept the teaching of Pope Paul VI's encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. I myself suspect the case is probably as bad or worse with regard to the teaching of Pope John Paul II's *Ordinatio sacerdotalis* to the effect that the Church has no power to ordain women to the sacred priesthood. The pope has solemnly declared this teaching to be part of the deposit of the faith, and the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has declared it to be irreformable. Nevertheless, today's Catholics simply go on massively dissenting from it anyway, just as they dissented from *Humanae Vitae* 30 years ago. They think the pope could perfectly well allow female ordination if he wanted to, and that it must be some streak of Polish stubbornness that prevents him from doing so.

Such are the fruits of 30 years of tolerated dissent. All of us have seen the polls on, for example, the disbelief of so many modern Catholics in the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist, where it has been asserted

that no more than perhaps 30 percent of modern Catholics any longer believe this—surely “essential”—teaching of the Church. The trouble is that, once it has been decided (or conceded) that “less important” or “non-essential” teachings may safely be dissented from—that only the “core” teachings of the faith are “essential”—then these “essential” teachings too are inevitably going to be dissented from as well, because, after all, *who decides* which teachings are “essential” and which are “non-essential”? Once again it is the individual exercising private judgment; the Magisterium has already been eliminated as a factor.

This is precisely the issue the Holy Father has been attempting to address in his recent document *Ad Tuendam Fidem*: namely, the fact that the teachings of the Church constitute a seamless garment which must be taken as a whole. There may be different degrees or levels of teaching, all right, depending upon their importance or centrality—those to be believed with theological faith, those to be definitively held, and those to be assented to with loyal submission of will and intellect—but all the Church's teachings without exception are to be *believed* by Catholics. Those who dissent from any of them are no more Catholics in the full sense than the ancient Arians were Catholics in the full sense. St. Athanasius explained it all for us once and for all.

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, in its fine commentary on the pope's *Ad Tuendam Fidem*, points out that, even before it was solemnly defined in 1870, the doctrine of the primacy and the infallibility of the pope was still binding upon the belief of Catholics; it was *going to be defined*, after all, just as—the Congregation does not fail to point out—the teaching on female

non-ordination could well be defined tomorrow as well. How does today's theory of licit dissent from non-infallible teachings deal with those teachings which are in fact infallible although not yet defined?

No: just as Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* #25 very clearly taught, we are obliged to believe all the Church's teachings if we want to be Catholics in the full sense; we are not free to pick and choose among them; it is vain to speak of a "Catholic identity" which does not include belief in the Church's teachings. As the same Vatican II's *Dignitatis Humanae* #14 taught, "the Catholic Church is by the will of Christ the teacher of truth," and *all* her authentic teachings are true. Some of them may be more important and more central to the meaning of the faith, but *all* of them are true. We cannot simply decide on our own that it is permitted to dissent from those we have decided are "less important"; the idea of such dissent has been ruinous; once we are allowed to pick at threads deemed (by us) to be "non-essential," the whole garment of faith becomes unraveled.

More and more people are finally beginning to see this. The faith is going to come back. In his *Redemptio Missio*, Pope John Paul II even speaks of a "great new springtime for Christianity." The Pope was speaking about the Church in Africa and Asia when he said this, but we can see signs of the same thing here as well. I live in the diocese of Arlington, Virginia, where most people realize there is a remarkable resurgence of faith in and practice of authentic Catholicism going on right now. On the airplane coming to Denver I was reading a Catholic News Service story about the new "boom in vocations" here in the Denver archdiocese; in the short time I have been here in Den-

ver, having met some of you, I already begin to appreciate why.

So we must not be discouraged by the continuing troubles and obstacles that beset us. There is work enough—and prayer!—for everyone. In the remainder of my remarks on this occasion, I want to speak briefly both about my co-awardee, Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn, and about the bishop for whom this award was named, Cardinal John Wright, whom I had the privilege of knowing.

In his own remarks, Msgr. Wrenn spoke about the collaboration which he and I began during the consultations for the National Catechetical Directory in the 1970s. I don't think many people appreciate the extent of Msgr. Wrenn's achievement at that time. He and I and several others prepared a large number of amendments to be substituted for many of the defective paragraphs in the draft Directory. Through Cardinal Cooke and the New York state bishops, most of these amendments were adopted by the bishops at their November meeting, and the result was a National Catechetical Directory that ended up being so sound—after the subsequent final Roman revision—that the catechetical establishment no longer even wanted to use it. Msgr. Wrenn personally drafted the famous amendment on memorization, which the catechetical establishment had so strongly hoped to keep out of the document entirely.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, by the way, which disclaims any concern for catechetical "methods," nevertheless strongly commends at least one particular "method," i.e., memorization, by the very fact of producing its "In Brief" doctrinal summaries which it recommends *be* memorized (CCC #22).

One of the other great achievements of Msgr. Wrenn, barely hinted at in his own remarks, concerns the work he did in helping insure a sound English translation of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. I do not know to this day how he secured a copy of the "inclusive language" translation of the *Catechism* which was originally prepared and sent to Rome. But I vividly recall the urgency with which he dragooned a number of us that summer of 1993 into helping him analyze and expose this very faulty translation. I had other things to do at the time, and did not want to get dragged into something like this, but when I actually saw the translation being proposed, I was as appalled as Msgr. Wrenn was at what was about to be visited upon English-speaking Catholics.

The joint article about this defective *Catechism* translation written by Msgr. Wrenn and myself was published in *Crisis* magazine in this country in its issue of November, 1993; it appeared simultaneously in publications in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, and Ireland; and it was reprinted as an Appendix to our jointly authored book, *Flawed Expectations: The Reception of the Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Ignatius Press, 1996). We think it had some effect.

In fact, one of the great treasures in the possession of Msgr. Wrenn, which grew out of this whole translation affair, was the letter he eventually received from Archbishop (now Cardinal) Christoph Schönborn of Vienna, the General Editor of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, who wrote commending Msgr. Wrenn on bringing the errors of this translated text to the attention of the authorities. "You *wrang* the alarm"—spelled W-R-A-N-G—Archbishop Schönborn wrote to him.

This letter is now framed and

hanging on Msgr. Wrenn's wall. It is ironic that two German-speaking prelates, Cardinals Ratzinger and Schönborn, should have been the ones most responsible for insuring that we finally did get an authentic English language version of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The other person I want to commemorate, in concluding these Remarks on receiving the John Cardinal Wright Award from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars, is Cardinal John J. Wright himself. As I mentioned, I was privileged to know him personally. I called on him several times in Rome during his tenure as Prefect of the Congregation for the Clergy, the last time around Palm Sunday, 1977, when his office helped to secure for me a preferred ticket to the Holy Father's Palm Sunday Mass that year.

Cardinal John Wright was a man of faith and courage. He early saw the crisis of faith that was coming and moved intelligently to deal with it, notably in becoming the patron and promoter of the excellent *General Catechetical Directory* issued by the

Congregation for the Clergy in 1971; and also in encouraging the foundation of graduate catechetical institutes, such as the Archdiocesan Catechetical Institute in New York, of which Msgr. Wrenn was the founder and for ten years the director; and the Notre Dame Catechetical Institute in Northern Virginia, founded by the late Msgr. Eugene Kevane, of which I was chairman of the Board of Directors for a number of years—and which has since become the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College.

Although Cardinal Wright was primarily concerned in Rome with questions of the clergy, he always had time for a layman such as myself—particularly one with news from the catechetical front. This subject never failed to interest His Eminence. I don't know what his personal means were; but I do know that he backed up his support for the catechetical work some of us laypeople were doing at that time by writing more than one personal

check for the continuation of the work.

