

# Lay Leadership

Gerard V. Bradley

**L**iturgium authenticam, the new Vatican document on translation principles, just arrived. It supplies the occasion for a short reflection on the efficacy of papal documents addressed, as this one is, principally to bishops. And, in turn, a reflection on the laity's vocation.

There are more of these documents than you might think. You might think of the Instruction a few years ago concerning "the collaboration of the lay faithful in the ministry of priests." *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, too, was basically addressed to diocesan bishops, and concerned their oversight of Catholic higher education. Neither of these two documents, I think it fair to say, has had nearly the effect intended by its author.

Do you recall that *Veritatis Splendor*, too, was addressed "to all the bishops of the Catholic Church Regarding Certain Questions of the Church's Moral Teaching"? VS responded, the Pope said, to a "genuine crisis" in teaching—in seminaries and in faculties of theology—the foundations of moral theology. The Pope called his brothers in the Episcopate, with whom he shared the duty of safeguarding sound teaching, to greater vigilance on behalf of the truths of the faith.

VS has doubtlessly stirred much discussion in the United States. It has done good. But I doubt it has had the effect desired by its author.

The newly received document on principles of translation *has* to have significant effects. Not necessarily because the bishops will embrace it. They might. But even if they do not, the Holy See retains a trump card: withholding needed approval for new translations.

The fact remains that, sometimes, bishops do not seem receptive to a particular papal call to carry forward the new evangelization. And, let's face it: there is very little that the Vatican can, or even should, do in the face of opposition (often expressed through inaction) from a united, wealthy national conference. Think of Germany. Certainly with regard to *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* the Vatican has done all it can. The fate of the papal constitution is squarely up to the American bishops, and administrators (and faculty) at Catholic colleges. We should pray for them all.

What else can we do? The rest of us must increase, even if it seems that, sometimes, episcopal authority has decreased. This is especially true for lay persons working in Catholic apostolates. We are used to being the leaven. Now it looks like we are being called to ever greater leadership in our various undertakings. Always with the faith, and never contrary to the directives of our shepherds, it is indeed—as the Vatican Council suggested—the era of the laity. Whether we like it or not. ✠

*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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# Historical Perspectives on the Human Person

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What is man that thou art mindful of him?  
 And the son of man that thou visitest him?  
 For thou has made him a little lower than the angels,  
 and thou has crowned him with glory and honour.  
*(Psalm 8:4-5)*

Contemporary Western society—the most materially advanced in the history of the world—stands alone and without precedent in the high value it attributes to the individual person. Simultaneously, it stands exposed for the cheapness in which it holds human life. Individual rights, human rights, self-esteem, and related concepts dominate our culture's sense of the good that must at all costs be defended. Yet unborn babies, terminally ill patients, or those who simply “dis” others in the street are deemed expendable. Some lives embody the essence of all that is admirable and worthy; others are to be brushed aside as mere encumbrances. What remains to be explained is who gets to decide which lives deserve respect and protection and which do not? Which of us has a right to decide which lives are worth living?

The well known passage from the eighth Psalm with which I began reminds us of the unique place the human person enjoys in creation, delicately poised between God, whom we are made to serve, and other living creatures—animals, fish, and birds—over whom God has granted us dominion. Contemporary culture, certainly in the United States and Europe, readily embraces the idea of man's dominion, but it shows markedly less enthusiasm for the idea that we rank lower in the hierarchy of merit than the angels and God. Our age has lost the Psalmist's marvel at the unique blessings that God has

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showered upon us, preferring to assume that they are ours by right or by our own merit. Our complacency and self-satisfaction constitute the very essence of the culture of death against which the Holy Father warns us, for our boundless self-absorption blinds us to the value of others.

Caught in a dangerous paradox, our age simultaneously celebrates the unique value of human life and, however inadvertently, dismisses it as of no consequence. The life we are told to value is our own, and the more highly we value it the more easily we are tempted to discount the value of the lives of others. Preoccupation with self at the expense of the other is nothing new: Cain established the model at the dawn of time. But our culture is breaking new ground in its attempt to establish selfishness as a higher principle, swathed in words like choice and fulfillment and autonomy.

In historical perspective, fixation upon the rights and unique value of the individual is something new. Until very recently, societies, including the most sophisticated societies of the Western world, have primarily regarded individual persons as members—and often as representatives—of groups, notably as members of families, but also of clans, tribes, social castes or estates, religious orders, or various trades or professions. The preferred forms of classification have varied, but the prevailing principle has held firm. A human person has been understood as someone's daughter, father, wife, or cousin—one link in a kinship that defines all of its members.

Christianity's insistence that God loves each individual broke radically with these patterns. Christianity affirmed the value of each particular person independent of ethnicity or sex or social standing, pronouncing, in the words of St. Paul, that “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.” (*Galatians 3:28*.) More, in affirming the value of each, Christianity also affirmed the value of all. In other words, Christianity viewed the human person as both particular and embodied and as universal. The parable of the Good Samaritan was intended to teach Jesus' followers that the com-

mand to treat others with charity extended beyond the members of one's own ethnic group.

In Christian perspective, it was not possible truly to value any single person without valuing all persons or to value all persons (humanity) without valuing each single person. In both respects, Christianity broke with the tribalism of Ancient Israel and of much of the rest of the world, establishing new standards for the freedom each person should enjoy and for equality among persons. Christians did not, however, immediately attempt to impose their standards of spiritual dignity and spiritual equality upon relations among persons in the world. Over time, Christianity powerfully influenced the character of Western culture and even political life, but it owed much of its success to its remarkable ability to adapt to prevailing institutions and relations.

Only with the birth of modernism, notably in the dangerous—if widely celebrated—*cogito ergo sum* of René Descartes, did the disembedding of the individual person from the collectivity that grounded his identity begin to be viewed as a positive good. And only with the Enlightenment and the great eighteenth-century revolutions, notably the French Revolution of 1789, did the ideal of individual freedom attain preeminence over all forms of dependence and connection. In the waning years of the eighteenth century a political and intellectual vanguard proclaimed freedom the absolute antithesis of slavery and promulgated an understanding of freedom that favored the severing of all binding ties among human beings. Freedom in this lexicon means autonomy, self-determination, and independence from binding obligations, and this is the idea of freedom that has triumphed in our own time. Significantly, it originated as a radically secular idea, one frequently launched as a direct challenge to God. At the extreme, its consequences have been disastrous, but its most chilling implications may yet lie ahead. For it is the pursuit of this ideal of freedom that has brought us sexual liberation, abortion, assisted suicide, and an entire battery of assaults upon human life.

Before focusing upon the ways in which the radical pursuit of freedom has cheapened the value of the human person, however, it is necessary to acknowledge its many benefits. For the pursuit of

human freedom has heightened the dignity and improved the lives of countless persons throughout the globe. The same history that has brought us the progressive discrediting of ties among persons has promoted a remarkable improvement in our understanding of the intrinsic value and dignity of each person. During recent centuries in many parts of the world, we have witnessed the abolition of slavery, an improvement in the position of women, greater attention to the discrete needs of children, respect for the needs and dignity of those who suffer from various handicaps, and more. As Pope John Paul II has emphasized, these gains are not trivial, and on no account must we countenance their reversal. The puzzle remains that they have been accompanied by—and many would argue have depended upon—a hardening of attitudes towards the intrinsic value of all human persons and, especially, towards the binding ties among persons.

These two tendencies confront us with a paradox. On the one hand, we have a decreasing respect for the bonds among persons, and on the other an increasing commitment to the value and rights of previously oppressed groups of persons. On the one hand we have an inflated concern for the rights and sensibilities of the individual, on the other a callous disregard for any life that, in any way, inconveniences us. This paradox challenges us to rethink our understanding of the human person, and especially the nature of the freedom and rights to which each of us is entitled. A misguided understanding of freedom will inescapably shape our understanding of the claims of life. Presumably, if one values human life, one opposes its willful termination, especially in its most vulnerable forms. Yet many of those who claim to value human life view abortion, assisted suicide, and even infanticide as necessary to its defense. For only the right to secure liberation from unwanted obligations protects the individual's freedom, which many view as the essence of any life worth living.

There is nothing surprising in the inclination to celebrate freedom as freedom from rather than freedom for, with the "from" understood as oppression and the "for" understood as service. Throughout history, the majority of labor has been unfree and the majority of women have been subordinated to

men—initially their fathers or uncles and, later in life, their husbands or brothers. The Old Testament and Classical literature both abound with examples. Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Iphigenia, to further his prospects for victory in the war against Troy. Until recent times, Hindus in India practiced suttee whereby a widow was burned upon her husband's funeral pyre. Even in England, the sale of wives, although increasingly rare, persisted into the nineteenth century. Similarly, serfdom and slavery persisted throughout the world well into the nineteenth century and may still be found in some places today.

Under conditions in which even upper-class women rarely owned property in their own names and poor women might be beaten or bullied at will, it is not surprising that the early proponents of woman's rights embraced the analogy of slavery to describe their own condition and spoke of breaking the chains of their bondage. In practice, the women who were most likely to protest women's condition were from the urban middle class and sought to enjoy the same advantages of education and professional careers as their brothers. Such women normally benefited from codes of middle-class gentility and did not suffer from the horrors of abuse, sexual slavery, oppression, denigration, and desertion that plagued less privileged women—although some did. But they readily depicted their lot as indistinguishable from that of their less fortunate sisters. By the early twentieth century, the more radical were beginning to argue that marriage and childbearing were the true seedbeds of women's oppression, and to lobby for expanded legalization of divorce and artificial contraception.

Throughout these and related efforts, feminists continued to describe their goal as freedom from bondage and to claim their right to be regarded and treated as full human persons. Most people initially responded to the women's movement with hostility or incredulity, but few, even among opponents, claimed that women did not count as full human persons. They simply insisted that they were very different persons than men and, consequently, in need of a different social situation. The conviction that women and men, although both fully human persons, differed by nature persisted well into the

twentieth century. Doctors argued that women's bodies made them unfit for college, psychologists argued that women had a distinct criminal disposition, lawyers argued that women should not be admitted to the bar, countless people argued that women should not vote, and virtually everyone assumed they should not engage in armed combat. Yet within the comparatively brief span of a century or so, feminists began to convince growing numbers of people of the justice of their cause, and, in so doing, to convince many that the natural differences between women and men had been vastly exaggerated.

We would be rash to minimize the magnitude of their extraordinary rhetorical victory, which significantly expanded the meaning of individual freedom and ultimately resulted in a reconfiguration of the moral landscape. By rhetorically extending the absolute opposition between freedom and slavery to the condition of women, feminists had declared any limitation upon a woman's freedom—including those imposed by her own body—as illegitimate. The campaigns against slavery and the subordination of women both embodied a worthy—indeed necessary—commitment to increasing the dignity accorded to all human persons and the equality among them. Both, in other words, represented what we may reasonably view as moral progress. Yet both tacitly embraced the flawed premise that to be authentic, freedom must be unlimited, or better, unconditional, which, by a sleight of hand, reduced the ties among persons to another form of bondage.

Throughout the modern period, material change has undergirded and, arguably, accelerated changing attitudes towards the human person. Modern urban societies provide many more possibilities than traditional rural societies for people to live alone. In rural society the interdependence of persons constitutes the very fabric of life, and none can survive without mutual cooperation. Typically, rural societies also favor a clear articulation of authority whereby one member of the family or group assumes primary responsibility for and direction of the rest. Typically, that person has been the male head of a household, family, or tribe. What modern critics are loath to understand is that rarely—if ever—could such a head exercise his authority without the tacit or active collaboration of those over whom he presides.

We should, nonetheless, err in romanticizing traditional societies, although many find it tempting to do so. These were worlds in which life for many could often be “nasty, brutish, and short.” They were worlds in which cruelty among persons abounded and in which death stalked young and old alike. Not for nothing did the Palestine of Jesus’ time abound with cripples and lepers, hemorrhaging women and desperately ill children. Population has increased in the modern world because modern medicine has done so much to control disease and defer death, more than because of an increase in the number of births. The prevalence of disease and the likelihood of early death have led many traditional rural societies to value highly women’s fertility and the birth of children. Here too, however, romanticization misleads, for even groups that welcome births might turn around and kill infants they could not support. Traditional societies, even when Christian, did not necessarily manifest “respect for life” in the sense we use the phrase today. They did, however, know that their agricultural and military survival depended upon sustaining their population or increasing it.

These traditional rural worlds did not ordinarily celebrate the unique attributes of each person as we are wont to do today, but they did value each person as an essential member of the family, household, or community. No family could function for long without a mother or appropriate female substitute, typically a maiden aunt, and widowers with small children were normally quick to remarry. Similarly, it could not function for long without a strong senior male who, with or without assistance, could bring in crops, care for livestock, and defend against predators. Personal autonomy did not figure as the *summum bonum* among rural folk for whom interdependence provided the best guarantee of family or community survival. Modern critics of those bonds frequently focus upon the injustice of specific forms of subordination: slave to master, wife to husband, children to parents. But in repudiating the injustice of women’s subordination to men, for example, they end by attacking all binding ties as obstacles to women’s liberation, not just specific abuses, which cry out for uncompromising repudiation. The reasoning seems to be that binding ties have always

disadvantaged women and that abuse is the rule rather than the exception.

The acceleration of economic progress transformed the rural world, mainly by moving the economic center of gravity to cities, which offered new possibilities for people to live in smaller groups or even on their own. Drawing ever larger numbers of people into wage labor, capitalism insinuated itself into the interstices of families and households, reinforcing the culture’s growing tendency to encourage members to see themselves as individuals. Capitalism’s dependence upon an accelerating consumption of material goods furthered the cultural emphasis upon the psychological goods of autonomy, satisfaction of desire, and instant gratification. Secular psychology contributed mightily to the transformation of “I want” from evidence of selfishness or greed to a sign of mental health. In the same spirit, it declared war on the idea of sin, which it denounced as nothing more than a sadistic campaign to thwart people’s enjoyment of life. Multinational corporations have powerfully supported, and indeed, advanced these tendencies, for their interests do not benefit from stable families, but rather from a large pool of unencumbered employees, who are prepared to live with their cell phones always turned on and a suitcase always packed.

Some modern scholars have delighted in exposing the ways in which traditional societies held persons in thrall to repressive norms, primarily fostered by punitive, misogynist, patriarchal, and hierarchical forms of Christianity—especially Catholicism. Others have tended to romanticize folk and working-class cultures, presenting them as more spontaneous and less repressed than the middle-class culture of the modern urban world. Both views contain a measure of truth and a measure of falsehood. But both, however inadvertently, suggest a greater emphasis upon the bonds among persons than commonly prevails today. Whether one views the traditional world as good or bad—or, more plausibly, a mixture of both—it was a world in which people developed a sense of themselves as persons as a function of their relations with others, often beginning with their relation to God. Nor were these attitudes unique to Christians. In different versions, they prevailed among Jews, Muslims, Hindus, and Confucians, as

well as among adherents to various forms of polytheism, animism, and other systems of belief.

Here, I do not wish to engage in debates about the deeper character of the various faiths but simply to underscore that all have shared a sense of that the individual could only prosper in union with the group. These were faiths that viewed the human person as an integral part of a larger group whose needs would take precedence over the specific person's whims and desires—faiths that promoted unambiguous messages about good and bad, that attributed little importance to individual subjectivity, and that had little interest in progress. Like all others, traditional oral cultures do change, but as they lack written records, they do not register change but rather absorb it into “the way things have always been.” Modern secular cultures, in sharp contrast, focus upon the dynamism of change and the superiority of the “new.”

Traditional societies' conservatism with respect to the rights and independence and of the individual, like their strong commitment to holding persons to prescribed social and familial roles, represented above all a commitment to the survival and internal coherence of the family or community. In this spirit, they rejected individual judgment as an appropriate guide for behavior, not least because they fully recognized the disruptive power of individual passions, notably anger and desire. Saint Paul said it clearly in *Galatians* (5:13-15): “For you have been called to liberty, brethren; only do not use liberty as an occasion for sensuality, but by charity serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if you bite and devour one another, take heed or you will be consumed by one another.” Mindful of the dangers of strife within families and among neighbors, traditional societies might enforce their convictions through methods that seem repressive or even brutal today. Even the more rigid, however, did not often rely upon the extreme measures that some contemporary groups have been known to use, such as killing girls who try to attend school. Today's extremes, as Bernard Lewis, the great authority on Islam, has argued, primarily embody a panicky reaction against what are perceived as the excesses of the disintegration and decadence of contemporary Western society.