Cardinal Wright was always kindly and fatherly in the meetings I had with him. Unlike the typical Roman official, he received me not in one of those nondescript, neutral "parlors" with French furniture in which Romans officials are accustomed to receive visitors, but in his own office—where I was heartened by how much his cluttered desk top resembled mine! I shall always treasure the books of his which he inscribed to me in his large florid hand: "*J. Card. Wright.*"

In short, I am as honored to receive an award named for this champion of the faith as I am to receive this honor from the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars. I thank the Fellowship for this award and I thank those of you who have come here tonight. I pray, in the words of the Liturgy of the Hours, the Prayer of the Church: "May the Lord bless us, protect us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life." Amen, and thank you!

## Acceptance Speech by Msgr. Michael J. Wrenn on the Occasion of the Reception of the Cardinal Wright Award of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars.

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Your Excellency, Archbishop Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver,, Colorado; Your Grace,, Archbishop George Pell, Archbishop of Melbourne, Australia, Distinguished Members and Friends of the Fellowship:

The depth of my gratitude and appreciation to the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars for their honoring me with the Cardinal Wright Award is truly doubled by the fact that my fellow recipient is none other than Kenneth D. Whitehead, whose knowledge of the faith and devotion to the Church is sought by many and achieved by few.

Ken and I go back to the days when *Sharing the Light of Faith*, the National Catechetical Directory, was going through a series of drafts. As Director of Religious Education for the Archdiocese of New York, I was responsible for mounting the consultation in the schools and parishes of New York that would provide input to the Directory Committee of the USCC in Washington.

When I discovered, through the good offices of the then USCC Secretary of Education, Msgr. Olin Murdick, (who had been shut out of the consultation process involved in drafting the directory) that the writers of the drafts wanted the final

product to be purposely ambiguous, I enlisted his assistance. Ken was, at that time, working for Catholics United for the Faith, and together with my esteemed associate, the late Fr. Dennis Fernandes, we managed to prepare 57 amendments which were given to Terence Cardinal Cooke and his six Auxiliary Bishops for submission at the General Assembly of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops.

These amendments replaced the very serious ambiguous statements in the areas of Doctrine, Morality, Liturgy and Sacraments which had found their way into the final draft of the directory prior to its approval by the Bishops. It was on this occasion, I am proud to say, that I became public enemy number one of the United States catechetical establishment as well, as the bureaucrats of the United States Catholic Conference and National Catholic Education Association. I pray that my collaboration with Ken Whitehead will continue for years to come.

Tonight's award means a great deal to me! On two occasions, I had an offer to pursue an earned Doctorate in Theology. In the first instance, I declined for what I mistakenly, then, considered a good reason. In the second instance, I declined for what was to be the best reason – preparing Michael and Elizabeth,, my beloved parents for the grace of a happy death. They died within seventy-seven days of each other in 1989.

The Cardinal Wright Award of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars is indeed for me equivalent to the Doctorate that professionally I would have wanted to earn.

It has been my privilege to be a part of the Fellowship from the earliest days of our meeting in the cornfields of Kansas. As a young seminarian at Dunwoodie, back in the 50's, I

frequently served Mass for one of the founders of the Catholic Theological Society of America. Those years at Dunwoodie, 1955-1961, were, for the most part, the halcyon days of Theology in the United States. Little did I think, then, that on July 2, 1976, the weekend of the Bicentennial of Our Nation, I would suddenly and unexpectedly be appointed by Cardinal Cooke the founding director of the Graduate School of Religious Education at Dunwoodie. As a result, my plans for the celebration of the Bicentennial, including a review of the tall ships from an aircraft carrier, abruptly changed.

The Archdiocesan Catechetical Institute was intended to be an alternative to existing Religious Education Masters Degree Programs in the metropolitan area. As Father Benedict Groeshel has written: "Cardinal Cooke was the master of alternatives."

My association with the members of the Fellowship, during the beginning years of this graduate school, gave me a tremendous sense of our common cause in defending and upholding the authentic teaching authority of the Church. Just focusing on the Jesuits, for instance, not to speak of all the other distinguished members of the Fellowship, such heroes as: Paul Quay, Robert I. Bradley, Joe Farraher, Joe Mangan, John Ford, Edward Berbusse, Bishop John Sheets, Earl Weis, Ken Baker, Don Keefe, Joe Fessio whose devotion to the Company of Jesus, in spite of attempts to marginalize them, in one way or another, were an inspiration to me and a challenge to continue to believe that nothing succeeds like success!

As of today, the Institute of Religious Studies at Dunwoodie has graduated over 400 students who have earned their Masters degree – one of them being

Margaret, the wife of Kenneth Whitehead. These graduates serve in teaching and administrative posts not only in New York but also throughout the United States.

I wish now to take this opportunity to pay honor and tribute to our Blessed Lady whose assistance I sought in February of 1977 at her statue in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris as I seriously considered asking out of the directorship of the recently opened Institute.

My years at the Institute afforded me many opportunities to write, to translate from the French, and to continue to speak on issues of religious education. Little did I think that, in 1987, I would be assigned by Cardinal O'Connor to the Manhattan Parish of St. John the Evangelist as Pastor succeeding such giants as the third Pastor, Msgr. James McMahan, who served there from 1850-1880. A scholar in his own right, he became one of the Founders of the Catholic University of America – McMahan Hall being named in his honor. But even more surprising was the fact that I was also succeeding the ninth pastor of St. John's who had, for many years, been the most distinguished Professor of Dogma in the history of St. Joseph Seminary, Dunwoodie, Msgr. William O'Connor. And then to realize that I was succeeding, as well, the tenth pastor, Msgr. George A. Kelly, whom Church historians will one day revere as the Elder Statesman of United States Catholicism throughout these turbulent years of dissent, confusion and institutional denial regarding the problems confronting the Church here and elsewhere.

On September the Eighth of this year, in the Church of Our Savior on Park Avenue, New York City, a Mass was celebrated to honor the Eightieth Birthday of a very good

## MILE-HIGH POINTS FROM DENVER CONVENTION

priest, Father Avery Dulles S.J., who was converted to Catholicism while a student at Harvard University. The Mass was followed by a brilliant lecture presented by Francis Cardinal George on the Holy Father's recent *Motu Proprio Apostolos Suos* on Episcopal Conferences. The evening ended with the singing by the entire packed congregation of "Happy Birthday."

I knew Avery Dulles from the time I was a seminarian and was privileged to receive from him an autographed copy of the story of his conversion - entitled: *A Testimonial to Grace*.

In an article, "Orthodoxy and Social Change" which appeared in the June 20th issue of *America* magazine Fr. Dulles argued: that the erosion of faith caused by "cultural secularization," as distinguished from "political," had led to such trends as relativism and individualism that worked against the orthodox Catholic conception of permanent truths taught by an authoritative magisterium. This contemporary mentality makes it necessary for orthodoxy to be "countercultural, at least in the sphere of religion."

In November 1996, Fr. Dulles, in a lecture at Fordham University criticized the Common Ground initiative launched by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin.

There, Fr. Dulles said statements

such as the one Cardinal Bernardin issued as a framework document for the Common Ground Project gave a misleading impression that Catholics could find: "'common ground" some place other than on the basis of Church teaching. He said the difficulty with such statements was "not so much with what they actually said as with what they seemed to imply, and would be understood as implying in the current atmosphere."

In an August 3rd, 1998 letter to Msgr. George A. Kelly, Fr. Dulles wrote the following: "I hope that between us (and with much help from others) we can help contain some of the madness that passes for Catholic Christianity."

As I continued on my way home, I had one of those *Eureka* experiences. Why not an apotheosis, similar to that accorded Father Dulles, celebrating the theological consistent life-long contributions of our founder, Monsignor George A. Kelly - a man whom as a young priest I considered something of a wise guy but who, over the years, I have come to admire as a great scholar, a good and devoted priest and a loyal friend and confidant.

To this end, I am pleased to announce that the Second Annual Lucille Choquette Memorial Lecture of St. John the Evangelist Parish will be a colloquy devoted to the various major ecclesial topics and issue so

prolifically written about during the life time of our distinguished founder.

These events will take place in the city and Archdiocese of New York, at a date to be announced, during the Spring of 1999. I can assure you that no effort will be spared as we honor, as we should, the tremendous contribution made to the Church in the United States by this giant of a priest and scholar!

I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the great honor which you have bestowed upon me. I regret that I will not be able to be here for the rest of the program, as I must return to New York this evening on the "red eye," in order to participate in two events tomorrow: one has to do with the Cause of Pierre Toussaint, whose canonization I have been privileged to serve as President of the Historical Commission for his Cause and also, in the afternoon, to be present in St. Patrick's Cathedral as six members of my parish are named Knights and Ladies of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre.

Thank you once again for honoring me, a street wise kid from the South Bronx, who at an early age, fell in love with the French language, without knowing why, until many years later.

# Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Business Meeting

September 27, 1998  
Denver, CO

The meeting began with a prayer at 8:03 AM.

## President's Report

Prof. Gerard Bradley commented on the following items of interest:

(1) Finances - the Fellowship remains in stable financial condition, income having exceeded expenditures for each of the last three years. Income is primarily through payment of dues and secondarily through donations. Expenses incurred are primarily associated with the *Quarterly* and the annual convention. An additional expense this coming year will be the publication of *The Fellowship Reader* - an edited volume of 22 significant papers from previous conventions.

(2) Board of Directors - balloting for new directors was conducted during this summer. The two newly elected directors are: Dr. LAURA GARCIA (Rutgers University) and Rev. PETER RYAN, SJ (Loyola University, MD). In addition, the Board appointed Rev. JOHN ROCK, SJ to fulfill the remainder of the term vacated by Sr. Joan Gormley.

(3) FCS Quarterly - two new administrative features were announced: the hiring of Ms. ELLEN RICE, who will serve as editorial assistant, and the formation of an editorial board, whose members will seek the publication of articles in a

variety of academic areas.

(4) By-Laws - the Board unanimously approved the adoption of new by-laws, the first such revision in the history of the Fellowship. Important changes include the provision for international chapters, and terms of office for directors.

(5) 1999 Convention - the next annual convention will take place in Chicago on September 24-26, 1999. The theme will be: *Marriage, the Common Good, and Public Policy*. Additional details will be published in the 1999 editions of the *FCS Quarterly*.

## Secretary's Report

Fr. Thomas Dailey, OSFS commented on significant happenings with regard to the membership.

(1) Applications - since the 1997 convention, 59 new members have been accepted into the Fellowship. To promote applications, new brochures have been created. Current members are encouraged to make personal contact with others and invite them into our Fellowship.

(2) Membership Directory - for better communication among the members, the Board has authorized the publication of a *Directory*. In order to produce this work, updated and expanded information needs to be gathered on all the current members. All members will be contacted to provide this necessary information.

(3) Chapters - among the revisions to the By-Laws is the inclusion of a provision for geographic or disciplinary chapters. At present, international chapters exist in Australia, Canada,

and Ireland.

(4) Public Relations - at the decision of the Board, a campaign has begun to raise awareness of, and promote the positive image of, the Fellowship. To-date several press releases have been issued. Members are asked to assist in this campaign by checking their local newspapers (diocesan and secular) for stories published about the Fellowship and communicating this information to the Secretary.

(5) Internet site - members (and others) may now keep up-to-date with the Fellowship on-line! The URL site is: <http://www4.allencol.edu/~philtheo/FCS>

## New Business

Among the many items discussed, the following are noteworthy:

(1) 1999 Convention

- the services of a Chicago-based television company could be used to videotape the presentations (as volunteered by Fr. Baker)
- a publisher's exhibit should be set up at the convention
- a "debate" could be part of the program (e.g., on annulments)

(2) Public Relations

- receiving advance copies of Vatican documents (e.g., the forthcoming encyclical) would aid in preparedness to offer the FCS response
- how present documents are being implemented might be cause for further study (e.g., an grant-funded and objectively administered "poll")

There being no further business, Fr. Lyons moved, seconded by Fr. Baker, that the meeting be adjourned, which it was at 9:03 AM.

**Not Infallible:  
Two Histories of the Papacy**

Marvin R. O'Connell

**Saints and Sinners:**

**A History of the Popes**

by Eamon Duffy

Yale Univ. Press, 326 pp. \$30.

**Lives of the Popes**

by Richard P. McBrien

Harper San Francisco, 520 pp.

\$29.50.

The proudest royal houses are but of yesterday when compared with the line of Supreme Pontiffs. That line we trace back in an unbroken series, from the Pope who crowned Napoleon in the nineteenth century to the Pope who crowned Pepin in the eighth; and far beyond the time of Pepin the august dynasty extends, till it is lost in the twilight of fable. The republic of Venice came next in antiquity; but the republic of Venice is gone, and the Papacy remains. The Papacy remains, not in decay, not a mere antique, but full of life and vigor.

So wrote Macaulay more than 150 years ago. The occasion for the memorable essay, published in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1840, was the appearance of an English version of Leopold von Ranke's *The Ecclesiastical and Political History of the Popes of Rome During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Neither Ranke nor Macaulay entertained any intrinsic sympathy for the Church of Rome; both were Protestants, though it is probably safe to say that Ranke took his Lutheranism rather more seriously than Macaulay did the evangelical Anglicanism in which he had been reared. Macaulay at any rate tempered his appreciation of the papacy's "youthful vigor" with puzzlement: "The stronger our conviction that reason and scripture

were decidedly on the side of Protestantism, the greater is the reluctant admiration with which we regard that system of tactics against which reason and scripture were employed in vain."

More to the point, perhaps, is the fact that both men, in quite different ways, stood at the cutting edge of the writing of history in their day, both represented the first generation of historians who consciously modeled their work on the inductive method of the physical sciences. Taking as their exemplar the physicist in his laboratory, this new breed of researchers into the past pulled away the strait jacket of moral uplift into which their discipline had been bound since Aristotle's time. They repudiated the traditional wisdom that history functioned as a barely respectable species of ethics, teaching virtue by examples. For Ranke, what mattered was to ransack the archives and to find the documentary sources that would make it possible to reconstruct the past "wie es eigentlich gewesen— as it had really happened"; for Macaulay, what mattered was a reconstruction of the past that would provide a literate and plausible explanation of the institutional realities of the present.

It cannot be surprising, therefore, that both of them, despite whatever confessional or intellectual distaste they may have felt, were fascinated by the papal phenomenon, by its antiquity, by its phoenixlike capacity to recover from calamity. Brought time and again to the brink of dissolution, most recently— indeed, within the living memory of them both— by the seemingly irresistible assault of Voltaire and Robespierre, of the Enlightenment and the Revolution, popery had emerged stronger than before. "It is not strange," Macaulay wrote, "that in the year 1799 even sagacious observers should

have thought that, at length, the hour of the Church of Rome was come.... But the end was not yet. Again doomed to death, the milk white hind was still fated not to die. Even before the funeral rites had been performed over the ashes of Pius VI, a great reaction had commenced, which, after the lapse of more than 40 years, appears still to be in progress." The "milk white hind" was, of course, Dryden's metaphor in *The Hind and the Panther*, which still rang with Catholic defiance of a Protestant culture: "In Pope and Council who denies the place, / Assisted from above with God's unfailing grace."