Those who fear the destructive potential of Western cultures do not err. It is child's play to muster examples of rampant consumerism and what Karl Marx called the fetishism of commodities, which today seems to be degenerating into the commodification of personal relations. Even the most casual acquaintance with American media—especially television—reveals a world that has all but dehumanized persons by severing the binding connections among them. For all the talk of the warmth and support of substitute, alternate, or proxy families, American culture depicts a world in which family represents no more than a person's current choice, which may easily be replaced by another choice. We have never lacked for critics of the symptoms of this culture of easy-come, easy-go, and recent years may even have seen an increase in the defense of marriage, attacks upon the harm that divorce wreaks upon children, and defense of the value of modesty and premarital chastity. We have dedicated groups and individuals who oppose abortion and so-called assisted suicide, and we are apparently seeing an appreciable increase in the number of Americans who have doubts about the desirability of legal abortion, especially after the first trimester. What we lack—and the lack is devastating—is an insistent, concerted counter-offensive. We lack it because more often than not even those who oppose many specific forms of social decomposition accept the main premise that underlies them all, namely the primacy of the convenience and comfort of the individual.

Recently, I had the opportunity to speak with a group of faithful Catholic women, many of whom attend daily Mass, all of whom rightly consider themselves devout. Blessed with considerable material comfort, they have all given generously to the parish for decades, and would all consider themselves loyal supporters of the Church. During my talk, I mentioned my growing horror at abortion as one of the important elements in my own conversion to Catholicism. When we broke into informal conversation over lunch, one of the women drew me aside because she wanted me to know that notwithstanding her respect for the teachings of the Magisterium, if she had a thirteen-year old daughter who was impregnated during a rape, she would whisk her off to an abortionist before you could say “boo.” Startled,

I responded, "And what if she were twenty-three and finishing law school?" She looked startled and suddenly abashed.

An intelligent woman, my acquaintance readily understood my point that, with each passing day, we Catholics seem to be finding it easier to acquiesce in the logic of the secular world. The results are disastrous for our understanding of the human person and our ability to sustain binding relations with others. We have too readily acquiesced in the secular view of the human person as, above all, an individual who is fundamentally disconnected from other individuals. The disconnected individual may enter into relations with others, but the relations remain contractual, subject to termination at the choice of either party. Such instrumental relations are bad enough for adults, but they are disastrous for children, not to mention the handicapped, the unborn, and the terminally ill. More, they are in direct contradiction to the teachings and spirit of our faith. For how are we to understand Jesus' repeated commands that we love one another as ourselves, if not as a command to recognize that our own personhood depends upon our recognition of the other. In this sense, the modern era has not merely transformed the idea of the person, it has effectively abandoned it in favor of the subjective individual.

The irony of our situation is painful. In historical perspective, we appear to place a higher value on the individual—as an individual—than any previous society, yet we increasingly view the individual as essentially a subjective being whose will and desires should determine what he or she is due. Only in this spirit would it be so easy to present an unborn baby—and, for some people, one that has been born as well—as nothing more than an obstacle to its mother's freedom to pursue the goals she has chosen. Rather than emphasizing the mother's obligation to the human life she is carrying, our culture increasingly insists upon her right to be free of it. The mother's right to choose thus negates the unborn child's right to live, and by claiming this right to deny the personhood of another, the mother negates her own. No longer a person whose being, sense of self, and place in the world depend upon her relations with others, beginning with her primary relation with God, the woman becomes an isolated individual,

disconnected from others whom she can see only as objects to be manipulated or obstacles to be cleared away.

Christianity led the way in promoting a view of each person as valuable, unique, beloved, and endowed with freedom. Yet Christianity also presupposed that each person derived meaning from relations with others—that the very essence of personhood lay in the recognition of the equal personhood of the other. Thus, the Christian ideals of the value and freedom of each individual coexisted comfortably with a culture that placed a much higher value on the group than the individual, who was primarily understood as a member of the group. The Reformation placed a new emphasis on the individual, but Luther, Calvin, and their heirs remained tied to a communal ethos. Their doctrine of *Sola Scriptura*, however, opened the way for a disastrous slide into a rising secular bourgeois individualism that, in our time, has largely overwhelmed the protestant Churches and—let us admit frankly—is now threatening our own. For as individualism gradually triumphed over the collective values of traditional culture, it did so in radically secular terms and usually in direct rebellion against the Church.

This history has left us a dangerous and insidious legacy, for the individualism that spearheaded a broad cultural revolt against the teachings of the Church also insinuated itself into the thinking of Christians, including Catholics. The goods that individualism purported to offer are almost irresistibly seductive: tolerance of the behavior of others; delight in bodies and sexuality; acceptance of oneself, complete with flaws; the legitimacy of desire; and on and on. Consequently, any attempt to oppose or criticize them seems ungenerous, judgmental, and intolerant. Who am I to tell another how to live his or her life? What gives me the right to impose punitive values upon another?

In *Writings on an Ethical Life*, Peter Singer reaffirms his argument that "the life of a fetus... is of no greater value than the life of a non-human animal at a similar level of rationality, self consciousness, awareness, capacity to feel, etc., and that since no fetus is a person, no fetus has the same claim to life as a person." This reasoning, Singer continues, necessarily applies "to the newborn baby as much as to the fetus." Thus, if we

but free ourselves from the “emotionally moving but strictly irrelevant aspects of the killing of a baby, we can see that the grounds for not killing persons do not apply to newborn infants.”<sup>1</sup>

Singer’s chilling perspective exposes the ultimate logic of the emphasis upon the individual’s right to choose, for in Singer’s world, the individual may first decide what counts as life before deciding between life and death. By this sinister logic, the choices of rational individuals may never be judged evil, for they are always choosing life as they define it. Thus

does our purported and seductive solicitude for the freedom of each individual mask the ominous tendency in our Western societies to objectify the very individuals we pretend to celebrate. Substituting rights for mutual bonds, we are substituting the individual for the human person, thereby freeing ourselves to deny the humanity of others. Thus does the slaughter of the innocents become “a woman’s right to choose.” ❧

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Presbyterians Pro-Life News* (Fall 2000): 3; [PresProLife@compuserve.com](mailto:PresProLife@compuserve.com).

## The Vocation of a Catholic Teacher/Scholar

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I want to provide a framework for my comments on the vocation of a Catholic teacher/scholar by offering some reflections, first, on the universal call to holiness addressed to every Christian, and then on more specific vocations, and, finally, on the personal vocation of each individual Christian. I will then focus on the vocation proper to the teacher/scholar.

### The Universal Call to Holiness: The Vocation Common to All Christians

One of the most profound truths central to the teaching of Vatican Council II is that “it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man becomes clear.

Adam the first man, was a type of him who was to come, Christ the Lord. Christ, the new Adam, in the very revelation of the mystery of the Father and of

his love, fully reveals man to himself, and brings to light his most high calling” (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 22). In revealing to us our “most high calling” or vocation Jesus summons us to follow him and to be “perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5:48). Truly, “the followers of Christ,” as Vatican II insists, are “called by God not in virtue of their own works but by his design and grace.” Moreover, “justified in the Lord Jesus, they have been made sons of God in the baptism of faith and partakers of the divine nature, and so are truly sanctified” (*ibid*).

This shows us is that the ultimate basis of our vocation to holiness is our *being as sons and daughters of God himself*. The basis of this vocation, in short, is what Blessed Josemaría Escrivá called our “divine filiation,” whereby we are literally *divinized*, made sharers in the divine nature.<sup>1</sup> We become God’s children and answer his call to holiness when we accept the saving revelation given to us through Jesus and commit ourselves to be his disciples and to “follow in his steps.” And we do this when we make our baptismal commitment. Most of us, of course, were baptized as infants, and others—our godparents—made this commitment for us, acting on our behalf. But, as we matured in the faith, we have made this commitment for ourselves, for instance, when we were confirmed. Moreover, we are asked to renew this commitment—this commitment to become holy as the heavenly Father is holy and to take up our cross daily and follow Jesus—every year during the Easter vigil.

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*Editor’s note: This paper was given as the keynote address at the organizing meeting of the Catholic Teachers’ Guild of Toronto, Canada on March 31, 2001.*

And we renew this commitment every time that, through God's grace, we repent of our sins, receive his forgiveness in the sacrament of penance and reconciliation and pledge to amend our lives and walk worthily of the vocation to which he has called us.

I have referred to our baptismal "commitment." But what is meant by "commitment," and why is the baptismal commitment so crucial? A commitment is a special kind of free choice, the kind that, as Pope John Paul II emphasizes in his Encyclical *Veritatis splendor* (no. 65), "shape(s) a person's entire moral life, and serve(s) as bounds within which other particular everyday choices can be situated and allowed to develop." Thus in order to understand properly the significance of the baptismal commitment, we must recognize the existential and religious meaning of free choice.

John Paul II emphasizes this in *Veritatis splendor*. There he eloquently expresses the truth that it is in and through the actions we freely choose to do every day of our lives that we *determine ourselves and give to ourselves our identity as persons; we make ourselves to be the persons we are*. As the Pope says, "It is precisely through his acts that man attains perfection as man, as one who is called to seek his Creator of his own accord and freely to arrive at full and blessed perfection by cleaving to him" (no. 71). Our freely chosen deeds, he continues, "do not produce a change merely in the state of affairs outside of man but, to the extent that they are deliberate choices, they give moral definition to the very person who performs them, determining his profound spiritual traits" (ibid.). In developing this great truth John Paul II calls attention to a beautiful passage from Saint Gregory of Nyssa's *Life of Moses* that magnificently makes clear the existential, religious significance of our daily deeds:

All things subject to change and to becoming never remain constant, but continually pass from one state to another, for better or worse .... Now, human life is always subject to change; it needs to be born ever anew... but here birth does not come about by a foreign intervention, as in the case with bodily beings...; it is the result of a free choice. Thus *we are* in a certain sense our own parents, creating ourselves as we will, by our decisions (cited in *VS*, no. 71).

Thus each free choice a person makes to do

something involves "a *decision about oneself* and a setting of one's own life for or against the Good, for or against the Truth, and ultimately, for or against God" (no. 65).

But some choices can rightly be called "commitments" because they shape a person's entire moral life and serve as bounds within which other particular everyday choices can be, as John Paul II says, "situated and allowed to develop" (*VS*, no. 65). An example of a choice of this kind is the choice to be married, whereby two persons, a man and a woman, freely establish one another as irreplaceable and substitutable in each other's lives and commit themselves to live as "one flesh" and to honor, respect, and pursue the "goods" or "blessings" of marriage, the goods of handing on and educating human life and of faithful conjugal love, and in living out their married life they must see to it that their other, everyday choices, are integrated into this overarching commitment.

But the most fundamental commitment or choice of the Christian is the *baptismal commitment* or choice to be a Christian, a living member of Christ's body, the Church. At the heart of this commitment is a free, self-determining choice, one made possible only by God's saving grace, whereby a person freely commits himself to live henceforward *as a Christian*, i.e., as truly a child of God and brother and sister of Jesus, whose only will, like that of Jesus himself, is to do what is pleasing to the Father. In and through this overarching free and self-determining choice one commits oneself to a way of life, to the following of Christ, to the pursuit of holiness. Through this self-determining choice one commits oneself, as St. Paul puts it, to complete in his own flesh "what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, the Church" (Col 1:24). This most fundamental choice "which qualifies the moral life and engages freedom on a radical level before God" is, the pope reminds us, the decision of faith, of the *obedience of faith* (cf. ROM 16:26) "by which man makes a total and free self-commitment to God, offering 'the full submission of intellect and will to God as he reveals.'"<sup>2</sup> This faith, which works through love (cf. GAL 5:6), comes from the core of man, from his "heart" (cf. ROM 10:10), whence it is called to bear fruit in works (cf. MATT 12:33-35; LK 6:43-45; ROM 8:5-10; GAL 5:22) (*VS*, no. 66).

To carry out this fundamental commitment a Christian must try to integrate into it *all* the choices he makes *every day* of his life; he carries it out fully only if he makes every choice of every day of his life conform to it. It is only if he succeeds in doing this that he can in truth become fully the being God wants him to be: a saint. And this is quite a task! Indeed, it is the basic task of our lives and one impossible to carry out on our own but possible in, with, and through Christ, our best and wisest friend,<sup>3</sup> who will enable us to live truly as his disciples if we but ask for his help.

To summarize this matter in a slightly different way I can say that in and through the choice to be baptized, we *give ourselves*, with the help of God's grace, *the identity of children of God, brothers and sisters of Jesus*. Our vocation to be holy, to which we commit ourselves in choosing to be baptized, means fundamentally that *we are to become what we already are: God's faithful children, members of the divine family, alive with God's own life, willing to do only what is pleasing to the Father*.

We know that some kinds of choices are utterly incompatible with our basic commitment "to be" other Christs. These are the choices to do what is gravely immoral, to sin mortally. Mortal sin, because it is irreconcilable with love of God and neighbor, is totally opposed to our baptismal commitment to holiness. But venial sin, too, although in some way compatible with love of God, is not compatible with perfect love of God or with the holiness to which we are called. An analogy may be helpful here. Telling a "small lie" to one's wife to preserve domestic tranquility (e.g., telling your wife that indeed you did mail the letter she gave you to post when in fact you had forgotten to do so) is in some way compatible with love of your spouse (while adultery is completely incompatible with such love), but it is surely not compatible with *perfect love* of one's spouse, and husbands (and wives) are called to deepen and perfect their love for one another throughout their lives and to root out everything that can mar or block that love. Similarly, in our common pursuit of perfection, in our efforts to become holy, even as the heavenly Father is holy, we must root from our lives deliberate venial sin. But, unfortunately, each of us has, as it were, his or her favorite venial sins. We

know we ought not commit these sins if we are to be fully the persons God wants us to be--his faithful and loving children--but we nonetheless continue to commit them *because we want to*.

## More Specific Vocations and Personal Vocation

**I**n carrying out their common vocation to holiness Christians are called to more specific vocations. These include the states of life to which individual Christians are summoned, some to the priesthood or religious life, others to marriage, and still others to the vocation of unmarried men and women in the world. The great majority of Christians are lay people. Their more specific vocation is to seek the holiness to which God calls them *in the world in which they live*. As Vatican Council II has so clearly taught us,

By reason of their special vocation, it belongs to the laity to seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and directing them according to God's will. They live in the world, that is, they are engaged in each and every work and business of the earth and in the ordinary circumstances of social and family life, which, as it were, constitute their very existence. There they are called by God that, being led by the spirit of the Gospel they may contribute to the sanctification of the world, as from within like a leaven, by fulfilling their own particular duties. Thus, especially by the witness of their life, resplendent in faith, hope, and charity, they must manifest Christ to others. It pertains to them in a special way so to illuminate and order all temporal things with which they are so closely associated that these may be effected and grow according to Christ and may be to the glory of the Creator and Redeemer (*Lumen gentium*, no. 31).

Precisely because lay people work out their vocation in the world, "*the 'world' thus becomes*, as John Paul II says, "*the place and means for the lay faithful to fulfill their Christian vocation*" (*Christifideles laici*, no. 13). Their vocation to sanctify themselves and to sanctify the world, he continues, "ought to be called *an essential and inseparable element of the new life of baptism ... [and to be recognized as] intimately connected to mission and to the responsibility entrusted to the lay faithful in the Church*" (*ibid*, no. 17). saying this, the

Holy Father echoes the thought of Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, who insisted that “everyday life is the true setting [place, *lugar* in Spanish] for your lives as Christians ... It is in the midst of the most material things of the earth that we must sanctify ourselves, serving God and all mankind.”<sup>4</sup> Blessed Josemaría likewise emphasized that we fulfill our vocation to be holy by sanctifying our work, sanctifying ourselves in our work, and sanctifying others through our work.<sup>5</sup>

Thus a more specific vocation of a Christian incorporates not only the state of life to which he or she is called—the priesthood, the religious life, marriage, being an unmarried person in the world—but also the work one freely undertakes to be of service to God and neighbor. And one specific kind of work is that of teaching.

In addition, God speaks personally to each and every Christian—priest, religious, lay person, doctor, lawyer, construction worker, business man, teacher—calling him or her to a unique personal vocation, inviting him or her to play a unique and indispensable role in carrying out his redemptive work. Vatican Council II insisted that each one of us has a personal vocation to carry out: “by our faith,” the Council Fathers declared, “we are bound all the more to fulfill these responsibilities [our earthly ones as Christians] according to the vocation of each one” (*Gaudium et spes*, no. 43). And Pope John Paul II emphasized, in the first encyclical of his pontificate, *Redemptor hominis*, that, “for the whole community of the People of God and for each member of it what is in question is not just a specific ‘social membership’; rather, for each and every one what is essential is a particular vocation.... We must see first and foremost Christ saying in a special way to each member of the community, ‘Follow Me’” (no. 71).