If by some wizardry Macaulay were suddenly to reappear a century and a half after he had paid his reluctant tribute to the staying power of papal Rome, he would have had no difficulty expanding his original induction. All sorts of individuals and movements since 1840 have signaled the Roman church's impending demise. Freemasons and *libertins*, apostate intellectuals, radical traditionalists on the Right and liberation theologians on the Left, Nazis and Communists, blood-stained altars in the Mexico of the 1920s and the brutish cruelty of the gulag in the China of the 1990s— but none of them has succeeded any more than did Voltaire and Robespierre. "How many divisions has the pope?" Stalin asked contemptuously. But— to paraphrase Macaulay— the Soviet Union, like the Republic of Venice, is gone, and the papacy remains.

Why this should have happened involves an intriguing riddle, the solution to which may well depend on the eye of the beholder. Macaulay, for his part, had no doubts. "Tactics," he maintained, shrewd "human policy," a unique ability, for instance, to channel and control the passionate zeal of genius.

“Place John Wesley at Rome [and] he is certain to be the first General of a new society devoted to the interests and honor of the Church. Place St. Teresa [of Avila] in London [and] her restless enthusiasm ferments into madness, not untinged with craft.” But this explanation, and any like it, sounds unpersuasive to a Catholic who wonders why “tactics” or “human policy” did not likewise save the Caesars, the Ming dynasty, the sultans of Constantinople, the British Empire, the first, second, third, and fourth French republics, and the Whig Party U.S.A. Indeed, any Christian who believes in Providence, however reserved he may be about this or that papal pretension, can hardly judge it absurd that Catholics should find in this, humanly speaking, incredible succession evidence of a moral miracle that betokens the continuation within the church of the Petrine office. “Simon Peter,” Jesus said, “do you love me more than these? Then feed my sheep.”

Debate on this point will go on, no doubt, till the Second Coming. Meanwhile, the grand sweep of papal history continues to fascinate inquirers, as it does Eamon Duffy and Richard P. McBrien. In *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes*, Duffy, reader in Church History and fellow of Magdalen College, Cambridge, attempts, he tells us, “to provide an overview of the whole history of the papacy from the apostle Peter to Pope John Paul II.” “This is *a* history of the popes,” he adds sensibly; “it cannot claim to be *the* history of the popes. No one-volume survey of an institution so ancient and so embedded in human history and culture can be anything more than a sketch.” Father McBrien, Crowley-O’Brien-Walter Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame, shows himself

similarly diffident in tendering to the reading public his *Lives of the Popes*: “I cannot imagine any individual historian today writing a truly complete and comprehensive history of each of the more than 260 pontificates spread over the course of almost 2000 years.”

With such disclaimers in hand, what have these books to offer us/take Duffy’s first. *Saints and Sinners*, it should be noted, is linked to a six-part television series shown in Britain, Australia, and the United States, and the book itself, with its abundance of plates and photographs, most of them in color, furnishes a marvelous feast for the eye. In the midst of this visual elegance, Duffy carries his narrative forward through six chapters, each divided into four sections, presumably an arrangement conforming to the demands of the television series. Appended are a chronological list of popes, a glossary of terms, a bibliographical essay, and a few *pro forma* endnotes. Though there is nothing original in Duffy’s text, it exhibits adequate acquaintance with the usual secondary sources. The prose reads smoothly for the most part, and surely no one can blame Duffy for emphasizing what he had chosen to emphasize. All in all, this is a useful volume, and certainly one that would grace any coffee table.

There are, however, problems, some of them related to careless editing. Thus it is disconcerting to find a ludicrous numerical error in the opening sentence of the preface to *Saints and Sinners*— the very first sentence in the book. But more fundamental difficulties arise naturally from the genre itself. To write a survey of this kind requires the author to deal with subjects outside his demonstrated field of expertise— in Duffy’s case, the Reformation in England— and yet to speak of them

with enough confidence to earn the reader’s trusts. There is a fine line here between modesty and presumption, and Duffy does not always walk it nimbly. He would have done better had he displayed more reserve about his own capacity to discern the elements of thorny issues like the spread of Monophysitism (p. 41) or the character of Americanism (241–42) or the philosophical component of what Pius X condemned as “Modernism” (249–51).

Small errors of fact in a study of this scope— for instance, the date of Constantine’s death (p. 23), the identity of the tribe that sacked Rome in 410 (p. 36), the means by which Italy paid compensation to the Holy See in 1929 (p. 258)— are probably inevitable. Not so, however, the gossipy and condescending treatment of Pius XII’s last days (p. 268) or the witless description of Sen. Joseph McCarthy as defender of a “right-wing” Catholicism (p. 266). Not so either the barrage of clichés that resounds especially through Duffy’s early chapters: “If the fourth century papacy had not existed, it would have had to be invented” (p. 27); “For [Pope] Vigilius, however, chickens now began to come home to roost” (p. 43); “The relationship with Charlemagne was not all roses” (p. 73); “Unable to beat them, [Pope] Hadrian joined them” (p. 109). Perhaps these trite sayings as well as the frequent use of hyperbolic expressions— “nightmare complexities of eastern theological debates” (p. 25), “volcanic reaction” to a heretical proposition (p. 42), the “wildly extravagant” Avignon popes (p. 125)— are best explained by the connection of *Saints and Sinners* to its televised accompaniment. However that may be, Duffy, though a relatively young man, has already acquired the veteran academic’s skill in composing a bibliographical essay

that suggests an almost preternatural knowledge of the sources: If one wants to know the “best account of Constantine’s religious beliefs,” “the best treatment of the “Spirituali” of the sixteenth century, or the “best biography of Pius VI,” one need only consult *Saints and Sinners*, pp. 308, 313, and 314.

Father McBrien, by contrast, virtually disdains critical bibliography or other conventional scholarly apparatus. His “Select Bibliography” takes up but three pages (and includes a mistle for Pastor’s celebrated *History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages*), but in his own way he intimates that he, no less than Duffy, has pretty well mastered the “voluminous” literature. “The listing of titles,” McBrien says, “is [meant] to provide a representative sample of scholarly, encyclopedic, and popular works” (p. 489). Whether it does so may be open to question, but more important is the assertion on the same page that expresses the *raison d’être* for *Lives of the Popes*: “If the author of this book could recommend another comprehensive, one-volume, historical, theological, canonical, and pastoral treatment of the popes and the papacy geared to the non-specialist reader, he would do so. But that is precisely the gap this book is intended to fill.”

McBrien’s book is not a history, like Duffy’s— not, that is, a narrative concerned with context and transition. *Lives of the Popes* is rather a kind of catalogue or *Who Was Who*, supplemented by various lists, tables, and expanded explanations. Some of these latter are quite helpful, like the chronological rosters of popes and antipopes (pp. 443–50 and 466 respectively), a register of “key papal encyclicals” (945–65), and a description of the ways popes have been chosen over the centuries (403–16). Another appendix, “Rating the Popes” (429–42), can only be called-

to put the kindest word on it— idiosyncratic. McBrien’s own minimalist views about the papacy are clearly reflected in this section. Of the 262 pontiffs, he finds only two how were “outstanding”: John XXIII (d. 1963) and Gregory I (d. 604). He adds another 12 who were ‘good or above average.’ The “worst of the worst”— an interestingly provocative phrase— number 24. It is intriguing that McBrien includes in this rogues gallery Gregory XVI (d. 1846), who was pope at the time Macaulay thought the Roman church was “full of life and youthful vigor.”