## The Special Vocation of the Catholic Teacher/Scholar

**L**ike other Catholics, Catholic teacher/scholars, who undoubtedly desire, deep within themselves, to be of service to the students entrusted to them, can at times fail, perhaps seriously, to be true to their vocation as persons called to live out their Christian vocation to holiness in the classroom. In what follows I will not be concerned with the more serious failures of teachers to serve their students, betraying them by deliberately poisoning their minds, planting seeds of skepticism and cynicism, etc. Rather, after considering some “prior principles” that ought to guide a Catholic teacher/scholar in the carrying out of his vocation, I will focus on the everyday “work” of the Catholic teacher/scholar that he is called to sanctify if he is to become holy and help others to be holy. I will conclude by briefly considering some of the “little things” that enter into the life of a teacher/scholar and provide opportunities for fulfilling one’s vocation as Christ wants us to. First, however, what “prior principles” are operative in the life of a Catholic teacher?

### Prior principles

I believe that there are three major principles of this kind. The first is *the unity of all truth*; the second (a corollary, as it were to the first) is *fidelity to the magisterium of the Church*; and the third is *the dedication of intelligence to the service of Christ*.

As we have seen already, a Catholic’s basic commitment is the baptismal commitment, whereby he freely chooses to live with, in, and for Jesus and to shape his entire life in accord with the saving truths professed by the Church that is the Lord’s life-giving spouse; that he may become holy as the baptismal



to the students entrusted to him. The Catholic teacher/scholar, moreover, comes to his work intellectually certain, by virtue of his faith, that specific propositions about human existence are true and of utmost importance. Some of these truths, he realizes, can be shown to be true by human intelligence, for instance, that man is a person and as such superior in kind and not merely in degree to other animals, that man is free to determine his own life by his own free choices. Others, he recognizes, cannot be shown to be true by unaided human intelligence but God has nonetheless graciously revealed these supremely important truths—for example, that human nature has been wounded by sin but that human persons, by sharing in the saving death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, God's Son made man, can become truly new creatures, members of the divine family, alive with God's own life and able, with God's never-failing help, to live a new kind of life. And he holds that belief in these truths, although beyond human reason, is not irrational but reasonable and credible.

But the Catholic teacher/scholar's certitude about these truths does not forestall honest inquiry. His motto is not faith at rest, but faith seeking understanding—as John Paul II so beautifully shows in his encyclical *Fides et ratio*. He is certain that his faith cannot be overcome. He knows that his Catholic faith and the certitude of truth acquired in any other way cannot come into conflict, because the font of all truth is the one true and holy God who does not ask his children to deny their humanity and intelligence but wants them to exercise it to the full.

Thus the first prior principle of the Catholic teacher/scholar is the *unity of all truth*.

***Second prior principle: the dedication of the intelligence.***

A second prior principle of the Catholic teacher/scholar is *fidelity to the teaching of the magisterium of the Church*. The Catholic teacher/scholar makes his own the Church's own self-understanding. And according to this self-understanding the Church professes that a more-than-human authority that has been invested by Christ himself in the college of bishops under the headship of the pope. This teaching authority has as its responsibility the *cura animarum*, the care of souls. Like Peter and the Apostles before them, the pope

and bishops have the serious responsibility of feeding Christ's flock, of giving them the words of everlasting life. It has the God-given authority to settle disputes that may arise within the Church and to settle questions about the faith and its meaning for human existence.<sup>7</sup>

In *Veritatis splendor*, Pope John Paul II took care to note that the "Magisterium does not bring to the Catholic conscience truths which are extraneous to it; rather it brings to light the truths *it already ought to possess*, developing them from the starting point of the primordial act of faith" (no. 64). This is a truth worth pondering. In essence it means that the teaching of the magisterium is meant to remind us of *who we are: God's own children, brothers and sisters of Christ, led by the Spirit, willing to do only what is pleasing to the Father*. In short, it is meant to remind us of our vocation to holiness.

A third prior principle operative in the vocation of a Catholic teacher/scholar is the dedication of his intelligence to the service of Christ.

Etienne Gilson, surely one of the greatest Catholic teacher/scholars of the last century, developed this idea magnificently. Precisely as a teacher/scholar, a Catholic dedicates his intelligence to Christ. He realizes that if he is to be a good teacher/scholar, piety alone is not sufficient. He must discipline himself, acquire the skills necessary to achieve learning in a given field of inquiry, and devote himself to a life of study. "No one, nor anything," Gilson observed, "obliges the Christian to busy himself with science, art, or philosophy, for other ways of serving God are not wanting; but *if that is the way of serving God that he has chosen*, the end itself, which he proposes for himself in studying them, binds him to excellence .... That is the only way of becoming a good servant."<sup>8</sup> Only in this way is it his intelligence that the Catholic teacher/scholar puts at the service of Christ. Still, it is as a *Catholic* that he does so, and this is central. For as a Catholic, the teacher/scholar knows that the whole of nature, and the human intelligence that is its crown, is in need of redemption, and it is his vocation to participate in its redemption by seeking, through his intelligence, to conform his life to the saving truths of the gospel. As Gilson put it, "the intelligence is good, but it is only so if, by it and in it, the whole nature turns toward its end, which is to

conform itself to God.” But, he continued, “by taking itself as its own end, the intelligence has turned away from God, turning nature with it, and grace alone can aid both of them in returning to what is really their end, since it is their origin. The ‘world’ is just this refusal to participate in grade which separates nature from God, and the intelligence itself is of the world insofar as it joins with it in rejecting grace.”<sup>9</sup>

The Catholic teacher/scholar, in short, rejects the kind of “worldliness” exemplified by Pelagianism, i.e., the pagan and worldly claim that man can redeem himself and perfect himself all by himself. The Catholic teacher/scholar, by dedicating his intelligence to Christ, is inspired by the belief that the primary condition for attaining truth is humility and the obedience of faith, which he regards not as a restriction on intellectual freedom but as a wonderful, divine gift opening the human mind to entire realm of truth otherwise inaccessible to it and at the same time enabling him to more fully understand the truths that he can grasp by the exercise of his intelligence.

## The Catholic teacher/scholar's everyday work

I will consider the following areas:

- (1) preparation; (2) classroom presentation;
- (3) correcting papers and exams; (4) relations with students; and (5) research and publication.

### 1. Preparation

Preparing to teach can be considered as (A) remote; (B) proximate; and (C) immediate.

#### *Remote preparation*

Remote preparation requires the Catholic teacher, first of all, to acquire all the competency he can in his chosen area. This is absolutely indispensable if one is to dedicate one's intelligence to the service of Christ and to pursue holiness of life in one's work. Here it is worth noting that in *Fides et ratio* Pope John Paul II noted with sadness that “many people stumble through life ... without knowing where they are going,” and that at times “this happens because those whose vocation it is to give cultural expression to their thinking no longer took to truth, preferring

quick success to the toil of patient enquiry” (no. 6). It is the Catholic teacher/scholar's vocation, at least in part, to “give cultural expression to his thinking,” and he cannot rightly do this unless he disciplines himself in order to master the subject matter he chooses to teach. This, after all, is the “work” he freely undertakes and that he must sanctify if he is to become holy. How can one do this, how can one turn “the prose of each day into heroic verse,” as Blessed Josemaría put matters,<sup>10</sup> if one is not properly prepared for the work he freely chooses to do?

Moreover, not only must the Catholic teacher/scholar acquire the learning and the skills necessary competently to teach in his chosen area, he must continually deepen and enrich this learning and acquire new skills in order to keep abreast with developments in his field of study. At times this may require him to gain at least reading knowledge of a new language or competence in new technological developments that will help him to communicate better with his students.

#### *Proximate preparation*

Proximate preparation is preparing first for the specific courses and then the classes that one is to give at the times scheduled. If the teacher does not adequately prepare his courses and the classes for each day, he is not only failing to carry out his God-given and freely chosen vocation but he is also cheating his students, robbing them or their parents of money if tuition is paid, and cheating his employer. Moreover, since emergencies and unforeseen circumstances will inevitably arise that could prevent one from preparing properly for a class, let us say the day before it is scheduled, a Catholic teacher/scholar who wants to carry out his vocation to the best of his ability will have the prudence to keep several steps ahead of the class schedule, so that he will not be stumbling about or spouting hot air when situations of this kind arise.

Preparing classes, particularly if one is just beginning to teach or is going to offer a course he has never taught before, can be very demanding. But even after a teacher has had years of classroom experience the need to prepare each class properly still exists. One should, perhaps, throw away one's old notes, or at least revise them thoroughly in the light

of new knowledge. Not only ought the teacher assiduously prepare the subject matter to be covered, he ought also adequately consider the way in which it can be best presented to *this particular group of students*. He realizes, or soon will realize, that modes of presentation that “clicked” with one group of students, are completely out of sync with others, and careful thought needs to be given to the best way of presenting material.

Moreover, even if one has prepared several classes in advance, a teacher/scholar conscious of his responsibilities and filled with love for his students will take the time, prior to entering the classroom, to review the material at least in his mind, anticipating difficulties that may arise, devising fresh ways of presenting the material, etc.

#### *Immediate preparation*

By this I mean how one prepares to enter the classroom and begin the class. In the Gospel according to Matthew we read: “if you bring your gift to the altar and there recall that your brother has anything against you, go first to be reconciled with your brother, and then come and offer your gift” (5:23-24). Analogously, if as we are about to enter the classroom, we realize that we are not prepared adequately to teach the class scheduled, it would be better for us to give the students a study period so that we will not waste their time. I believe that a Catholic teacher, prior to entering the classroom, should ask for God’s help in presenting the material and, if possible, begin the class with a prayer. One should remind oneself that classroom teaching, if it is to be integrated rightly into one’s baptismal commitment to holiness, must be a work of love. It cannot be a work of love if one sloppily prepares it and if one does not love the students one is about to teach.

#### **2. Classroom presentation**

Here I will be brief. I believe that certain things must be avoided. The first is a *boring* presentation. We have all of us suffered through horribly boring classes, and usually they were boring because they were either inadequately prepared, or the teacher found the subject matter boring or the job of teaching it boring. If a teacher ever becomes bored with the subject he is teaching or with the job of teaching

it, then in honesty he ought to resign his post.

A second thing to avoid is a failure to speak loudly enough so that one can be heard or to write (if this is done on the blackboard) illegibly. Care must be taken to present the material intelligibly to the students.

More positively, any teacher, but above all a Catholic teacher/scholar, ought to do everything that lies within his power to communicate to the students a love of learning, particularly of the subject he is teaching. The teacher, in other words, ought himself to be in love with learning and love the subject matter he has chosen to teach. He has obviously found something attractive in it or else it hardly makes any sense why he would have chosen to master this area of study and seek to communicate it to others. Just as romance in marriage needs to be kept alive, so too the teacher must nurture his love of learning and in particular his love of the subject matter he teaches. Only if he does so can he hope to pass this love on to his students.

The Catholic teacher/scholar ought also to be cheerful in presenting the material. By this I mean that he must help his students to see that learning, and particularly learning about this subject matter, can be an occasion of joy, of coming to a deeper appreciation of God’s goodness and the bonds of fellowship that the common pursuit of learning can forge and of the joy that this can bring. The teacher ought not to come across to his students as a crab, as one who thinks life in general, and teaching, particularly teaching *these students*, is a pain, a kind of martyrdom. Quite the opposite should be the mood communicated.

Finally, the teacher must be alert to student reaction, ready to clarify difficult matters, patient in answering questions but preventing anyone from monopolizing his attention or leading matters astray, down dead ends or into irrelevant byways.

#### **3. Correcting papers and exams**

This, I believe, is perhaps the hardest task in the teacher’s life, but it is absolutely imperative that the teacher carry it out meticulously and carefully. The essential issue here is fairness to the students. It is necessary to read their papers and exams thoroughly, and resist any temptation to give a higher or lower

grade than merited because of any feelings toward particular students. Some papers and exams will be a joy to read and correct—the better ones, others will drive one to the wall in attempting to make sense of them, and still others may evoke anger—student incompetence and/or laziness. After a while, one begins to know one's students and to know which ones will do well and which ones will turn in papers and exams very difficult to correct and grade properly. Although no hard and fast rules can be given, I might suggest that one first correct exams and papers that, one suspects, will be the most challenging to correct and grade properly. If one puts them at the end, it's possible that one will be in a hurry to get the task over with and fail to give them the attention needed for a proper evaluation.

I also believe that, ordinarily, particularly for high school, college and university students, one is not properly responding to student papers merely by giving a grade. One should try to comment on the papers, offering constructive criticisms or suggestions for further developing a topic if the paper is quite good. To do this will demand more of the teacher's time and energy, but a Catholic teacher/scholar who wants to sanctify his work, sanctify himself in it, and sanctify others through it, will want to do it. Students will deeply appreciate the teacher's efforts in this regard. Only in this way will the love that the teacher should have for his students be deepened as it should be.

#### **4. Relations with students**

It is only natural for teachers to find some students easier to get along with than others and find others very difficult to handle and still others whom one would prefer not to teach at all because of their attitudes and behavior—and perhaps some students should be expelled. But the Catholic is required to respect and indeed love each one of his students, to treat them with dignity and respect, while firmly maintaining discipline.

It is wrong to treat students "equally," because of real differences among them that require different treatment. But it is absolutely imperative to treat them as "equitably," that is, justly, fairly, with consideration and respect. Although some may be "favorite" because of their intellectual and other

skills and character traits, none should be the teacher's "pet" or special friend. I think that the teacher should be friendly to all his students and, in a real sense, to be their friend. But teacher and student must never become chums or buddies. I think that as one's graduate students come to the end of their doctoral studies and when one has been the student's mentor, a particular teacher-student bond can be allowed to develop. It *may* even be possible at this stage to allow the student to address one by one's first name, but I believe that it is more prudent to wait until one's student can be regarded as one's "colleague" before allowing him to address one by one's first name. It is, I believe, wrong to allow students to call one by one's first name. If the Catholic teacher is to do his work properly he must maintain a professional "distance" between himself and his students. It is not proper for him to become their chums or buddies because this would not honor the difference between teacher and student. Familiarity can and does breed contempt, and true friendship is something far different from familiarity.

#### **5. Research and publication**

Some Catholic teacher/scholars, in order properly to carry out their vocation, are called to do original research and publication. I thus wish briefly to address this matter.

I think the principal thing to avoid is publishing merely for the sake of publishing. In my opinion, many allegedly scholarly journals are filled with junk that is a waste of time to read, and at times, particularly because of the "publish or perish" atmosphere prevalent in many institutions, one is tempted to get something published just for the sake of publishing something.

If research and publication is demanded or desired, there is plenty to do. The Church needs good research and publication, not only in such areas as philosophy, theology, Church history, etc. but in every area of human enquiry, for this contributes to the glory of God and the redemption of the world. One should select an area for research because of its intrinsic interest, its importance in one's field of study and/or to the lives of people today, etc., and an area where one can competently carry out one's investigations.

In doing research for publication the principal requirement is honest research and publication. One must not make claims that are not rooted in the truth or that go beyond the evidence and arguments advanced, and this at times is a temptation. Moreover, one must be fair in presenting and particularly in criticizing the views of persons with whom one disagrees. All too frequently one discovers that a particular author's position has been caricatured or distorted, a straw man has been erected, precisely so that one can, as it were, demolish his opponent. I could offer many illustrations of this, but there is no need to do so.