The bulk of Father McBrien’s book (367 pp.), however, is composed of sketches of the individual popes, and here there arises an extremely troubling problem. In his preface (p. 2), Father McBrien concedes that he has “relied on Kelly throughout”— the reference is to J.N.D. Kelly, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Popes* (Oxford University Press, 1986; 347 pp.). “But this book,” asserts McBrien, referring to his own, “differs from Kelly’s in that it offers more than summaries of each pope’s life and pontificate.” This claim is legitimate only in the sense that the “more on” offer is McBrien’s sometimes fatuous, usually debatable, and almost always unhistorical commentary. As far as quantity of *information* about the popes is concerned, Canon Kelly wins hands down. Moreover, the information McBrien *does* provide echoes almost to the word what Kelly published 12 years ago. In dealing with this admittedly delicate matter, only a comparison of texts will suffice.

“Profiting by the peaceful conditions ensured by Charlemagne, [Pope] Hadrian not only built, restored, or beautified an extraordinary number of Roman churches, but renewed the city’s walls, strength-

ened the embankments of the Tiber, and completely reconstructed four great aqueducts” (Kelly, p. 97); “In Rome, the pope took advantage of the peaceful conditions made possible by Charlemagne and built and restored many churches, strengthened the walls of the city and the embankments of the Tiber River... and completely reconstructed four great aqueducts” (McBrien, p. 126). “Although a harsh and divisive pontiff, [Pope Leo III] was included in the catalogue of saints in 1673 because of the presumed miracle of the restoration of his eyes and tongue” (Kelly, p. 99); “In spite of his severe, divisive, and morally dubious pontificate, [Leo III] was included in a catalogue of saints in 1673, because of the presumed ‘miracle’ of the restoration of his eyes and tongue” (McBrien, p. 131). “[Pope Martin V] showed unusual moderation towards the Jews, denouncing (1422 and 1429) violent anti-Jewish preaching and forbidding compulsory baptism of Jewish children under the age of twelve.... In Rome he carried out a vast program of reconstruction of ruined churches and public buildings” (Kelly, p. 240); “[Martin V] displayed unusual sensitivity toward Jews. He denounced anti-Jewish preaching and forbade the compulsory baptism of Jewish children under the age of 12. In Rome he organized a vast program of reconstruction of ruined churches and public buildings.” (McBrien, p. 255).

This sample could be replicated many times over. Which raises the question: why should Father McBrien’s account be preferred to Canon Kelly’s, when the former has clearly embraced the material in the latter— in a host of instances almost word-for-word— and when the latter has conscientiously identified its sources for each entry while the former has not? McBrien’s answer

(p 2) is that Canon Kelly, an Anglican, “may have been under greater constraint than a tenured Catholic theologian, lest he [Kelly] cross the line of ecumenical propriety by raising awkward questions regarding papal claims or the implications of actions taken by individual popes.”

One may doubt that the throne of Peter, after nearly 2,000 years, will tremble at the prospect of “awkward questions,” even when raised by so formidable an authority as ‘a tenured Roman Catholic theologian.’ One may wonder too at this theologian’s implicit charge that Kelly, a distinguished historian, has consciously repressed information found in his sources for the sake of “propriety.” This is chutzpah at its least endearing. In short, if a reader wants to know that opinions Rather McBrien holds about the papacy in 1998, this is the book for him; but if a reader wants to know about the lives of the popes, he should look elsewhere.

Macaulay concluded his colorful tribute to the longevity of the Roman church with an arresting image: ‘She may still exist in undiminished vigor when some traveler from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul’s.’ One hundred fifty years later, vibrant London belies this bit of whimsy, and Saint Paul’s Cathedral still stands in all the splendor Christopher Wren gave it. But the London Bridge of Macaulay’s day has indeed fallen down and has been erected again as a tourist attraction under the shadow of the Mohave mountains, in far-western Arizona. Perhaps the whimsy contained a splinter of discernment after all.

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### **A Conscience as Large as the World. Yves R. Simon Versus the Catholic Neoconservatives**

by Thomas R. Rourke  
Rowman & Littlefield Pub. Inc., 4720 Boston Way Lanham, Maryland 20706 1997, 286 pp.

Reviewed by Nicholas Lund-Molfese

**T**his book is an ambitious undertaking. Rourke seeks to assess “contemporary Catholic neoconservative thought as exhibited in the writings of its principal expositors: Michael Novak, Richard John Neuhaus, and George Weigel ... through a systematic comparison with [the work of] Yves R. Simon. Rourke evidences a comprehensive and integrated understanding of Simon’s work and, commendably, he expresses a fundamental concern for the poor in every chapter. Still, the primary question is: does Rourke prove his thesis? Rourke claims that: “there are fundamental and inherent dimensions of concepts such as the common good, authority, and freedom that render them incompatible with liberalism, even the nuanced version the neoconservatives advance” and that “in defending the liberal political economy the way they do . . . they part company with the Catholic tradition.”

The book is divided into four substantive sections: practical reason, the political system, the economic system and the moral-cultural system. In each section Rourke contrasts the thought of Yves Simon with that of the neoconservatives. Space will only allow for the evaluation of a representative sampling of Rourke’s arguments.

The first substantive chapter asks: to what extent does “the

neoconservative appeal to practical reason ... allow for politically relevant moral standards that are external to the social order?” Rourke argues that the “neoconservatives force the distinction between theoretical and practical reason to the point of concluding that practical reason is incompatible with theoretical reason.” He reads Simon to hold that the first principles of practical reasoning are derived from theoretical reasoning. As Rourke explains: “while the formulation of principles qua principles belongs to theoretical reason, practical reason recognizes that its judgment must be directed to the fulfillment of these principles.” He believes that, in contrast to Simon, the neoconservatives’ use of practical reason “tends to jettison theoretical reason” and that by doing so they “loose practical reason from its moorings in the realization of natural finalities. No longer guided by natural law or teleology, practical . . . reason’s standard of evaluation becomes consumer satisfaction.”

A close examination of the texts Rourke refers to strongly suggests that he may simply be misreading the position of the neoconservatives. Even if Rourke’s reading is correct, the validity of the claim that the first principles of practical reasoning are derived from theoretical principles is called into question by a long line of contemporary Catholic scholarship dating back to a landmark article by Germain Grisez in 1965. Grisez, frequently in collaboration with Joseph Boyle and John Finnis, discovered that “St. Thomas was careful to explain that practical conclusions always must be resolved into practical principles which are distinct from and irreducible to theoretical ones.” The first principles of practical reasoning are not inferred, in any way, from prior theoretical principles. To attempt to do so is a formal, logical

fallacy for, as Hume proposed (but also as Aquinas and Aristotle held), one cannot deduce an **ought** (a practical or moral principle) from an **is** (a theoretical truth). “The moral *ought* cannot be derived from the *is* of theoretical truth — for example of metaphysics and/or philosophical anthropology....From a set of theoretical premises, one cannot logically derive any practical truth.” If Novak “parts company with the Catholic tradition” for holding to this understanding of the relationship between practical and theoretical reasoning, as Rourke asserts, it would seem that he has for company many of the leading faithful Catholic scholars of our time.

In the third chapter, in the process of critiquing the neoconservatives’ understanding of the political system, Rourke claims that “one of the theoretical linchpins of Novak’s argument is his insistence that the common good materially considered is unknown by any actor, including political authority,” and therefore “the common good materially considered should not be willed by anyone.” Such a position clearly contradicts the Catholic understanding of the common good and is morally indefensible. Fortunately for Michael Novak., he does not have to defend this position because he does not hold it. The text fails to give any citation to Novak’s writings in support of these assertions. In fact, in his book *Free Persons and the Common Good*, Novak, in the process of commenting favorably on Yves Simon’s *Philosophy of Democratic Government*, states:

precisely because not all citizens can know the full material content of the common good ... there emerges a natural need for organs of national decision making; in short, for authorities of various types, responsible

for exercises of expertise and power within a limited range. And at some points, this veil of ignorance naturally requires the highest authority in the national community (executive or legislative or judicial, as appropriate) to make certain key decisions regarding [the] next practical steps forward.

Rourke’s final arguments in this chapter concern the neoconservatives’ understanding of freedom and equality. Rourke claims that the neoconservatives wish to avoid “a definition of freedom rooted in a common sense of the moral good” and that they have a “relatively passive political attitude toward the disquieting moral arbitrariness pervading public life in liberal societies.” As to whether this is really a fair description of their position, you can judge for yourself based on the following representative quotation from Novak. “There are two types of liberty: one ... emotive, whimsical, proper to children; the other critical, sober, deliberate, responsible, and proper to adults.... Lord Acton put it this way: Liberty is not the freedom to do what you wish; it is the freedom to do what you ought.... Only humans enjoy the liberty to do what we ought to do—or alas, not to do it.” Richard Neuhaus has written: “[t]he common good (emphatically a moral category!) therefore depends upon the vitality of the political and, above all, moral-cultural spheres. “

The central argument of the book’s final substantive chapter is that:

Novak’s understanding of the free person does not ... genuinely get beyond a liberal, utilitarian perspective for two reasons. First, Novak’s “communitarian individual”... is communitarian through voluntary relations ... [while

according to] the Christian understanding, the person is ontologically communal ... prior to any choice. Second, the Christian understanding of the person recognizes the ontological presence of Christ in all persons.... Novak’s definition of the person ... lacks this reference to Christ.

The neoconservatives’ understanding of the person creates “a culture where economic concerns are central” and where relationships are entered into “largely on the basis of calculation.” Again, a few representative passages from the neoconservative corpus can put Rourke’s concerns to rest. Novak agrees that human persons are created by God as ontologically communal. He states that

the ultimate ground of the dignity of the human person has two parts: the unalienable responsibility of each person ... and also the final destination of each [person] in the full insight and love of communion with God. This dignity is at once personal and communal. Moreover the person is not solitary.... It is an error to define the individual without reference to God.... The person is theophanous: a shining-through of God’s life in history, created by God for union with God.

Also, Neuhaus writes, “Our activity as economic man, homo economicus, is not the main thing in most of our lives. And for that we can be grateful. But ... in Christian teaching, this dimension of life, too, should be brought under the lordship of Christ. Rather than relations based on calculated self-interest, Neuhaus explains that, for Christians, “love for the poor is not optional.”

The evident disagreement between Rourke and Novak in interpreting the work of Simon is just that, an interpretative disagreement.

This debate is a sign of the coming of age of Simon scholarship. Also, while the neoconservatives may have a different interpretation of the liberal tradition than Rourke, this hardly places them outside the Catholic tradition. These disagreements involve matters of prudence, not dogmas of the faith.

Rourke obviously has the talent to make important contributions to the Catholic project of reforming the political, economic, and moral-cultural systems of the United States. Such reforms would move these institutions into greater conformity with the Church's preferential option for the poor. In this Catholic project, although their methods and prudential judgments might differ, Rourke, Neuhaus, Weigel, and Novak stand as close allies in contrast to the rest of the American political spectrum.

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#### Notes

1. Thomas R. Rourke, *A Conscience as Large as the World: Yves R. Simon Versus the Catholic Neoconservatives* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), ix.
2. *ibid.*, xi-xii.
3. *ibid.*, 32.
4. *ibid.*, 53.
5. *Ibid.*, 58.
6. *Ibid.*, 53.
7. *ibid.*, 64.
8. Germain Grisez, "The First Principle of Practical Reason," *Natural Law Forum* 10(1965): 168-209. *Summa Theologica*, 1, q. 79, a. 12; 1-2, q. 94, a. 2; 2-2, q. 47, a.
9. Grisez, *Christian Moral Principles*, 122.
10. see, Robert P. George, *Making Men Moral* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 13.
11. see, John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 47.
12. Grisez, Boyle and Finnis, "Practical Principles, Moral Truth, and Ultimate Ends," *The American Journal of Jurisprudence* 32 (1987), 101-2.
13. Rourke, *Conscience*, 114.
14. *ibid.*, 118.
15. Novak, *Free Persons and the Common*

16. Good,
17. *Ibid.*, 183-4.
18. Rourke, *Conscience*, 126.
19. Novak, "A 'Catholic Whig' Replies," 262-3.
20. Richard John Neuhaus, *Doing Well and Doing Good* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 59.
21. *ibid.*, 23.
22. *ibid.*, 6.
23. Novak, *Free Persons*, 31-32.
24. *ibid.*, 35.
25. Neuhaus, *Doing Well*, 25.
26. *ibid.*, 210.

Thomas R. Rourke, *A Conscience as Large as the World: Yves R. Simon Versus the Catholic Neoconservatives* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1997), ix.

*ibid.*, xi-xii

### **The King's Good Servant but God's First: the Life and Writings of St. Thomas More**

By James Monti, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1997, 497 pages. Sewn Softcover, \$19.95

Reviewed by  
Kenneth D. Whitehead.

As a public man who resisted a virtual totalitarian-style tyranny out of conscience, St. Thomas More looms large in the modern consciousness and is much admired even outside the ranks of Catholics. Both the play and the movie *A Man for All Seasons* have brought him within the purview of many and have correctly depicted him as a highly principled man of utter integrity as well as an exemplary Christian: a Lord Chancellor of England and servant of the king who was at once an honest lawyer, an accomplished scholar, an eminent humanist, a gifted writer, a steadfast friend, a generous benefactor, a wit, a faithful husband and father, and a cheerful and courageous martyr. John Henry Newman in his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* quoted the Whig historian Thomas Babington

Macaulay to the effect that Thomas More was the man of the greatest virtue the British Isles had ever produced, and Newman, of course, was very far from gainsaying that judgment.

He was even more (no pun intended!): he was a saint; 400 years after losing his head on the scaffold, the Catholic Church canonized him and raised him to the honor of her altars. At least a half dozen quite readable modern biographies of the man surely make him one of the most accessible and best known of the Church's saints, not to speak of the many excellent books on the age of Henry VIII and the so-called English Reformation generally that chronicle his life and accomplishments.

Nevertheless, there are always pertinent and profitable things to be added in the case of a biography and a career as illustrious and saintly as More's. James Monti has performed a great service, both for scholars and for the average Catholic reader, in the present work. Subtitled, "the Life and Writings of St. Thomas More," this book represents, among other things, a very successful effort to survey all of More's writings, which are more voluminous and still relevant today than many may realize. Since the Yale University Press, beginning in 1963, brought out its monumental edition of *The Complete Works of St. Thomas More* in fifteen volumes, a book such as this one which James Monti has now produced dealing with all these varied writings has been imperatively called for.

Mr. Monti capably surveys all of the Latin and English works, placing them in the context both of the history of the times and of More's own life. Indeed this book can now serve as a reliable guide to anyone who wishes to go more deeply into More's own writings—unfortu-

nately still little read, with the exception of *Utopia*, which, although deserving of its reputation as one of the premier productions of the English Renaissance, is not even very typical of St. Thomas More's best output; for unlike his friend Erasmus, who was reluctant to take a clear stand in the face of the Reformation challenge to the Church, More never allowed anyone to doubt where he stood, and some of his best and spirited writing was produced directly in the service of the Church.

As James Monti demonstrates, Thomas More, among his many accomplishments, was really a fine early writer of English prose; yet he is not so early that, with modernized spelling and editing, most of his English works are not still quite accessible to and eminently profitable for—the modern reader.