### "Little" things

By "little things" here I do not mean those central to the Catholic teacher/scholar's work as teacher/scholar (e.g., preparing classes well, taking care to correct a student's misunderstanding) but rather what Blessed Josemaría called the "trifling opportunities that come our way" every day<sup>11</sup>—the way we greet others, cope with the frustrations we encounter (traffic jams, missing chalk, computer failure, etc. etc.). All of these trifling opportunities must be turned into occasions of showing love to others. Indeed, these trifling matters are, as it were, the "oil, the fuel we need to keep our flame alive and light shining."<sup>12</sup> Blessed Josemaría says that one of the greatest dangers we face in fulfilling our vocation to be saints in the midst of the world lies in imagining that "God cannot be here, in the things of each instant, because they are so simple and ordinary."<sup>13</sup> Great holiness, the founder of Opus Dei rightly noted, "consists in carrying out the 'little' duties of each day."<sup>14</sup>

### Conclusion

The vocation of a Catholic teacher/scholar is a specific way of living out the common Christian vocation to holiness, a vocation given to every Christian when he was baptized and freely choose to be a Christian, a follower of Jesus, his brother or sister,

alive with his life, led by his Spirit, obedient to his loving Father. The Catholic teacher/scholar executes this specific vocation by doing well his work as a teacher/scholar. Only by sanctifying this work, sanctifying himself in it, and sanctifying others through it will he be faithful to his baptismal commitment and become fully the being his Father wills him to be: a child as faithful to his Father as his only-begotten Son, filled with the Spirit of life and love. ✠

### Endnotes

1. On this see Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *Carta*, Roma, March 19, 1954; cited by Pedro Rodriguez, *Vocacion, trabajo, contemplacion* (Pamplona: EUNSA, 1986), p. 93; Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *Friends of God: Homilies by Josemaría Escrivá de Balaguer* (New Rochelle, NY: Scepter, 1986), nos. 2, 177, 294.
2. Here John Paul II cites a passage from Vatican Council II's Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, 5, which in turn cites from Vatican Council's I Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith, *Dei Filius*, Chapter 3.
3. See St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, 1-2, q. 108, a. 4, sed contra: "Christus maxime est sapiens et amicus."
4. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, "Passionately Loving the World," in *Conversations with Msgr. Josemaría Escrivá* (Manila: Sinag-Tala Publishers, 1985), no. 113.
5. See *ibid.*, no. 55; *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 46; *Friends of God*, no. 9.
6. On the subject of personal vocation see Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus*, Vol. 1, *Christian Moral Principles* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983), pp. 559-561; 673-676.
7. On this see *Dei Verbum*, no. 10, and *Lumen gentium*, no. 25.
8. Etienne Gilson, *The Intelligence in the Service of Christ the King* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Scepter Booklets, n.d.), Booklet # 167. This essay originally appeared in Gilson's *Christianity and Philosophy* (New York: Scribner's, 1939), pp. 103-125. References here are to the Scepter Booklet reprint. The passage cited is from p. 16.
9. *Ibid.* p. 9.
10. Blessed Josemaría Escrivá, *Christ Is Passing By*, no. 50.
11. Homily, "The Richness of Everyday Life," in *Friends of God*, no. 9, p. 6.
12. *Ibid.*, no. 41, p. 36.
13. Blessed Josemaría, Homily "Toward Holiness," in *Friends of God*, no. 313, pp. 271-272.
14. See *The Way*, nos. 813-830.

## Baccalaureate Mass Reflection

# The Catholic Lawyer: Justice and the Incarnation

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I deeply appreciate being given the opportunity to share my thoughts with you today at this Baccalaureate Mass. In offering this reflection, I would like to say something that is worth hearing for everyone here, but in particular I would like to address the members of the graduating class.

This is a truly joyful occasion: the day you graduate from law school. I hope you know that everyone here, your family and friends, the faculty, staff, and administration of the Law School and the University, are proud of you and of your accomplishments. We are happy to be with you and to share your joy as we celebrate this day.

This celebration begins here, with our celebration of the Mass. We are commemorating and celebrating the learning you have gained and the sacrifices you have made during the past three or four years of law school by celebrating and commemorating the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, the Divine Teacher who fulfilled the law perfectly by embracing the Cross. In the life and person of Jesus, given to us in the Gospel and in the Eucharist, we have someone to whom, no matter how educated we become, no matter how many degrees we accumulate, we can always return and learn something new, and meaningful, and wonderful to behold.

I think it would be fair to say that you see some connection between your faith and your legal education, otherwise you would not be here today. You certainly weren't required to come to the Baccalaureate Mass. You could have skipped it and stayed home this morning and slept in, or you could have

gone to brunch with your parents or friends. But you chose to come here because you see that your faith and your chosen profession are related. They are connected in some fashion.

This morning I would like to share with you some of my reflections on this connection, on the relationship between the practice of the Catholic faith and the practice of law.<sup>1</sup> The first thing that can be said about this relationship is that it is multifaceted. Indeed, there are so many connections that we couldn't discuss them all even if we had the time. I would like to focus, therefore, on two connections that I think are especially pertinent to your future work as attorneys.

The first of these connections is your responsibility to see that justice is done within our legal system.<sup>2</sup> Justice is of course concerned with matters of right and wrong, good and evil. Justice is the right ordering of things, the right relationship among people within society, and between human beings and God. Ultimately the justice that each of us owes to one another is love,<sup>3</sup> and the justice to which God calls us is communion with Him in heaven.

The justice of our legal system is a little different. It doesn't set its sights quite so high. It is still concerned with right and wrong, but it conceives the question almost entirely in procedural terms. Thus, justice in our legal system is primarily concerned with ensuring that the proper rules have been followed.<sup>4</sup> This emphasis on rules and procedures might lead you to believe that justice really isn't your concern, that it is an ethereal, other-worldly concept which you may have talked about in law school, but which has no bearing on the "real world" of practicing lawyers.

Make no mistake, nothing could be farther from the truth. Every day when you go to work as a lawyer, justice should be on your mind. For some of you this will be easy: for the prosecutor seeking to incarcerate a brutal rapist, or the defense attorney representing an individual wrongly accused of a crime or whose rights have been violated by the state. But justice is also at stake even where the competing interests in public safety and individual

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*This article is based on a reflection delivered following the reading of the Gospel at the Baccalaureate Mass celebrated on May 22, 1999 at Madonna della Strada Chapel, Loyola University Chicago.*

freedom aren't so acute. When you, as a civil litigator in private practice, serve an overly broad discovery request on your opponent, justice is called into question. When you, as a business lawyer, advise a corporation whether to purchase a competing business, or to treat a certain item as a deduction on its taxes, justice is at stake.

Indeed justice touches upon virtually everything you will do in your professional life, even the most boring and routine, like keeping track of your billable hours at the end of the day.<sup>5</sup> It's easy to lose sight of this, but your Christian faith requires you to be mindful of justice even where it isn't readily apparent.<sup>6</sup>

The second connection between faith and the practice of law that I would like to share with you today is the Mystery of the Incarnation, a belief which is at the very heart of our Catholic faith.

Simply put, our belief in the Incarnation is this: some two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ, who is truly God, entered into human history as a man.<sup>7</sup> He did not come in all the overwhelming splendor of the Divine, but in a way that made the glory of God intelligible to human beings. As St. John so beautifully writes in the prologue of his Gospel: "The Word became flesh, he dwelt among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth."<sup>8</sup> And so it is that Jesus Christ, the Word of God, took on our human nature and became incarnate. He came as one of us, as a human being who was nurtured in the womb of His human mother and taught the value of human work by His human adoptive father, a carpenter.<sup>9</sup>

We are treated to a glimpse of this mystery in the Gospel reading for today, taken from the end of St. John's Gospel. Here the Crucified and Risen Christ appears to the apostles by the Sea of Tiberias. After seeing Him suffer and die on the Cross, the apostles now enjoy the company of Jesus once again, revealing the glory of God. They know that as God Jesus is the master of all existence, of time future and time past. He knows when and how St. Peter will die and give glory to God.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, as St. John makes clear, because Jesus is the Son of God, the world could not contain all the books that could be written about Him.<sup>11</sup> He is the Word of God which mere human words cannot fully capture or express.

Our belief in the Incarnation is not belief in a myth or a story, let alone a feeling as to how the

world ought to be. It is, instead, belief in an historical event, an event in human history of such singular and universal importance and ultimate meaning that its true significance can never be overstated.<sup>12</sup> As such, it has a direct, immediate, and intimate bearing on what you will do as lawyers everyday. What is this connection?

Everyday you are in practice as an attorney, you will deal with the real concrete legal problems of real human persons. For most of you, this will be a drastic change from your experience in law school. This is because for the past three years you have, as it were, lived in the land of the hypothetical, where one "party A" sued "party B" over the sale of some parcel of land called Blackacre, and where XYZ Corporation manufactured faulty widgets which injured plaintiffs John Doe and Mary Roe. This was all imaginary and you knew it, but it served its pedagogical purpose. The unreality of the hypothetical gave you the critical distance you needed to see the point of law, to abstract the principle at work and to see how it might apply in other generically similar situations. Throughout your legal education you also surely read many real cases from the past that involved the lives of real people, but even these had an air of unreality about them. They were someone else's cases, a history already lived, not something to be touched here and now.

Today, in graduating from law school, you have in a sense "graduated" from the hypothetical reality of the classroom to the incarnate reality of legal practice, and life will never be the same. Now you will be dealing with real companies that manufacture real products, not widgets--companies that engage in real transactions with real consequences not only for the buyer and seller, but for all of society. There will be no more party A's and B's or John Does and Mary Roes. Instead, everyday you will come face-to-face with a real flesh-and-blood human being with a real name, with a real history, and with real problems to be solved.

This concrete reality that you will soon experience as lawyers has a profoundly religious and spiritual dimension to it, a dimension whose meaning becomes clear only in light of the Faith and in particular, the Mystery of the Incarnation. From the revelation that God shared with our Jewish brothers and sisters long ago, the descendants of Abraham,

our father in faith,<sup>13</sup> we know that every human person is formed in the image and likeness of God.<sup>14</sup> In the Mystery of the Incarnation the profound dignity of human nature is fully realized, and “the incomparable value of every human person” is made manifest.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the Second Vatican Council teaches us that by the “very fact” that Christ assumed a human nature, He raised it up “to a divine dignity in our respect too. For by His incarnation the Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man.”<sup>16</sup> This unity with Christ is not a unity with human nature in the abstract. Indeed, in reflecting on this passage from the Council at the beginning of his pontificate, Pope John Paul II made it clear: “We are not dealing with the ‘abstract’ man, but the real, ‘concrete,’ ‘historical’ man. We are dealing with ‘each’ man, for each one is included in the mystery of the Redemption and with each one Christ has united himself for ever through this mystery.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the significance of the Incarnation for you as lawyers could not be more profound. The reality of God having become one of us for our sake means that in your work as attorneys you must strive to find Christ in other people.

Again, for some of you this will be easy. Because Christ was Himself a victim who wrongfully suffered at the hands of others, you should be able to find Him in those who are victimized today—the personal injury plaintiff who was crippled by the negligence, greed, or indifference of another, the worker who was not hired because of the color of her skin, and the child who was abandoned, abused, or neglected by his parents. The dignity of Christ Himself can be found in each of these persons, and you as a lawyer must work to serve this dignity through the instruments of law.

But you must go beyond this. You must also see Him where you least expect Him. You must find Him not only in the innocent client who is a sympathetic victim, but in the guilty person whom the state would condemn to death. You must see Him in the attorney who is your opponent, and in the judge who oversees your case. This, I can assure you, will not always be easy. Indeed, sometimes it will be very difficult because sometimes your opponent will treat you unfairly, and sometimes judges make decisions that are wrong or even unjust. As a Catholic lawyer you need not simply accept this unfair treatment, but you must remember that incivility, mistakes in judg-

ment, and even criminal guilt cannot erase the dignity that every human person enjoys by virtue of God’s love revealed in the wonder of the Incarnation.<sup>18</sup> It will not always be easy to see the world in this way, but this is the demand of your faith, this is the call of your baptism.

It is your baptism that continues to bind you to Christ even today.<sup>19</sup> During your time at Loyola when you were hard at work in studying for exams, when you set out to learn some arcane point of law dealing with federal taxation, the Uniform Commercial Code, or the law against perpetuities, or when you toiled away revising your moot court brief or your research paper by poring over the tedious and insufferable rules of the Blue Book, you may have thought that you were isolated and alone.

But you were not alone. Christ was there with you shouldering your burden, holding you up, and leading you on.<sup>20</sup> And Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, will continue to be there with you through all the challenges you will face in your professional life. You have only to ask for His help.

★ ★ ★

Some two thousand years ago the Son of God became Incarnate, and history will never be the same. Soon, you will be lawyers, and life will never be the same. May God give each of you the grace to live your vocation as a lawyer in the service of justice and in authentic witness to the Gospel. Amen. ✠

#### Endnotes

1. See generally Joseph G. Allegretti, *The Lawyer's Calling: Christian Faith and Legal Practice* (1996); Grace M. Walle, *Doing Justice: A Challenge for Catholic Law Schools*, 28 ST. MARY'S L.J. 625, 632-34 (1997).
2. See, e.g., Teresa Stanton Collett, *Speak No Evil, Seek No Evil, Do No Evil: Client Selection and Cooperation with Evil*, 66 FORDHAM L. REV. 1339 (1998); Walle, *supra* note 1, at 625-26, 632-34; see also Cohen v. Hurley, 366 U.S. 117, 123-24 (1960) (describing members of the bar as being responsible for the proper administration of justice); Eugene R. Gaetke, *Lawyers as Officers of the Court*, 42 VAND. L. REV. 39 (1989) (discussing how the professional codes governing attorney conduct describe lawyers as having a decidedly public function and responsibility that goes beyond the private duties they owe to individual clients).
3. See *John* 15:12 (“This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.”); *Leviticus* 19:18 (“You shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.”); *Matthew* 19:19; *Romans* 13:9.
4. See, e.g., Geoffrey C. Hazard, Jr., *The Future of Legal Ethics*, 100 YALE L.J. 1239, 1266 (1991) (“[T]he legal profession’s traditional ideal viewed the lawyer as the protector of life, liberty, and property through due process. The profession has sought to define this function in procedural terms, without express commitment to questions of distributive or social justice.”); see also ALLEGRETTI, *supra* note 1, at 105 (remarking that “[l]awyers in general see justice as mostly a matter of procedures, of due process, or impartial rules impersonally applied”).

5. For accounts of how lawyers often take advantage of clients in the billing process either through fraud or conduct that approaches fraud, see Symposium, *Unethical Billing Practices*, 50 RUTGERS L. REV. 2151 (1998).
6. See CATHECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ¶ 1807, ¶¶ 1928-33 (1994); Walle, *supra* note 1, at 628-30.
7. See *id.* ¶ 461, ¶ 464 (“[Christ] became truly man while remaining truly God. Jesus Christ is true God and true man.”); see also *Luke* 2:1-20 (recalling the virgin birth of Jesus which bears witness to his divinity); *Matthew* 1: 18-25.
8. *John* 1:14.
9. See SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, PASTORAL CONSTITUTION ON THE CHURCH IN THE MODERN WORLD, GAUDIUM ET SPES § 22 (St. Paul. ed., 1965) [hereinafter GAUDIUM ET SPES] (“[T]he Son of God has united Himself in some fashion with every man. He worked with human hands, He thought with a human mind, acted by human choice and loved with a human heart. Born of the Virgin Mary, He has truly been made one of us....”).
10. See *John* 21:18-19.
11. See *John* 21:25.
12. See CATHECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, *supra* note 6, ¶ 464 (referring to “[t]he unique and altogether singular event of the Incarnation of the Son of God”).
13. See *Romans* 4:16-17 (discussing how Abraham is the father of all believers).
14. See *Genesis* 1:26-28 (“God created man in his image.”).
15. JOHN PAUL II, ENCYCLICAL LETTER, EVANGELIUM VITAE § 2 (1995).
16. GAUDIUM ET SPES, *supra* note 9, § 22.
17. JOHN PAUL II, ENCYCLICAL LETTER REDEMPTOR HOMINIS § 13 (1979).
18. See EVANGELIUM VITAE, *supra* note 15, § 9 (“Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this.”).
19. Cf. *Romans* 6:3-4 (“You have been taught that when you were baptized in Christ Jesus you were baptized in his death. In other words, when we were baptized we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father’s glory, we too might live a new life.”); see also CATHECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH, *supra* note 6, ¶¶ 1272-74 (commenting on the indelible mark of baptism).
20. See *Deuteronomy* 1:31 (“[T]he LORD, your God, carried you, as a man carries his child, all along your journey until you arrived at this place.”).

# READING JOHN WITH ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

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## Membership Matters

Rev. Thomas F. Dailey, OSFS  
Executive Secretary

In this expanded edition of our regular column, we report on the actions of our board of Officers and Directors and many ongoing activities of the membership.