Besides being a fine writer, though, St. Thomas More was also an outstanding apologist for—and tenacious defender of—the truths of the Catholic faith. His knowledge and eminence as a scholar conversant with the newly discovered knowledge of his day meant that he was called upon to defend the faith and the Catholic tradition in the course of the furious Reformation controversies of the day to a much greater extent than perhaps most modern Catholics realize. It may be that some of his interminable polemical disputes with the Protestant William Tyndale have become somewhat dated with time, especially since more recent intellectual assaults on the faith have tended to take a somewhat different tack today; but More's apologetical writings are still of great interest for the scholar or specialist in the period, and modern readers generally will probably be surprised and impressed at Thomas More's theological sophistication, as well as his resourcefulness and ingenuity in

apologetical arguments, as brought out in the excerpts quoted and discussed by James Monti in this book.

St. Thomas More also produced spiritual writings which must count as indisputable spiritual classics and which deserve to be better known. In addition to More's *Dialogue of Comfort against Tribulation*, which has remained in print in various modern editions, Monti also treats with the detail they deserve the great English saint's late, outstanding writings on the Passion of Christ: the *Treatise on the Passion*, the *Treatise to Receive the Blessed Body of the Lord*, and *De Tristitia Christi*. These are exceptionally fine writings, and Monti properly treats them as among the most important of More's works. Among other pleasant surprises to be found in all of these works of More's are the evidences of the saint's profound knowledge and love of Scripture.

St. Thomas More is primarily known to history, of course, as a Catholic and public man who literally went to his death as a witness to the primacy of the See of Rome. How reasoned a theory More himself held on this subject is one more of the many fascinating topics treated in this book, especially as brought out in Monti's discussion of More's *Responsio ad Lutherum*. It is from this work that the following well-known formulation of Thomas More comes:

I am moved to obedient submission to this See by all those arguments which learned and holy men have assembled in support of the this point; moreover, I am indeed moved not least by a fact which we have so often noticed; that not only has no one been hostile to the Christian faith without at the same time declaring war on that See, but also there has never been anyone who declared himself an enemy of that

See without shortly afterwards declaring himself also a notorious and foremost enemy and traitor both to Christ and to our religion.

All of these things and many more are treated at suitable length and in suitable depth by James Monti in this book. An expert on liturgy and worship, and author of a well-received volume entitled *The Week of Salvation: History and Traditions of Holy Week* (Huntington, IN: OSV, 1993), Mr. Monti is able to show how knowledgeable about and devoted to the Church's liturgy and worship Thomas More himself was (as befits a canonized saint). In no biography of More, in fact, do we get a better sense of how much of a Catholic More was, centering his life around the liturgy and worship of the Church, especially the Eucharist. Most of all, the great English saint is shown to be a man of deep and constant prayer.

Although this book is surely now the best single guide available to More's writings, it also succeeds admirably as a life of St. Thomas More. The man himself comes across well as the very attractive and winning figure who has deservedly proved to be so popular in history both as a man and as a saint. Mr. Monti also ably describes both the England and the Church of More's day and contributes to our understanding of how the Church in England became lost to the Church universal in spite of the witness of St. Thomas More, St. John Fisher, and such companions of theirs in martyrdom as the English Carthusians.

In particular, what James Monti describes as More's "more intimate dialogue of comfort" found in his very moving last correspondence from the Tower of London with his daughter Margaret is fully treated in these pages. Nor has anybody described better than here the high

drama of the actual trial and execution of St. Thomas More, one of the great dramas of English history, in fact. In short, this is a solid and definitive scholarly work, which is at the same time quite readable and accessible to the educated Catholic reader; it fully merits its place in the already outstanding Ignatius Press list of essential modern Catholic books.

**Liturgical Question Box:  
Answers to Common  
Questions About the Modern Liturgy**

By Msgr. Peter J. Elliott  
Ignatius Press, 1998, 189 pages,  
paperback, \$12.95

Reviewed by Leonard A. Kennedy,  
C.S.B.

Monsignor Elliott, now back in Australia, worked in the Vatican for over ten years, and is the author of *Ceremonies of the Modern Roman Rite* (Ignatius Press, 1995). In the present book he answers 126 questions dealing with many aspects of the liturgy; the church and its furnishings; sacred vessels; vestments; liturgical ministries; ceremonial actions during the ministry of the word and the ministry of the Eucharist; Communion; concelebration; sacramental practice; Eucharistic adoration; the Church year; and funerals.

Until about forty years ago there was little or no change or “experimentation” in liturgical matters, but since that time we have witnessed trends resulting in many violations of liturgical laws. Perhaps the widespread nature of these violations has caused even well-intentioned clergy to fall into some of them. This book presents an opportunity to become aware of, and to correct, failings in these matters.

Elliott bases his teachings on certain basics: 1) Liturgical law exists and it is binding; 2) It is not a pure formalism, but exists for “maintaining, protecting, and promoting the central reason for the existence of the Church, the adoration of the triune God”; 3) Changes should not be *imposed* on people, but should develop naturally from sound Catholic faith, so that the faithful will not have their piety affronted; 4) The “delicate process” of inculturation should not be a “path to wild innovation.”

He recognizes the positive liturgical results of recent years, such as use of the vernacular, a wider use of Scripture, and increased participation of the congregation. But he sees some developments as unwelcome, mentioning particularly the loss of Gregorian chant and a decrease in the sense of the sacred.

Some of the questions dealt with touch upon matters of special interest to the clergy, but many of them are of concern to the laity. Some sample questions are: Does a pre-Vatican II main altar have to be moved? Should the celebrant begin Mass with “Good morning”? Is the Sign of Peace optional? May hands, rather than feet, be washed on Holy Thursday? May the funeral homily be a eulogy?

A sample answer may be given as well. Concerning whether “liturgical dancing” should be allowed, the author concludes concludes an excellent discussion by writing: It “should not take place during Mass in Western societies, where dancing in such a context is not part of the culture. However, Christian religious dance may be appropriate, even praiseworthy, in those cultures where it is part of the cultural patrimony.”

It is evident that Monsignor Elliott has been annoyed by liturgical goings-on, as we all have, by his

repetition of a joke. To the question “What do you do if you are locked in an elevator with two terrorists and a liturgist and you have only two bullets in your gun?” the answer is, “Shoot the liturgist- twice.”

**THE HUMAN PERSON AS  
AN EFFICIENT CAUSE IN  
THE CHRISTIAN AN-  
THROPOLOGY OF  
KAROL WOJTYLA** by

Jaroslav Kupczak, OP. Doctoral dissertation. (Washington, DC: The Pontifical John Paul II Institute for Studies on Marriage and Family, 1996). v-200 pp. Available from UMI Dissertation Services, 300 N. Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106. UMI Number: LD03633. Price: \$57.50 (+ \$5.04 tax), paperback.

Reviewed by John Kobler, C.P.

Over the past decade English-speaking readers have been offered a growing number of books by scholars dealing with the thought of Karol Wojtyla/John Paul II. More and more such scholars are recognizing him as a very creative philosopher whose methodology is a sophisticated blend of phenomenology and Thomism. This pre-papal style of reflection, mainly focused on ethics, provides much of the foundation for John Paul II’s interpretation of the Second Vatican Council and his multidimensional papal teachings.

In my opinion the volume here under consideration is the best basic introduction to Wojtyla’s philosophical ethics. Such an authoritative introduction is very important since the pope is confronting today’s complex global problems by laying the foundation for an innova-

tive Christo-centric anthropology (humanism). An integral feature of this new religious anthropology is the dignity and freedom of every human person. However valuable this practical program of humanity-building may be, some Thomists and phenomenologists contest the validity of Wojtyla's theorizing in whole or in part. Kupczak's dissertation does much to dissipate such objections.