At its regular April meeting, the *board* took the following actions of importance to our membership:

- (1) Accepting fifty-six (56) **new members** into our Fellowship, including six new members in Australia and thirteen from the University of St. Thomas in Texas.
- (2) Electing a new **editor of the FCS Quarterly** – Dr. Larry Chapp (DeSales University) who will commence his work with the Summer 2001 edition.
- (3) Announcing the **summer 2001 elections**. Members of the board will elect new officers for the Fellowship (president and vice-president). “Regular” members at-large will elect four new directors to the Board. Please note: *Only “regular” members who are current in their payment of dues will receive ballots for the election.* If your dues are not current, or your membership status is not clear, please contact the Executive Secretary at your earliest convenience!
- (4) Setting the **annual convention programs**. The 2001 convention will be in Omaha (NE) on the theme of “The Catholic Imagination” (with details to be mailed to the members in June). The 2002 convention will be held on the east coast (New York or Phila-

delphia) on the theme of “Being Catholic in a Pluralistic Society.” Beginning with the 2001 convention, the standard registration fee will be raised to \$50 in order to offset costs.

Members of the Fellowship continue to be engaged in a variety of activities that promote Catholic scholarship.

**CONFERENCE** activities in which FCS members are involved include:

“*Hans Urs von Balthasar and the Evangelization of Culture: Alternative Approaches*”—sponsored by Our Sunday Visitor Institute and the Salesian Center for Faith and Culture at DeSales University, the conference took place in Allentown (PA) on April 27–29, 2001, under the leadership of **Dr. Larry Chapp**.

The *Newman Lecture Series* for the University of California Medical Center at San Francisco held at St. John of God Church, directed by George Maloof and featuring a conference by **Dr. Hanna Klaus** entitled “Natural Family Planning: Is It Scientific? Is It Effective?”

**NEW ARTICLES** published by our members include:

Two pieces by **John F. Kobler, CP**: “Vatican II’s Pastoral Theology Needs Philosophy,” in *The Modern Schoolman* (November 2000), and “The Collapsing Birthrate in the Developed World,” in *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* (February 2001).

“New Commentary, Old Nonsense” by **John Trigilio**, published in *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* in March 2001.

“Confession of Sins as an Essential Element of the Sacrament of Penance” by John M. Grondelski, published in *Angelicum*, volume 78/1 (2000), pages 49–67.

Three pieces by **George Maloof, MD**, all of which were published in the *Bulletin of the Ovulation Method Research and Reference Centre of Australia*: “NIH Recently Proposed Guidelines on ‘Research Involving Pluripotent Stem Cells: An Open Letter’” (27/3, Sept. 2000); “Physician-Assisted Suicide *vis-a-vis* Hospice Care” (27/4, Dec. 2000); and “Freud’s Deadly Legacy” (28/1, March 2001).

**BOOKS** recently published by or about our members include:

*Women and the Future of the Family* by Prof. **Elizabeth Fox-Genovese**, which “explores how the drives for liberation and equality have affected the family and calls for a return to self-sacrifice, gendered family roles, and a Christian understanding of sexual difference and human equality. First delivered as the Kuyper Lecture, the book also contains three responses and a concluding essay.

*The Mysteries of Life in Children’s Literature*, a series of fourteen essays by **Mitchell Kalpakgian** (from Neumann Press).

*The Structure of Human Fulfillment*, by **Adrian J. Reimers** (from Edwin Mellen Press), a study of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II’s account of human happiness in relation to the thought of Thomas Aquinas.

*The Second Spring of the Church in America* by **Msgr. George A. Kelly**. Also, the papers from the

conference honoring the good Monsignor have now been published as *Keeping Faith: Msgr. George A. Kelly's Battle for the Church*, edited by **Patrick G.D. Riley** (Christendom Press). This collection includes tributes from Professors **Robert George** and **Gerard Bradley**, as well as essays by **Joseph Varacalli**, **J. Brian Benestad**, **William May**, **James Hitchcock**, **Ralph McInerny**, **Kenneth Whitehead**, **Scott Hahn**, and **Archbishop George Pell**.

Two works from Prof. **William F. May**: *Ethics of Giving and Receiving: Am I My Foolish Brother's Keeper?* and *The Physician's Covenant: Images of the Healer in Medical Ethics*.

More intrigue in novel form from Prof. **Ralph McInerny**: *Still Life* (a Five Star First Edition Mystery Series) and *Grave Undertakings: A Father Dowling Mystery*. And soon to appear will be his 1999-2000 Gifford Lectures, with the title *Characters in Search of Their Author*.

*Reason, Revelation, and Human Affairs* by Rev. **James V. Schall, SJ**, a wide-ranging "meditation on practical and theoretical political questions" from an author described as "arguably one of the best, perhaps even the only, authentically Thomistic political scientist writing today."

*Reassessing the Liberal State: Reading Maritain's Man and the State*, edited by Timothy Fuller and **John P. Hittinger**. This collection of essays includes work by the following FCS members: **Joseph M. DeTorre**, **Desmoneg FitzGerald**, **William Haggerty**, and **Nicholas C. Lund-Molfese**.

*With Mind and Heart Renewed: Essays in Honor of Rev. John F. Harvey, O.S.F.S.*, edited and introduced by **Thomas F. Dailey, O.S.F.S.** (University Press of America). This festschrift contains essays by several members of the FCS.

With regard to **THE INTERNET**, the Fellowship is fast spreading its wings on the web! These new cyber- developments include:

a new format for the **main FCS site** (<http://www4.desales.edu/~philtheo/FCS>), including new additions that highlight "news and information," announce FCS publications, and provide on-line indexes and links for the *Quarterly*;

a new site for the **Canadian chapter** (<http://www.globalserve.net/~sarina/doug/index.htm>), which offers contact information as well as links to some articles previously published in their journal;

a new site for the **Australian chapter** (<http://www.fcsaustralia.org>), which features news and texts from the inaugural national conference held in Melbourne last October.

Finally, **CONGRATULATIONS** and best wishes from the FCS are in order for:

**Dr. Joseph Varacalli**, who has begun and been appointed director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Nassau Community College-SUNY.

**Mr. Russell Shaw**, who has been appointed by Pope John Paul II to a five-year term as Consultor to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications.

**Fr. James Lyons** (Chicago) on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee of ordination. *Ad multos annos!*

Questions about any Membership Matters, or information about activities, should be directed to the Office of the Executive Secretary (call 610-282-1100 ext. 1464 or fax to 610-282-2254 or send email to: [Thomas.Dailey@desales.edu](mailto:Thomas.Dailey@desales.edu)). If you have not already done so, *please keep your membership current by paying your dues for 2001!*

## Dr. Larry Chapp Appointed Quarterly Editor

**L**arry S. Chapp, Ph.D., was appointed Editor of the *FCS Quarterly* by the Board of Directors at its April 2001 meeting. Dr. Chapp's first issue will be Summer 2001. Larry Chapp received his doctoral degree from Fordham University in 1994 in the field of systematic theology. He has taught in the theology department of de Sales University (formerly, Allentown College of St. Francis de Sales) since then. His book, *The God Who Speaks: Hans Urs Von Balthasar's Theology of Revelation* appeared in 1997. Welcome aboard, Larry Chapp!

Cardinals gathered in Rome for a special consistory criticized what they called the undue centralization of authority in the Church. Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor of Westminster (England) proposed the convening of a new ecumenical council, to meet somewhere other than Rome, for which the Holy See would not set the agenda and at which the pope would preside "only in love." Cardinal Christoph Schonborn of Vienna characterized the proposal as "an eschatological dream."

Cardinal Godfried Daneels of Mechelen-Brussels (Belgium) criticized the agenda of the periodic episcopal synods, because they are set by the Vatican. He called for the establishment of "a culture of debate."

Cardinal Thomas Winning of Glasgow urged the Holy See to consult more frequently with national bishops' conferences, criticizing in particular the Vatican's norms for liturgical translations. His complaint was endorsed by Cardinal Wilfred Fox Napier of South Africa, who said this view was shared by many other cardinals. Cardinal Bernard F. Law of Boston urged that synods be held yearly and have "open agenda."

Four curial officials—Cardinals Mario Pompedda, Walter Kasper, Ignace Moussa I Daoud, and Achille Silvestrini—also called for decentralization of Church authority. Cardinal Alois Lorscheider, retired archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, charged that the pope is "the prisoner of the Curia." Cardinal Schonborn and Cardinal Avery Dulles, the American Jesuit theologian, defended papal authority during the conclave.

★ ★ ★

Although his name was omitted from the first list of cardinals appointed in February, Bishop Karl Lehmann of Mainz, president of the German bishops' conference, was named a cardinal a week later, along with Bishop Kasper, who has been critical of the Holy See's document *Dominus Iesus*, which affirms that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ. Earlier Bishop Lehmann had suggested that Pope John Paul II might resign because of ill health.

Shortly after naming Bishops Lehmann and Kasper to the College of Cardinals John Paul sent a strong letter to the German bishops urging them to correct what he called "serious weaknesses" in the Church in Germany.

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Extensive repair of defective liturgical texts and other reforms in liturgical practice have been mandated in a new document issued by the Holy See's Congregation for Divine Worship. *Liturgiam Authenticam*, calling the Latin rite itself "an instrument of true inculturation," requires translations to be faithful to the Latin text and finds some existing translations deficient. Among other things, it proscribes the use of "inclusive language."

Bishop Joseph Fiorenza of Houston, president of the American bishops, and Archbishop Oscar Lipscomb of Mobile, chairman of the bishops' committee on the liturgy, welcomed the document. Bishop Donald Trautman of Erie (Pa.), chairman of the bishops' committee on doctrine and former chairman of the committee on liturgy, decried "lack of consultation" on the part of the Holy See

in formulating the norms. Jesuit Father Thomas Reese, editor of *America* magazine, said the document marks a diminution of episcopal authority.

★ ★ ★

Jesuit Father Roger Haight has been relieved of teaching duties and instructed by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith to revise his book *Jesus: Symbol of God*, in order to make it faithful to Catholic teaching. The CDF criticized the book for suggesting that Jesus is not necessarily the only way to salvation. Haight is on the faculty of Weston School of Theology in Boston.

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The CDF has issued a similar warning about the book *Towards a Christian Theology of Religious Pluralism*, by the French Jesuit theologian Jacques Dupuis, who teaches at the Gregorian University in Rome. A move by Indian bishops to support Dupuis was abandoned after it failed to gain full hierarchical endorsement. However, Bishop Michael Fitzgerald, secretary of the Vatican's Council for Interreligious Dialogue, praised the book as "a pioneering work," defending it on the grounds that "theology is a developing discipline."

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A number of speakers at the Los Angeles Religious Education Congress, sponsored by the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, ridiculed or expressed disagreement with traditional Catholic teaching and practice. Several urged religious educators to foster an atmosphere of full acceptance of homosexuality among their students.

An audience of youth ministers was told that the teachings and prac-

tices of the Church are major obstacles to the faith of young people. A married priesthood and the ordination of women are necessary steps towards attracting religious vocations, according to several speakers. Dominican Father Paul Philibert, author of a book defending the morality of homosexuality, told the ministers that parishes are "locked into the most tedious kinds of liturgical franchises." Kim Cavnar, who teaches in a Jesuit high school, praised students for being tolerant of homosexuality and for understanding that formal religious practice is not essential to faith.

Franciscan Father Richard Rohr claimed that the teachings and practices of the Church are "obstacles to having a relationship with God" and characterized the Church as "like a funeral society" which "only programs us for death." He also compared it to a dysfunctional "dating service" which sets up inappropriate conditions for membership.

Sister Mary Boys, a Catholic theologian teaching at Protestant and Jewish seminaries, said that Jesus is best understood as an observant Jew who nonetheless "relativized" Jewish law in the interests of freedom.

Michael Downey, a professor at the Los Angeles archdiocesan seminary, argued that the doctrine of the Trinity, as a relationship of equality among the three divine persons, can be used to promote radical egalitarianism in the Church, in which there is no need for hierarchy or absolute truth.

Paulist Father Richard Sparks, Catholic chaplain at the University of California (Berkeley), urged educators to imagine the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph engaged in sexual activity. "Did they ever neck, or did

they snuggle and cuddle?" he asked. If Mary and Joseph did not engage in sex, "We could annul that marriage in a minute," he claimed, suggesting also that Jesus was sexually attracted to Mary Magdalen. Refusal to entertain such possibilities is a sign of "sexual hangups," Father Sparks said.

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John J. DeGioia, vice-president of Georgetown University, was chosen president of the school, making him the first layman to head the oldest Jesuit institution of higher learning in the United States. Father Joseph O'Hare, president of Fordham University, expressed puzzlement at the choice, since qualified Jesuits were available for the position. "I can assure you that my successor will be a Jesuit," Father O'Hare said.

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Cardinal Roger Mahony of Los Angeles admitted that he made "a serious mistake" in asking former President William J. Clinton to review the conviction of drug dealer Carlos Vignali. Clinton pardoned Vignali and 139 other people just before leaving office.

\* \* \*

Benedictine Sister Joan Chittester, a leading feminist, denounced the treatment of women in the Church in addressing the annual convention of the National Catholic Education Association. The delegates gave her a standing ovation before and after her speech. The diocese of Pittsburgh, Peoria (Ill.), Lincoln (Neb.), Tulsa, and LaCrosse (Ws.), objected to Sister Joan's presence on the program, because of her opposition to Church teaching on women's ordination and other subjects.

\* \* \*

Catholic Answers radio program has been banned from the St. Petersburg (Fla.) diocesan radio station by Bishop Robert Lynch, because of a program which questioned the way in which Catholic News Service deal with the abortion issue in the 2000 election.

\* \* \*

The decision by a Lafayette (La.) Catholic high school to ban the works of novelist Flannery O'Connor from the classroom has been upheld by Lafayette Bishop Edward J. O'Donnell. The books were banned after some parents claimed that they are racist.

\* \* \*

Remarks by Baltimore Auxiliary Bishop William Newman, apologizing to homosexuals for "the sins individually and collectively which the Church has committed against gays and lesbians," were taken out of context, according to Raymond P. Kempisty, director of communications for the Baltimore archdiocese. The archdiocese accepts church teaching that homosexual acts are immoral, Kempisty said.

\* \* \*

Pope John Paul II was "pleased" to be told by American bishops that they are completing the implementation of *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, according to Bishop Fiorenza. *Ex Corde* is a Vatican document requiring orthodoxy from professors in Catholic institutions of higher learning.

\* \* \*

Theologians teaching in the archdiocese of San Antonio will be asked to sign a statement affirming their acceptance of Church teaching, but no action will be taken against those who do not sign,

according to Archbishop Patrick F. Flores. Archbishop Flores said he has never received a complaint about any theologian in the archdiocese.

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Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo of Zambia, who was deprived of his see by the Vatican because of his involvement in pagan practices, was "married" in a ceremony in New York City presided over by Rev. Sun Myung Moon of the Unification Church. The archbishop's "marriage" was one of sixty performed by Rev. Moon, who assigned the new spouses to one another. At the same ceremony Rev. Moon "married" George Stallings, a Washington priest who left the Catholic Church some years ago to found his own church.

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Speaking under Church auspices at Corpus Christi Church in Toledo (Oh.), Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur of Ohio accused the Catholic Church of having a "nefarious theology" because of its refusal to ordain women to the priesthood. She condemned the Nicene Creed for its alleged male bias.

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A Center for Catholic Studies has been established at Nassau Community College, a public institution on Long Island. The center is headed by Joseph Varacalli, a professor of sociology at the college.

\* \* \*

Ludmilla Javorova, a Czech woman, was allegedly "ordained" to the priesthood in 1967 by Bishop Felix Davidek, a long-time personal friend.

\* \* \*

Protestant members of Congress in general have a better pro-life voting record than do Catholics, according to Robert Kendra, who has tracked the pattern over a period of years. Only a minority of Catholic legislators consistently vote against abortion, Kendra found, and some always vote the pro-abortion position.

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Rick Heffern, a long-time editor of Playboy magazine, has been named editor of Celebration, a journal of spirituality published by the National Catholic Reporter.

\* \* \*

The Catholic Church in Vietnam is not persecuted, although its freedom to operate is "severely limited," according to Thomas Quigley, an official of the United States Catholic Conference.

Quigley, a long-time supporter of left-wing groups in Latin America and elsewhere, testified before a congressional committee investigating religious persecution.

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The Church in India is moving away from Western ties, according to several Indians interviewed by the National Catholic Reporter. Father Julian Saldanha, a professor in a Bombay seminary, said that Indians are by nature "kind and tolerant" and have little interest in dogma or orthodoxy. Lorna Barrett, secretary of the Bombay archdiocesan women's desk, charged that the Holy See is an impediment to the development of the Indian Church but that "the old men in the Vatican will die soon."

\* \* \*

Christians in India are increasingly subject to harassment and persecution, including personal violence, according to news reports in a number of publications.

\* \* \*

The term "culture of death" is "simplistic and unworthy of Christians," according to Jesuit sociologist John A. Coleman, speaking to National Conference of Catechetical Leadership. The phrase, which is chiefly associated with the thought of John Paul II, constitutes "sulking and sniping," Coleman charged.

## Msgr. Michael Wrenn, 1998 Cardinal Wright Award Winner, 40 Years a Priest

Monsignor Michael J. Wrenn, pastor of St. John Evangelist Church in New York City, was honored on Pentecost Sunday for his forty years as a priest of the Archdiocese of New York. Msgr. Wrenn, perhaps best known as a scholar for his publications on the new universal Catechism, received the Cardinal Wright Award from the Fellowship in Denver, 1998. (Kenneth Whitehead, noted collaborator in some of Msgr. Wrenn's work, was honored that year as well.) Among those attending Msgr. Wrenn's anniversary celebration was Most Reverend Andre Dupuy, D.D., Apostolic Nuncio to Venezuela. Stained-glass windows *Les Vitraux*, designed and executed by Mr. Serge Nouailhat, were blessed by Archbishop Dupuy. Dr. and Mrs. Jose Antonio Cordido-Freytes were the donors.

## *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*

is a peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, scholarly journal, publishing articles in theology, philosophy, and history, from a broadly Catholic perspective.

The journal reflects certain convictions shared by the editors. The first and most essential is that faith, far from being opposed or inessential to serious scholarship, illumines understanding in all intellectual disciplines, but has special reference to theology, philosophy, and history. Though these are distinct disciplines with their own proper methods and criteria, they share a common aim: to elucidate *meaning*—the meaning of human existence, in the world and before God.

The project of “faith seeking understanding,” moreover, necessarily involves all three of these disciplines. Speaking broadly, for the bulk of the Christian era, theology took philosophy as its correlative discipline—as the *ancilla theologiae*—which led to many of the great achievements in Patristic and Medieval theology. With the advent of Romantic theology, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, history was taken as a replacement for philosophy in this role. Since then, there has perhaps been a tendency to take one or the other, philosophy or history, as the basic correlative discipline to theology. It is the

understanding of the editors, however, that philosophy and history are neither opposed to each other, nor does an emphasis on one exclude the other in relation to faith and theology. Rather, the disciplines and methods of theology, philosophy, and history operate harmoniously in elucidating our human and Christian existence.

These convictions are by no means original; indeed, something akin to them has been held by many of the greatest Catholic thinkers of the twentieth century, including Henri de Lubac, Jean Daniélou, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Yves Congar, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Étienne Gilson, Maurice Blondel, Philotheus Boehner, and Christopher Dawson, as well as significant Catholic thinkers of the nineteenth century, such as John Henry Newman and Johann Adam Moehler. However, the editors believe that there is a need for a journal which expresses these convictions and allows for the fruitful interplay of ideas from each of these three disciplines. Furthermore, faith-illuminated study needs to occur in a communal context, for faith is essentially communal. Therefore, taking as its foundation the standpoint of faith and posing the questions of particular moment to our common existence, *Fides Quaerens Intellectum* seeks to be a forum where scholars in theology, philosophy and history can share their fundamental insights, treating

the fundamental issues of faith and life in a serious, scholarly fashion.

Though taking a broadly Catholic outlook, the journal welcomes articles from non-Catholic perspectives. Characteristically, the journal will consider any articles dealing with the essential questions of faith and life, of nature and grace, of ecclesial and historical existence. Thus articles in systematic, historical, and moral theology, Scripture studies, philosophy of religion, philosophical theology, philosophy of history, history of the Church, history of theological and philosophical issues, and on the historicity of human life are all appropriate. Articles addressing connections of theology, philosophy, and history with other allied disciplines may also be considered. Articles need not be on the themes mentioned, and need not be explicitly interdisciplinary, but should manifest in some way the interdisciplinary consciousness suggested above. All articles submitted for consideration will be sent for blind review to experts in the appropriate scholarly fields.

The journal is beginning with two issues a year, with the possibility of more frequent publication in the future.

For more information, contact  
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## The Idea and Prospects of a Center for Catholic Studies at a Public Institution of Higher Learning

By Joseph A. Varacalli, Ph.D.

*(Remarks given at the Opening Gala of the Center for Catholic Studies, Nassau Community College, Garden City, New York, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2001)*

Theoretically, the instituting of a Center for Catholic Studies at a public institution of higher education (in the specific case at hand, at Nassau Community College of the State University of New York) is easily justified. This is so because the ever expanding corpus of Catholic social thought and the ever evolving cultural heritage of the Catholic religion represents a source that can enrich both the intellectual-scholarly-academic mission of the university and its moral-ethical-social policy concerns to help construct a Good Society based on truth, beauty, and justice. However, theoretical justifications, no matter how intrinsically persuasive, logical, and reasonable, oftentimes are casualties to a host of other empirical, historical, and political realities. One doesn't have to be an expert in American history and the history of higher education in this country to realize that what Michael Schwartz has claimed to be the case in the general society is, if anything, even more true in the academy, i.e., that Catholicism has been subject to the "persistent prejudice." On the other hand, in the specific case of Nassau Community College, the prospects for a Center for Catholic studies are enhanced somewhat by a series of factors: the existence of an administration

that understands that the logic of multi-culturalism must be inclusive, the presence of at least several college trustees who have demonstrated a willingness and ability to resist political correctness, by the courage of at least a few Catholic college professors willing to risk their faith commitments by exiting the catacombs and becoming public, and the presence of a significant core of serious and influential Catholic citizens in the surrounding community who desire, very strongly, to see the concept take on flesh.

The Catholic contributions to the serious academic calling are many, even if any one contribution is not specifically or solely a Catholic one. First of all, Catholicism claims that there is an objective reality in the nature of things that can be reached through the critical application of reason and that can be plausibly demonstrated through empirical application. Secondly, the universal thrust of the Catholic sensibility breeds within its faithful adherents a sense of obligation to pursue the truth courageously in a non-politically correct manner and to be fair-minded and even-handed to the students and all others in one's dealings in the academic community.

Thirdly, there is a philosophically distinctive and historically demonstrable Catholic contribution to scholarship based on the Catholic religion's understanding of itself as incarnational, sacramental, and integrative—that can only enrich and enlighten students and intellectual discourse in general.

Catholicism, in short, can make a contribution to just about everything that goes on within the university, especially in the humanities and social sciences.

Fourthly, Catholicism advocates what might be termed a "realistic interdisciplinary" approach to academic study, one showing the good fruits of intellectual exchanges between and among such disciplines as biology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, and theology which has as its goal the comprehension of as much of ultimate truth as is humanly possible.

Fifthly, in "spanning the ages," Catholicism's memory brings with it the insights of many cultures and historical ages and, just as importantly, the lesson that tradition can be dynamic and relevant to the modern age.

Sixthly, Catholic social thought brings to the academic plate a host of important natural law concepts (e.g. subsidiarity, solidarity, personalism, the universal purpose of goods) and philosophical anthropological claims regarding the inherent nature, freedom, and responsibility of human beings as social creatures that can and should be debated honestly within the academy regarding either their scholarly utility or applicability in social policy to aid in the social reconstruction of society along more humane lines.

The social encyclicals of the Popes and other elements of Catholic social doctrine have something intelligent and important to say about all aspects of social existence. These include, among many others, an understanding of the family as the basic unit of society, the need for other intermediary institutions to protect against the monopolistic tendencies

of either the State or corporate capitalism, the requirements of a just economy and polity, the creation of work that is dignified and inherently meaningful, the inclusion of spiritual issues in a discussion of human and social potential and, conversely, poverty; the moral obligation of wealthier societies to those poorer; a balanced understanding of environmental responsibilities, the rights and obligations of unions, and the protection and development of life from the moment of conception throughout the life course.

However, today the claim that Catholicism can add something important, indeed perhaps indispensable, to the academy and to the larger Republic is, at very best, a hard sell. The contemporary prospects of a Center for Catholic Studies at a public institution of higher education are less than the merit of the idea itself. This is not the case, again, due to any intrinsic deficiency in the Catholic tradition, but primarily because of the pervasive anti-Catholic bias historically present throughout the greatest part of American history, first generated by a generic and hegemonic Protestantism and now by an almost pristine secularism approaching monopolistic status in the American public sphere. It is important to point out that the Catholic community, or at least a major part of it, also must bear a certain amount of blame for insufficiently shaping the university and nation. Ironically, just as Catholics, qua Catholics, seemed poised, in the early 1960s, to take a leading position in American society, large sectors of the Catholic community collapsed under the weight of its desire to conform to standards of success

defined by the non-Catholic cultural elite. The precipitating factor in many Catholics "giving up the Ghost," so to speak, was a distorted, selective, and false understanding of the theology of Vatican II, an interpretation or spin that gave a religious veneer justifying the "making it" in society as the top priority of too many Catholics. Similarly, within the educational community, both secular and Catholic, too many Catholic academics bought, as a rationalizing device justifying conformity and acceptance by the cultural gatekeepers of the time, the argument that Catholics were not up to snuff in terms of intellectual achievement and, at least implicitly, must learn from their non-Catholic academic superiors.

Today, Catholicism faces the incredibly difficult task of putting its house back together in a situation in which secular elites control the key idea and image-generating locations in society and in which too many younger Catholics—now two generations removed from the, at least relatively speaking, salad days of a 1950's Catholicism—are almost totally innocent of their 2000 year old Catholic heritage. The same unhappy situation faces the Catholic heritage in the realm of higher education, in both secular and Catholic spheres. A strong case can be made, empirically, that many of the overlapping philosophies, concepts, and programs that shape the present landscape of higher education are interpreted in such a way as to be inhospitable at best, to outright destructive, at worst, to the Catholic worldview. For instance, academic freedom is a needed concept to protect serious research and researchers who write

from the academic periphery. However, it can be, and often is, broadened inappropriately to defend almost any utterance, however intellectually indefensible, or artistic or humanistic creation whose sole purpose is the promotion, on almost pristine political grounds, of some blatantly antinomian, ideological, or utopian end. Multiculturalism is a potentially useful philosophy that appropriately can encourage the incorporation into the cultural center of groups and traditions hitherto and undeservingly under-represented. Oftentimes, however, it can turn into an instrument to foment the de-Christianizing of American civilization and, within the academy, to grant an often monopolistic advantage to secular leftwing perspectives (e.g. Marxism, feminism, homosexualist, deconstructionist). Cultural relativism was an idea originally propounded by Western anthropologists as a methodology to guard against a narrow and excessive ethnocentrism in research. It is now routinely misused and expanded into a full blown worldview, a philosophy of cultural relativity, that denies the existence of objective truth, deprecates the exercise of reason to pursue that truth, and, in its place, exalts emotion and mere opinion. Likewise, the call for "tolerance" in the university was originally designed to afford elbow room for a forum for intelligent discussion for legitimately debatable lifestyles. Now, many times, calls for "tolerance" are anything but that. Rather they serve, as Allan Bloom has claimed, to not only cut off any meaningful debate about the social and emotional consequences of some con-

temporary social arrangements (e.g. cohabitation among both heterosexuals and homosexuals, out-of-wedlock births) and practices (e.g. abortion, assisted suicide) but to actually stigmatize those scholars raising such questions as narrow minded bigots.

However misused, consciously or not, the concepts of academic freedom, multi-culturalism, cultural relativism, tolerance, and the like can and must be utilized and rehabilitated by Catholic scholars and other serious but marginal schools of thought to get their ideas into the university and the American public sector for debate and discussion. In short, Catholic scholars are "academically free" to bring their philosophical presuppositions, in a responsible and academically appropriate way, into their scholarship and into their classroom teaching. A truly inclusive multi-culturalism, similarly, has no good reason not to grant the Catholic scholarly tradition a place at the academic table. The logic of cultural relativism, for its part, gives Catholic scholars "the right to their opinion and voice" which much be granted, at least formally, equal ontological status with other philosophical positions. And, finally, given that *everyone* is expected to be tolerant of *everything* and *everyone*, this obviously includes tolerance to Catholic scholars and their claims that there are absolutes, an objective morality, and ultimate Truth. To use these terms and ideas in such a manner is, following Peter L. Berger, to "relativize the relativizers" and gives Catholic scholars, in the light of the day and *mano a mano*, a chance to convince the open-minded, the searchers, the curious, and the ambivalent.

To the naked eye, the modern orthodox Catholic scholar surrounded in a secular milieu will have the odds stacked overwhelmingly against him/her. The Catholic scholar, however, will have a fighting chance—and a chance better than his opponents would ever publically acknowledge—because of the increasingly widespread awareness of the various failures of secularism in education and social policy and because of a subliminal acknowledgement of the incredibly sophisticated intellectual, moral, and organizational heritage of Catholicism.

Just how much of an impact the Catholic scholarly tradition can make in the American educational system and within the civilization that surrounds it remains an question presently without a definitive answer. But only the arrogant secular ideologue or the simple fool would count serious and knowledgeable Catholics out of any enterprise that they put their mind, heart, and soul into in a systematic, unified way. I end by making a plea to those in the audience who are sympathetic: I need your prayers, your financial support, and your willingness to volunteer your time and creative abilities. Together, we will make history at Nassau Community College and beyond. ✠

Dr. Joseph A. Varacalli is Professor of Sociology and newly appointed Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at Nassau Community College. In 1992, he co-founded (with Stephen M. Krason) the Society of Catholic Social Scientists. He is the author, most recently, of *Bright Promise, Failed Community: Catholics and the American Public Order* (Lexington, 2000, 1-800-462-6420)

## Fr. John A. Hardon— Eternal Priest

If there is one priest I didn't want to die he was John Hardon. An attendant at the founding meeting of the *Fellowship*, he was sixty-four years a Jesuit and fifty-three years a priest. Dying, because cancer got him last December, and he bowing to God for the last time.

Fr. Hardon will live among us much longer anyway, because his legionnaires will keep him memory alive. Although he always looked like death warmed over — gaunt, thin, circles under his eyes — this Jesuit was indefatigable in his service to the Church. Years ago, I visited him in a Connecticut hospital, where he was recuperating from quintuple by-pass heart surgery. He looked awful. About to leave, I said to him solemnly: "John, go home to Detroit and rest." To which he replied: "I will. I will. I leave here Saturday for my Jesuit residence, where I hope to do nothing for a week. Then I have a thirty-day retreat back here in the East."

John Hardon may not have been a bishop, but he surely had the fullness of the priesthood. I was surprised to learn that once in his young years he planned to marry, but the Jesuits got him first.

Our relationship began in 1974 when he helped establish the *Institute for Advanced Studies in Catholic Doctrine* at St. John's University in New York. At that time Rome was anxious to counter-face the wrongful catechetics going on almost everywhere on the American continent. Not only did Fr. Hardon teach Catholic doctrine

correctly, but he inculcated Catholic piety while doing it. In his priesthood, right thinking went hand in hand with a holy life.

He was intellectual, to be sure, but was better known for his way of life than for his theological musings. Yet, he mused a lot.

After his ordination in 1947 he became interested in the Japanese missions, but was deflected from going to Tokyo by his superiors. He became a teacher at West Baden College in short order, but began also to teach in other than Jesuit colleges, even in Protestant seminaries. In 1956 he published *Protestant Churches in America* for the edification of his separated brethren. From 1962 to 1967 he taught "Comparative Religion and Catholicity" at Western Michigan University, and in 1963 published *Religions of the World*.

His best work was still to come, however. Vatican II had ended, a Catholic revolution was on its way, and somehow Fr. Hardon wormed his way into Rome's self-defense politics. The Congregations for Religious and the Clergy became his homes away from home. Rome wanted to do something about the secularization of religious and clerical life, and about the flight from the convents and from altars which had begun in earnest. In 1969 he helped orga-

nize *Consortium Perfectae Caritatis*, an association of religious women dedicated to their communal life, to evangelical vows, to religious habits, and to the Pope. Five years later he helped found the *Institute on Religious Life*, a support group for bishops, priests, laity as well as nuns, dedicated to authentic religious life. Nothing Fr. Hardon ever did was as important as helping create these two apostalates. If American priests, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, were called "sweet incense to the Republic," the 20<sup>th</sup> century was best recognized by its Religious Mothers – its nuns everywhere, in the classroom best of all, but in hospitals and nursing homes, and in the corner grocery store. Almost overnight they disappeared, especially from the streets. Today, thanks to the likes of Fr. Hardon, we have once more the *Council of Major Superiors of Women Religious*, building anew the sisterhood the American Church badly needs.