Kupczak opens his reflections on John Paul II with a quotation from *Time* magazine in 1994, which has great relevance for us even today:

His popular book and his unpopular diplomacy... share one philosophical core: "It always goes back to the sanctity of the human being." ... In a year when so many people lamented the decline in moral values or made excuses for bad behavior, Pope John Paul II forcefully set forth his vision of the good life and urged the world to follow it. For such rectitude — or recklessness, as his detractors would have it — he is *Time's* Man of the Year.

Kupczak goes on to mention that John Paul II's "vision of the good life" is founded on a consistent and profound theory of the human person. The foundations of this anthropology, created before Wojtyla became pope, were further developed during his papacy. His philosophical anthropology forms "a complete Christian alternative to the humanistic philosophies of the 20th century — Marxism, structuralism, the atheistic ideas of the post-Enlightenment — a new anthropology that is based on something genuinely Christian." Kupczak's dissertation presents the development of Wojtyla's thought up to 1978, the year he was elected pope.

The dissertation's chapters are laid out in the following sequence: (1) introduction (with a concise

intellectual biography of Wojtyla), (2) his early writings, (3) the development of his philosophical method employing Thomism and phenomenology in a complementary way, (4) his sophisticated theory of consciousness, and (5) two fundamental notions for his account of human action and its efficacy: i. e., transcendence and integration. The last chapter is simply a summarizing one, and the book concludes with a lengthy and informative bibliography.

It would prolong this review unduly were we to enter into the technical details of Wojtyla's philosophical ethics. Here I would only insist on the importance of such an effort by the serious reader. In closing his book Kupczak drives home this point quite forcefully:

If history come to think of Wojtyla as "John Paul the Great"...the reasons will have much to do with a third successful papal intervention [like Leo the Great's and Gregory the Great's] in the face of the barbarians. This time, the barbarians are the modern and post-modern "masters of suspicion" whose radical deconstruction of reason poses a grave threat to Western civilization. To oppose such barbarians, John Paul II created his Christian anthropology, his theory of the acting person.

### **What Went Wrong With Vatican II: The Catholic Crisis Explained**

Ralph McNerny, Sophia Institute Press, 1998. 168 pp. \$14.95.

Reviewed by Ellen Rice

What went wrong? Some would say nothing, others would say everything. Ralph McNerny, however, has taken his press clippings from

that era and convincingly argued that the problem is not the Council itself, but the subsequent crisis of authority in the Church.

This is a brief book, easily read in one day. It is one to be re-read, studied, and used as the springboard for further thought on the matter. Not only is McNerny addressing the question, "what went wrong"; he raises the natural question, "how do we fix it?"

This is the first book in a new series planned by Sophia Press called *Forthright Editions*. Sophia plans to publish other works that "address contemporary Catholic issues with clarity, cogency, and force." The beauty of *What Went Wrong With Vatican II* is that it is accessible to a high-school educated reader, while providing food for thought for even the most learned scholars. One hopes more Catholic scholars will hone this skill of popularizing tough material without sacrificing substance.

This is one of McNerny's eight books published in 1998. Will there be nine in 1999?

### **Tell Me Why: A Father Answers His Daughter's Questions About God**

Michael and Jana Novak, Pocket Books, 1998, 321 pp., \$24.

Reviewed by Ellen Rice

I was touched to read this latest Michael Novak offering, cowritten with his daughter Jana, who has asked him real-life questions about God, the meaning of life, and Catholicism. Jana Novak wrote one half of the book when she faxed her father a list of questions, leaving him with the daunting task of answering these questions. A few points are worth noting about this book.

1. In a review in the October 1998 issue of *Crisis*, Ann Guppy writes, “*Tell me Why* is not... a Q & A catechism.” On the contrary, I would argue that it is. While we don’t start off with “Why did God make me?”, and go systematically through the Creed, we delve into Jana Novak’s questions about human existence, and these questions provide the springboard for introducing the truths of the faith. What else is the catechism approach except a pedagogical method that connects doctrine with the questions and concerns of ordinary life?

It’s also a sign of the times. Even if middle-aged nuns dislike the catechism approach, some publisher found it worth his trouble and money to publish a Q & A book about God.

2. Jana Novak is an emerging speechwriter on the Hill. Although she presents the questioning, agnostic side of things here, the fact that she co-published this book is a statement of her independence from the materialistic and corrupt Washington scene. Surely many of her colleagues think she’s a geek for writing this book. After a debut like this, her future is worth watching.

2. Michael Novak did a tremendously gutsy thing here. Ordinarily it is a great source of embarrassment when a child does not embrace the Church’s teachings wholeheartedly. It seems Novak’s hope here was to give parents and children in like situations a good model for intellectual dialogue. May it remind Catholic parents that they are responsible for giving an account of the hope that is within them.

One suspects Miss Novak will do just fine. She has already asked the questions, thus rejecting today’s big epistemological lie: that each person is his or her own God, with the right to define the meaning of

the universe itself.

Whether you are a neoconservative, a Catholic Worker, a paleoconservative, or a card-carrying Democrat, this is one Novak book you are sure to admire. Make your students read this so they can learn what intellectual dialogue is, what catechesis is, and what the role of the parent is in instructing children in the faith.

### Position Announcements

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**St. Mary’s University, established in 1852 and operated by the Society of Mary, is the oldest and largest University in Texas. There are 4200 students in five schools. The Department of Theology offers the B.A. and the B.A.T. (Bachelor of Applied Theology), and has M.A. programs in Theology and in Pastoral Ministry.**

**The Department of Theology of St. Mary’s University invites applications for a tenure-track position in Systematic Theology at the Assistant or Associate Professor level, depending on background and years of experience, beginning in August 1999. Ordinary course load is twelve hours per semester. A strong commitment to teaching is required, and a dedication to research is expected. Candidates for Associate level must be competent for consideration for future leadership roles in the department. Since this position concerns Roman Catholic doctrine, candidates for this position should be Catholic, grounded in the tradition and its development, and will be ex-**

**pected to participate actively in local parish/archdiocesan life. A completed doctorate from a Catholic institution is preferred. St. Mary’s University encourages applications from women and minority candidates.**

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Send a letter of application, curriculum vitae, and evidence of teaching excellence and scholarly performance to Rev. John A. Leies, S.M., S.T.D., Chairman of the Search Committee. St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas 78228-8585. If the Search Committee, upon review of these documents, desires further information, it will request a copy of graduate transcript and three letters of recommendation. Screening of candidates will begin January 4, 1999, and will continue until the position is filled.

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# Ex cathedra

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Ralph McInerny

My esteemed colleague Professor Astrik Gabriel tells the story of an academic who died and appeared before St. Peter to receive the grim news that he was condemned to hell. He was whisked away to a place of sybaritic luxury: his favorite music was his for the asking, his library was exquisite, the devil's food cake divine, his every wish seemed fulfilled. He was puzzled. He called the front desk to ask if there had been a mistake. What was the problem? He described his circumstances and reasonably asked, Where is the hell of it?

Ah, St. Peter replied. You must share it with a colleague.

One of the purposes of the Fellowship is to

help us overcome the version of the *odium theologicum* that travels across disciplinary borders. And of course, since our specialities are so various, neither our meetings nor our publications look like products of one field as opposed to another. What principally binds us together is the ambience within which we pursue our scholarly work.

As this issue was being prepared, the long-awaited encyclical *Fides et Ratio* appeared. While chiefly concerned with theology and philosophy, it is relevant to all scholarly work. We will be devoting much attention to it in these pages.

With the following issue, the *FCS Quarterly* will be enhanced by the addition of a number of consulting editors who will take responsibility for their special field of competence, soliciting contributions, proposing books for review, and of course writing themselves. It will be heavenly to share this wonderful task with colleagues.

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