During the 1970's he founded *Mark Communications* in Canada, catechetical institutes in the United States, produced *Christ Our Life*, a textbook series for elementary schools, wrote *The Catholic Catechism* in 1975, a forerunner of John Paul II's official text, which appeared in 1994. In the 1980's he formed *Inter Mirifica* dedicated to the media apostolate, followed ten

years later by *Eternal Life*, a pro-life initiative. At the urging of Mother Teresa, he organized *Marian Catechists*, and in 1995 launched *Catholic Faith*, a new magazine for teachers. Even during his cancer-filled last years, he was issuing directions to his disciples. We always wondered what he did with his spare time.

Fr. Hardon's Catholic faith and his low-key persistence as a fiery disciple of the Church annoyed many elite Catholics. He had many bishop friends from places like Scranton, Rockford, Arlington, and Denver, was a recognized theologian without receiving notable public status, a peripatetic evangelist for Christ without holding office almost anywhere. No one would have thought of making him a Monsignor, even if his Jesuit superiors were agreeable. He was welcome in Rome but not in the new power structures of the American Church.

Still, John Hardon remains one of the great priests of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, sitting comfortably today somewhere near Someone's Right Hand. May his name continue to inspire those of us who remain behind.

*Msgr. George A. Kelly*

William E. May, *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life*, (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division, 2000). Pp. 340. PB. \$17.95. ISBN 0-87973-683-6

Nearly a quarter century has passed since Catholic theologian and FCS member William May wrote *Human Existence, Medicine and Ethics*,<sup>1</sup> his first book on bioethics. In the ensuing 25 years, the field has grown from a nascent secular discipline (there had already existed a distinguished tradition of Catholic medical ethics) into a veritable industry. Despite the proliferation of bioethical literature and the accompanying handwringing, however, even a cursory comparison of Bill May's 1977 and newest books shows the moral decline in bioethics. Bioethical progress clearly does not stand in direct proportion to the number of trees felled to write about it.

*Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life* is a welcome and needed addition to the literature in this field. As its title indicates, May examines contemporary bioethical issues through the prism of the dignity, inviolability and giftedness of human life. Human life is, after all, what should stand at the heart of bioethical discussion.

Should but not always does. "Bioethics," etymologically, is the ethics of *ἀεὶδὸν*, "life." The paradox, however, is that most secular bioethics maintains an epistemological agnosticism about the very subject matter of the discipline. Oftentimes, the question of life is evaded or readers are treated to a survey of mutually contradictory opinions about it, without ever resolving the key question which ought to illumine the whole bioethical enterprise. There are, of course, those authors who resolve the question erroneously and then proceed to

construct an entire bioethic on those flawed foundations. To their credit, however, they at least recognize and grapple with the core question. Alas, their erroneous grapplings are often very influential in shaping public opinion and policy.

A recent anti-Catholic slam piece in the prestigious British weekly *The Economist* noted this opinion-forming impact, observing that "...the church is often not taken seriously on other issues, such as embryo research, where health and ethics collide." The journal, however, argues that the Church has only itself to blame, forfeiting its "credibility" because "the birth control ruling still marks out the church as an irresponsible and obstructionist voice in any debate on over-population, poverty or, especially, the containment of AIDS."<sup>2</sup>

To borrow a phrase once in vogue in Washington: they "just don't get it." What the Church teaches about experimentation on embryos derives from what the Church teaches about the dignity of human life and its origins. A bioethic that avoids resolving when life begins, or pretends that the problem is insoluble, may broker compromises about embryo research based upon shifting calculations of good and evil outcomes, but such a utilitarian calculus can hardly ground a principled and consistent ethic of life.

William May, on the other hand, does. The principle of respect for the dignity of human life informs each of his eight chapters.

Before launching into specific bioethical issues, however, May gives his reader a broader perspective on Church teaching and moral methodology. Chapter one, "Church Teaching and Major Issues in Bioethics," provides somewhat detailed résumés of four Magisterial documents: Pope John Paul II's 1995 encyclical, *Evangelium vitae*, and three Congregation for the

Doctrine of the Faith texts (*Donum vitae* from 1987, the 1981 "Declaration on Euthanasia" and the 1974 "Declaration on Procured Abortion"). The exegesis of the teaching of those documents and the rationale underlying those teachings are especially necessary when so many people are often told to "form their consciences" on the basis of those documents without a clue of *what* those documents teach or, even more importantly, *why* they teach what they do. Pope John Paul II's masterful defense of human life, contained in *Evangelium vitae*, remains too little known in average Church circles.

May acknowledges (p. 19) that there are other key Magisterial documents bearing on the questions he treats, and some of these are referenced in the course of the book. Still, the omission of an explicit introductory treatment of *Humanae vitae* is a *lacuna*. Without discounting John Paul's yeoman work on matters sexual and bioethical—his pontificate alone basically coincides with the period since May's earlier book—the reviewer also feels a certain "overdependence" on John Paul II's Magisterium. The incumbent pontiff has certainly contributed enormously to this field (remember that after *Humanae vitae* Pope Paul VI gave up writing encyclicals) but it is also important to show that Pope John Paul II's Magisterium stands in continuity with a much longer tradition of ecclesiastical teaching. Particularly in what may be the twilight of the current papacy, it is important to be clear that what is being taught is not just the brainchild of John Paul II.

Chapter Two, "Making True Moral Judgments and Good Moral Choices," presents an overview of key principles of fundamental moral theology germane to bioethics. These include an extended discussion of what constitutes a human act (*actus humanus*) and remarks about

the nature of human freedom. On human acts, May is careful to explain the distinction between *finis operis* and *finis operantis*, clarifying the confusion sown by proportionalism (without getting too explicitly into the revisionist project). On freedom, May points out the basis of human dignity in freedom while noting that freedom exists *for* the good (and not simply *as* the good). Clarity regarding the latter, essentially Sartrean, notion of freedom is critical to addressing the contemporary abortion debate.

With Chapter Three, "Generating Human Life: Marriage and the New Reproductive Technologies," May begins treating specific bioethical issues. First, however, he frames a context: the conjugal act is procreative and unitive and the generation of new human life should occur within the conjugal act. The term "conjugal act" is neither a misnomer nor an ecclesiastical euphemism synonymous with "sexual intercourse." As May notes:

The marital act is not simply a genital act between men and women who happen to be married. Husbands and wives have the capacity to engage in *genital acts* because they have genitals. Unmarried men and women have the same capacity. But husbands and wives have the capacity (and the *right*) to engage in the *marital act* only because they are married, i.e., husbands and wives, spouses. The marital act, therefore, is more than a simple genital act between people who just happen to be married. As marital, it is an act that inwardly participates in their marital unity, in their one-flesh unity, a unity open to the gift of children. The marital act, in short, is an act inwardly participating in the "goods" or "blessings" of marriage, i.e., the good of steadfast fidelity and exclusive conjugal love, the good of

children, and, for Christian spouses, the good of the "sacrament" (p. 68, emphasis original).

Would that this insight was proclaimed in our pulpits and taught in our sex education classes!

The bulk of chapter three (pp. 72-108) focuses on specific artificial reproductive technologies, most of which did not even exist when May wrote his 1977 book. He deals with *in vitro* fertilization/embryo transfer (IVF-ET) and cloning. May also examines various moral means to address the problem of infertile couples seeking children (e.g., perforated condoms to circumvent hypospadias, low tubal ovum transfer, and moving sperm deposited in the vagina into the uterus or Fallopian tubes). He likewise discusses those "controverted techniques"—sperm "capacitation," cumulative sperm insertion, gamete intrafallopian tube transfer (GIFT) and Tubal Ovum Transfer with Sperm (TOTS)—the latter two of which have been approved by some Catholic theologians who try to adhere to Church teaching. May, nevertheless, offers persuasive reasons why those methods cannot ultimately be reconciled with Catholic teaching.

One of the victims of the IVF business are "surplus" embryos. IVF typically involves fertilizing multiple ova, only some of which are subsequently implanted into the woman. Those ova which are not destroyed are sometimes then cryopreserved. Occasionally, the parents of these children die or abandon them, leaving these frozen embryos in limbo. The question has arisen in Catholic circles whether it is moral to "rescue" or pre-natally "adopt" these children by volunteering to implant them in one's uterus and carry them to term, either with a view towards subsequently raising them or giving them up for adoption. Msgr. William B. Smith was the most promi-

nent opponent of this idea; May and Germain Grisez deemed it morally licit. This entire debate, like May's subsequent treatment of debates over the ongoing adequacy of "brain death" definitions of death (pp. 294-306) show just how *au courant* this book is.

In Chapter Four, "Contraception and Respect for Human Life," May concedes that "[c]ontraception is usually considered an issue in sexual ethics rather than one proper to bioethics" (p. 119). *Pace, The Economist et al.*, however, who blame the teaching on contraception for the Church's supposed marginality, May hits the nail on the head: "...contraception is very much relevant to respect for human life inasmuch as it is not, of itself, a *sexual act* but rather an *anti-life kind of act*. It is indeed the 'gateway to abortion'; widespread social acceptance of contraception has led to the 'culture of death' . . ." (ibid). Notwithstanding claims that greater access to contraception would decrease recourse to abortion, two facts are indisputable: contraception and abortion have grown in direct, not inverse ratio, and no nation where widespread use of contraception became prevalent failed to legalize abortion within a generation. May's critique of contraception is, therefore, on target.

May does a masterful job explaining the anthropological and ethical mindset that necessarily must underlie the use of contraception, contrasting it with the presuppositions that can underlie decisions to use natural family planning (NFP). The only thing lacking in this chapter might have been a brief excursus on today's types of NFP, a subject still insufficiently known.

Chapter Five, "Abortion and Human Life," serves two purposes: it solidly defends human life and it provides a useful rejoinder against the arguments used by (not only) the

"Catholics for a Free Choice" crowd who distort ecclesiastical teaching. May first takes on the general arguments against the humanity of the unborn child (largely rooted in a lack of "exercisable cognitive abilities"), then successfully repudiates those who maintain that "individual personhood cannot be established before implantation." The latter is particularly important for two reasons: it gives the lie to those "Catholic theologians" who do not want to allow their faith in the Pill to be shaken by reckoning with its abortifacient properties and it removes the figleaf of calling the unborn "pre-embryos" as a way of justifying using them for experimental purposes or tissue harvesting. May concludes the chapter with a useful moral discussion of contemporary treatments for ectopic pregnancy, a phenomenon of increased incidence today.

Chapter Six, "Experimentation on Human Subjects," is a particularly good illustration of how much (waste) water has flowed beneath the bioethical bridge in the past quarter century. May opens by recalling them, 25 years ago, the major debate about experimentation employing human beings, between him and Paul Ramsey on one side and Richard McCormick, S.J., on the other was whether proxy consent sufficed for certain nontherapeutic experiments. Back then, the issue was whether a parent could justify giving consent for a minor child to be used for experiments which were not directly beneficial to the child but which might benefit medical research. May and Ramsey said no; a child cannot be used for nontherapeutic research by proxy consent.

Today, of course, the issue has degenerated into lethal experiments on unborn children, including embryonic stem-cell research. May explains the issues and the ethics,

clearly repudiating the use of embryos for cell salvage operations. Critically, May also notes (p. 215) that human stem cells can be morally obtained in ways other than raping embryos. The chapter also provides lucid explanations of gene therapy and genetic counseling, pre-natal screening and the human genome project, all likely to grow in prominence and frequency of application by the time May next writes a bioethics book.

Chapter Seven, "Euthanasia, Assisted Suicide and Care of the Dying," makes a critical distinction between "euthanasia" and "benemortasia" (the moral care of the dying). On euthanasia, May critiques the arguments, paying special attention to the "physician-assisted suicide" crowd. On benemortasia, May discusses legitimate care of the dying, making clear what is encompassed by the traditional criteria of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" means of preserving life. He gives special attention to the debate over artificially-provided nutrition and hydration for the permanently unconscious, examining the views of those who justify removal of such care before arguing—as this reviewer has<sup>3</sup>—that artificially provided nutrition and hydration is ordinary care that is morally obligatory.

Chapter Eight, "Defining Death and Organ Transplantation," captures the nub of the issue: most of the debate over definitions of death is driven by the effort to procure organs for transplantation promptly. May rightly reminds us that such connections, even if only in the intellectual order, are conflicts of interest that distort ethical analysis. Quoting Paul Ramsey, he reminds us that "[i]f, in the practical order, we need to separate [the transplant team from the doctor who attends the dying patient and certifies his death], do we not need in the intel-

lectual order to keep the definition of death equally discrete from the use of organs for transplantation?"<sup>4</sup>

May traces the development of definitions of death to the position enshrined in the Uniform Definition of Death Act adopted by many American States, viz., death is spontaneous and irreversible cardio-pulmonary failure or irreversible cessation of function of the entire brain, including the brain stem. May rightly argues that the underlying presupposition of that definition is that irreversible cardio-pulmonary failure or irreversible cessation of *all* brain function (including the brain stem) signifies that the integrated functioning of the human body has permanently ceased. The lack of an integrating principle means death.

May prophetically sees the definition of death as the next major pro-life struggle. Already, significant voices want to scrap the nonfunctioning brain stem criterion of death, arguing that permanent loss of upper brain function (i.e., higher cognitive and communicative abilities) is tantamount to *human* death. May rightly sees these efforts as the next encroachment of a Cartesian dualism that treats the body as something subpersonal and purely instrumental.

New data and May's intellectual honesty, however, force him to ask an even more radical question: did the total brain (including brain stem) definition of death itself go too far? May admits that he once regarded this definition as correct. That definition presupposed that the brain was the central integrating *organ* of the body. New medical research by Dr. Alan Shewmon, however, appears to dispute that presumption. Shewmon has detailed 175 cases of individuals declared "brain dead," placed on mechanical ventilators, who survived more than one week (in one instance, 15 years), disproving the claim that brain death leads to imminent cardiac

arrest. Shewmon's work suggests that if death is indeed the cessation of all integrative somatic functioning, then we have been asking the wrong question. Instead of asking whether the brain is the "central integrating organ of the body" (p. 293) do we rather not need to ask instead whether there is some other integrating principle in the body? To borrow Kuhn's terminology, is Shewmon invalidating the whole paradigm that has provided the intellectual foundation for our practical action about when we declare people dead and take their organs?

May himself is clear: "I can no longer in conscience accept 'brain death' as equivalent to the death of a human person" (p. 306). When a serious Catholic theologian reaches such a conclusion about so central a subject as the human good of life, the argument needs to be carefully examined. Stay tuned!

There are a few disappointments in the book. Recognizing that this is not a treatise on all matters bioethical but a reflection on bioethics as it impacts on human life, one palpably feels the absence of a treatment of AIDS and AIDS containment (especially from a Catholic theologian noted for his sense of *sentire cum Ecclesia*). Some treatment of the social dimensions of healthcare and healthcare access is also warranted. Given the merger tendency among hospitals, Catholic medical facilities may find themselves in affiliation with institutions less concerned about human life. In such cases, some contemporary examples of how the principles of formal and material cooperation might come into play would have enhanced the book. The same applies for how one bears witness to Catholic values within a secular health care framework (e.g., the debate in Germany over abortion counseling comes to mind).

All things considered, however, this is an extraordinarily valuable

book. In the jungle of bioethics, it will be a useful text for undergraduate and graduate/seminary courses in that area. Clergy and helping professionals will find it a useful update and reference in addressing the moral questions they are likely to encounter with increased frequency. Educated general Catholic readers and open-minded readers of good will will find this book an articulate defense of human life and explanation of Catholic teaching on issues, like embryo stem-cell research, increasingly in the headlines.

May stands in the long line of Catholic moral theologians—like John Ford, Gerald Kelly, Charles McFadden *et al.*, who combined professional competence in current medical ethics with a commitment to Catholic thought. *Catholic Bioethics and the Gift of Human Life* is a worthy successor to May's earlier book. Highly recommended.

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1. William May, *Human Existence, Medicine and Ethics* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1977).
2. "Between This World and the Next," *The Economist*, 358 (27 January-2 February 2001)/no. 8206: 25-27, quotes on p. 26.
3. John M. Grondelski, "Removal of Artificially Supplied Nutrition and Hydration: A Moral Analysis," *Irish Theological Quarterly*, 55 (1989)/4: 291-302; "Catholicism and the 'Right' to Die," *Linacre Quarterly*, 59 (November 1992)/4: 50-56. Shewmon's subsequent research (*post*) might be relevant to some of the conclusions drawn in those articles.
4. May, p. 284, quoting Paul Ramsey, *The Patient as Person* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), p. 103.

Msgr. Francis J. Weber, *Encyclopedia of California's Catholic Heritage* (Mission Hill, Calif., St. Francis Historical Society, 2001, 1148 pp., \$90.)

Someone ought to find an award worthy of Los Angeles' Msgr. Francis Weber. Only a few years ago knowledgeable opinion-moulders whined about the failure of Catholic historians to report fully and accurately on West Coast Catholicism, preoccupied as they were, from the American Revolution onward, with ecclesiastical politics on the East Coast. Then along came Msgr. Weber, author in 1997 of a 700 page biography of James Cardinal McIntyre, L.A.'s Archbishop 1947-1970; author again in 1999 of another 700 page biography of successor Timothy Cardinal Manning (1970-1989); and now only two years later this 1, 100 page encyclopedia, covering California Catholicism back to 1770, when Fra Junipero Serra and the first Franciscan missionaries graced what would become the outer limits of a new nation.

Leafing through the *Encyclopedia* brought back scary memories. About forty years ago I had a long meeting with Cardinal McIntyre, while we were both in San Antonio. McIntyre had been a new bishop in New York (1940) making sure that new priests like me behaved. There, one Saturday morning, within a cab ride of the Alamo, the aging Cardinal spoke of the mass of personal papers he had accumulated during his dozen years in L.A. Simplistically, I offered to help him organize them. He was graciously thankful, but no, he was about to name one of his own priest to take charge of those archives. I did not know Fr. Weber at the time but, thanks be to God, Weber got the job. Looking at these three books on my shelf today, I realize I would never have done for

the Church of the West Coast what Msgr. Weber has accomplished superbly.

This *Encyclopedia* is remarkable. It opens appropriately with 200 pages on "the California Missions," and then offers reminiscences in order about California's hierarchy, its laity, clergy, friars, religious, ecclesial institutions. The volume closes with Memoirs of forgotten people, words or events, and two hundred pages of *Topicals* from the Adobe to the Regan Library.

For East Coast denizens the early Franciscan mission material is fascinating—from the attack upon Fra Junipero Serra by Indians upon his entry to San Diego, whose savagery was assuaged by seeing the painting of Our Lady shown them by Serra, to the plight of the Indians, as the Gold Rush took off, and a defense of the mission system itself.

The section on hierarchy, the roots of which were first in Mexico City, contains some distinguished names. One prominent figure was Joseph Sadoc Alemany, Archbishop of San Francisco 1853-1884. California historically may have been in the ecclesiastical shadows, yet it begot impressive bishops: John Cantwell, Thomas J. Conaty, Robert Dwyer, Edward Hanna, Robert Lucey, Norman McFarland, George T. Montgomery, Denis O'Connell, Patrick Riordan, John Ward, et al.

The two sections on California's prominent laity and clergy, with names running beyond a hundred, feature people who ordinarily receive even less attention from Church historians, but who at a given time perform most of the work done for parishes and/or ecclesial agencies. The names usually are not familiar, except for stars Kit Carson and Leo Carillo of Hollywood fame, or oilman Edward Doheny. The priest segment will obviously interest those who recognize how priests make or unmake

the Church, many of whom go to God with little more than a faint good-bye. I knew Fr. Peter Yorke from reading about his work, and Msgr. Thomas McCarthy personally, both of whom symbolize the priesthood at its best, both pastors.

Americans who live East of the Hudson should be grateful for the two hundred pages given over to the Franciscan Friars and other religious. Especially to the women who helped found Catholicity in the West, about the time the American Church was receiving its first bishop. I, for one, cannot get enough of Blessed Fra Junipero Serra, monuments to whose priestly enterprise dot the West Coast almost everywhere. The 40 panels of commentary on his life certainly tickle my fancies. Born in Mallorca 1713 (died in 1784), the Friar raised the first Christian cross in California on July 16, 1769, creating a chain of missions up and down the coast for educating and training Indians. Serra had been a professor, with scripture as his specialty, but he became a teacher of doctrine and song to the unlettered in nine of those Franciscan missions. At some point almost half-of-all Indians fell under his sway. The Gold Rush later brought suffering to Indians at the hands of whites. Some of the blame fell wrongly on Serra's missions, which had done so much to uplift them. A good deal of what is known about Serra comes from his own writings, which as late as 1966 were published in four volumes and in English. Finally, while this Franciscan exercised the authority of a bishop (he confirmed 6,000 Indians himself), he fled the designation.

The remainder of the *Encyclopedia* is a potpourri of people and events — like the Methuselah Tree and the Protestant Requiem Mass — snippets on various dioceses, even something on William Randolph Hearst. The *Encyclopedia* supplies

more than data on Catholicity. One learns also things like General Douglas MacArthur wanting San Francisco's John Mitty to be made a Cardinal, how Lawrence Well, the son of German immigrants, didn't speak English until he was twenty years old, and how a retreat master told a new bishop: "Don't hesitate to use the lower end of the crozier, which is intended to chastise those of our flock who disobey." The reader will get more than he bargains for when he buys this *Encyclopedia*.

*Msgr. George A. Kelly*

William May and Kenneth D. Whitehead, *The Battle for the Catholic Mind*, (St. Augustine's Press, South Bend, 2001, 519 pp.)

This is a good title for a book dealing with "that mind which is in Christ Jesus, Our Lord: (Phil. 2, 5). One of Christ's most fascinating lines during life was that which he directed at his beloved Peter: "Get behind me, you devil...you're not on the side of God, but of men." (Mt. 16, 23). My friend, Msgr. John Tracy Ellis, after Vatican II once walked away from a lecture to young Catholics, sputtering: "They think like very other American, not very Catholic." Catholics are not supposed to think like everyone else if they believe that Christ is the true Son of God and that what he revealed about mankind's nature and destiny is true.

In some respects *The Battle of the Catholic Mind* is evidence that the French Revolution has bested the American Revolution, that Voltaire has triumphed over Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson at least was a deist, believed in God and "nature's laws." From his time came chaplains for Congress, bible reading in the public schools, and the Ten

Commandments as the under-law of the land. He just didn't want the American government to decide religion for its citizens, as the French monarch did. Voltaire hated Christianity and preferred godlessness in its place.

*The Battle for the Catholic Mind* is a compilation of the best thinking of the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* on the secularist war that is going on within the Catholic Church over what it means to be a Catholic and a member of Christ's Church. By 1976 One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic had gone out of fashion in Catholic academe as marks of the true Church. In that year Paul VI's Vicar for Catholic Education, Gabriel Cardinal Garrone, asked a few Americans: "Is there no other voice in the United States for Catholic higher education than the Jesuits and NCEA?" By that year, diversity, pluralism, and autonomy from pope and bishops were the preferred marks of the new Catholicity. The *Fellowship* was born to fight for the original four marks.

In 2002 the *Fellowship* will hold its 25<sup>th</sup> convention and will dutifully publish its proceedings, some of which may prove to be of little account. But William May, one-time distinguished member of the pope's *International Theological Commission*, and Kenneth D. Whitehead, one-time Deputy Director of the *U. S. Department of Education*, found Catholic gold in the hills of earlier convocations, worthy of publication. They scoured earlier conventions to find 31 nuggets of Catholic thought, worth re-publishing as a unit. And gave them an appropriate title.

I once thought of writing a book called *The Seven Lost Words* which capsulated the old faith at its very best. Things like orthodoxy, state of grace, Real Presence, etc. May-Whitehead deal with many more: intrinsically evil, Catholic

conscience, natural law, pluralism, common good, natural family planning, the Catholic university, contemplation, etc. Some of the titles have more than a news quality:

"The Governance of the Church," "Principles of the Catholic Scholarship," "Four Developments in Modern Physics that Subvert Scientific Materialism," "To be or not to be - Female," "The Church of Christ and the Catholic Church," "Americanism the 'Phantom Heresy' Revisited," "God as a Prisoner of His Own Choosing: Critical Historical Study of the Bible," "The Bitter Pill the Catholic Community Swallowed."

The writers of these are no less attractive than the subject matter: Glenn Olsen, William B. Smith, Paul Vitz, Donald Keefe, S.J., Ronald Lawler, O.F.M. Cap., John M. Finnis, James Hitchcock, Robert Young, Robert Georg, Joyce Little, Janet Smith, Marvin O'Connell, Brian Benestad, Paul Quay, S.J., Gerard V. Bradley, John Cardinal O'Connor, and others. In their respective spheres these are all stars.

Dennis J. McCarthy, S.J., of the *Biblicum* makes the point that we are so preoccupied today with where the Bible came from, in what circumstances it was born, and how it was put together, that we neglect to appreciate its very meaning. No one will be deceived in the May-Whitehead effort about what the Catholic Church or the *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars* holds and teaches as true.

It is unfortunate that a book packed with such knowledge has no index, nor a full identification of its stellar authors.

*Mmgr. George A. Kelly*

Walton, Clarence C., *Archons and Acolytes: The New Power Elites*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998. Pp. xii + 267.

Walton takes his lead from the 1956 book by Columbia University's C. Wright Mills, *The Power Elite*. The "new power elite," Walton argues, has gravitated from business to the academy. What goes on there, he is convinced, affects every area of life, notably law, government, business, science, and one might say, culture in general. Bewildered by the titanic changes occurring simultaneously in law, in the business world, in education, and in the family structure, Walton draws upon his considerable experience in the academy to explore the ideological roots of these changes. Widely read, he is not only conversant with the major philosophical trends of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century but draws upon his considerable experience in the academy as a dean of Duquesne University's School of Business, as dean of Columbia University's School of General Studies, and as president of The Catholic University of America. His discussion is wide ranging, but the focus is on the influence of Heidegger, Derrida, and Foucault. Philosophy, he fears, has lost its character as a science based on accurate and precise descriptions of nature and human nature, one given to making distinctions and refining definitions and finally to offering explanations. It is not and should not be, he insists, politics, propaganda, or an evangelizing instrument for cultural change.

Deconstructionism, post-modernism, feminism, and other fashionable "isms," he fears, have jeopardized the humanities that constitute the core of liberal learning and have encouraged a form of multiculturalism that scorns Western

values. Not only that, but they have spawned politically correct speech codes that threaten academic freedom itself.

In addressing what he takes to be a growing list of American pathologies, Walton's perspective is the classical Western intellectual tradition forcefully described by Werner Jaeger in his monumental *Paideia*.

The book opens with chapters on deconstructionism and post-modernism. As in two previous works, *Ethos and the Executive* and *Conceptual Foundation of Business*, works which gained Walton national recognition, he is ever attentive to the influence of finely woven abstractions on everyday life, resulting in what he calls "the radicalization of the nation's most important institutions."

The book ends with a chapter on mainline religions, now reeling, he is convinced, from attacks by their own theologians who have embraced the zeitgeist with a consequent loss of influence on the common morality. Carefully reasoned, never shrill, the book serves as a powerful reminder that abstract ideas have consequences in the social and political order. It could be read with profit by any who aspires to leadership in the academy.

Jude P. Dougherty  
*The Catholic University of America*

Joseph Pieper, *Death and Immortality*. Translated by Richard and Clara Winston. South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2000.

The purpose of this relatively brief philosophical meditation on death is to explain and clarify what happens when a person dies. The author admits the difficulties of the task, not least of which is the lack of first hand knowledge about this fact of life called death. For, in spite of the many books written on the subject, no one living really qualifies as an expert in death, while the multitudes who have had direct experience are "dead silent" about it. The other side of this is, of course, that everyone knows enough about death to be "dead certain" that it will come sooner or later to every human being. Indeed, Pieper stresses that each person bears within himself an inner sense of the certainty of his own death, even while being uncertain about its time. Even the modern who claims to ignore, defy, or deny death, carries this certitude within which is bound to have profound consequences on one's sense of self and of one's life in this world.

In order to probe the significance of death for life, the author's first order of business is to survey examples of everyday "vocabulary of death" to determine what truth it carries, often under the veil of euphemism. At times in speech, the focus is on death as a physiological or temporal ending. Thus we say such things as that a person has "passed away" or "has ended his days." Other expressions emphasize the family of community's experience of separation: "he is gone;" "she has lost her husband;" "they have lost their parents." At times, death is seen as an action: "he has handed over his soul to God" or "she has entered eternity." At other

times, it is seen as a violent assault - the attack of the "last enemy," (1 Cor 15) as the New Testament terms it, or the grim work of the "Grim Reaper."

For its part, philosophy common speaks of death as the separation of the soul and the body. To understand the separation, Pieper examines the mode of communion of body and soul present before the separation. The body is not a mere instrument used and then left behind by the body as a sailor leaves his boat or a prisoner his cell. Neither is the soul the essential part of man that lives on contentedly after the death of the body. Pieper terms this frequent but false view a "spiritualistic minimizing of dying" wherein death turns out to be nothing much as all. With Aristotle and Aquinas, he insists on a relationship between soul and body, so intimate and so defining that the soul is "the form impressing itself on the body from within." In death then, the whole man dies. This means that the soul, though indestructible, is "deeply affected by death," because, for man, body and soul belong together.

Taken together, the various ways of speaking about death indicate our perception of it as both end and beginning, terror and liberation, something imposed from outside and something maturing from within; as something we do ourselves and something happening to us.

To understand better the mystery hidden and revealed in our language about death, Pieper looks for something analogous in our experience that, like death, is not natural and even against nature but that, in the whole scheme of things, can be necessary, and even good. He finds it in the concept of just punishment where there is an evil that ought not be, that of guilt, and another evil that, in some real sense, ought to be, namely punishment

understood as a response to and a consequence of guilt. Applying this to death, Pieper sees the "whole state of things" as disordered, the result of something that ought not have happened and should not be, but has happened and cries out for ordering. It is not difficult to move beyond philosophy and recognize here the biblical and Christian concept of a primordial fall that continues to affect man and his destiny. With Aquinas, Pieper sees death as partly natural and partly contrary to nature and the result of sin. As a deliberate turning from God, the source of life, sin deals death and is manifest in death. Before sin, man would have been immortal, not by nature but by free gift. As things now are, man must perceive and receive the good within the punishment that death is: he must acknowledge and reject sin; he must accept and submit completely to God's authority in punishing. Thus freely accepted, death becomes, not just something that forces itself upon a person, but rather a personal decision. In the act of dying, the person who, up to this point has been a pilgrim whose existence is not complete, freely and finally completes his existence "from within."

Pieper takes issue with the notion that the person facing death is reduced to a state on non-freedom and darkness concerning his own existence. Appealing to the experi-

ence of the many who faced death on the "scaffolds of the Third Reich," he notes the clarity and desire for truth that permeates the testimonial letters of men and women facing imminent death. He cites the witness of a prison chaplain during those dark days who found person after person calm and composed, free from fear or hatred or a desire for revenge, and enlightened by "a great light [which] casts its glow ahead and experiencing a "boundlessly expanding realm of inner freedom." In Pieper's view, this freedom and light can come also even to those who die suddenly or unconsciously, since little time is needed for this action, "man's last will and testament," by which he "simultaneously concludes and completes his earthly existence." This final act is, the philosopher says, a "religious act of loving devotion in which the individual, explicitly accepting death as his destiny, offers up himself, and the life now slipping from him, to God."

The end of the journey marks for man a new beginning, the indestructible life that indeed he always hoped for in his earthly pilgrimage. Once God creates the person, only he can annihilate him. A person cannot annihilate even himself. "In creation something happens that absolutely cannot be undone again; the creature which has once entered existence can never again vanish

totally from reality." Pieper, again following Thomas, locates this indestructibility in man's capacity for apprehending the truth, a capacity that demands the soul's independence of the body and persists through its dissolution beyond death. But since the soul requires the body for its perfection, it likewise seems to require the resurrection of the body from the dead. However, to delve more deeply into this mystery, one must cross the boundaries of philosophical to theology and faith in the great good news of Christ's resurrection from the dead.

In this meditation on death and immortality, Joseph Pieper manifests his usual clarity and simplicity as he opens up one of the deep mysteries of human existence. The English translation reads quite well, aside from a few typographical errors, and preserves Pieper's characteristic luminosity. A preface of some sort, placing these reflections in their situation in the author's life and work and introducing St. Augustine's Press, would have been most welcome. But even without these, the essay stands very well on its own.

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