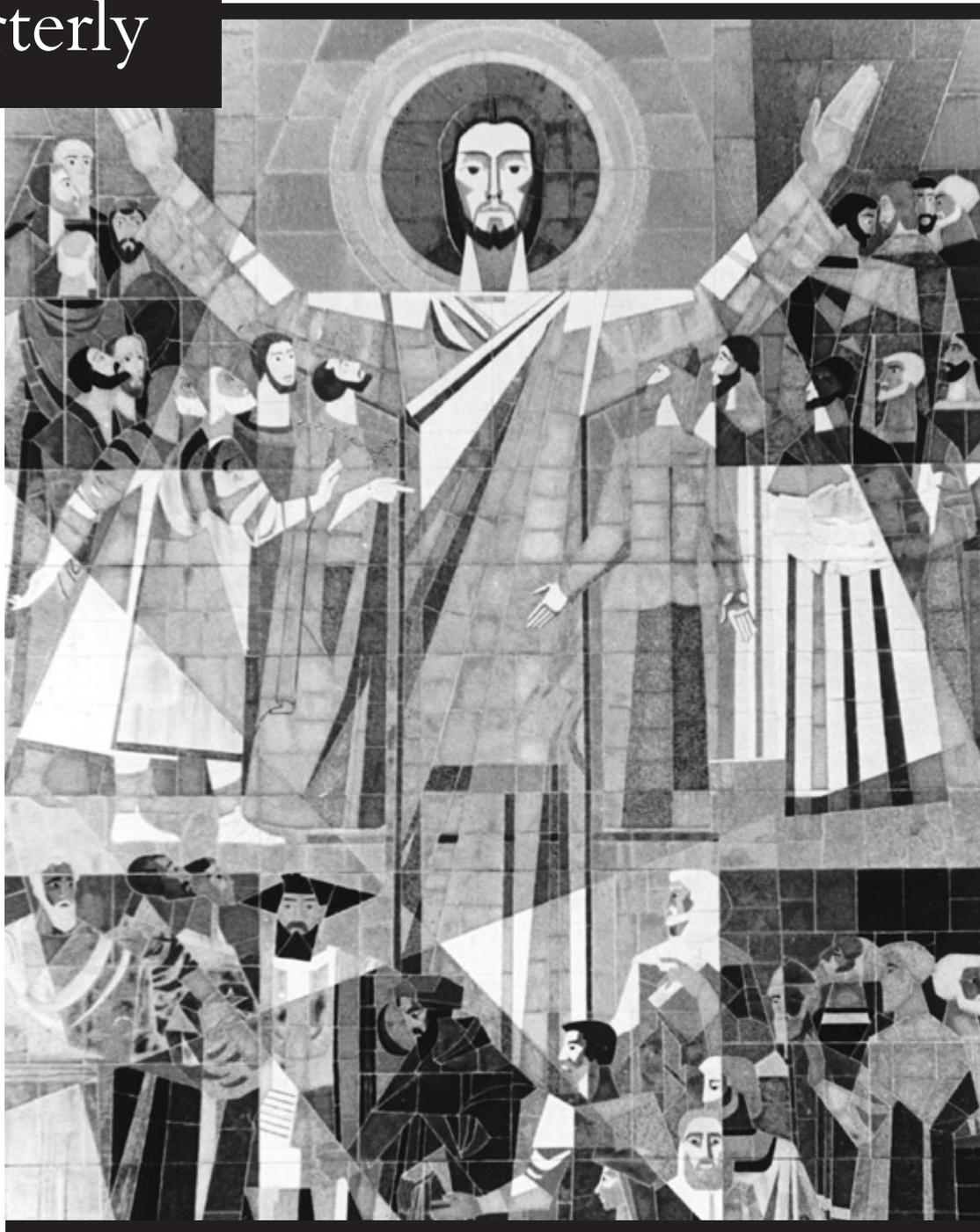


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## Fellowship of Catholic Scholars

Scholarship Inspired by the Holy Spirit,  
in Service to the Church

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### CONTENTS

PRESIDENT'S PAGE .....	2
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR .....	3
ARTICLES	
On Curiosity .....	3
The Laity in the Mission of the Church ....	7
The <i>Virginitas in Partu</i> .....	9
Carl Rogers, Vatican II, and the Person of Tomorrow .....	13
Ethical Issues in the Disposition of Frozen Embryos by Divorcing Couples ....	16
Leading His Flock: Has the New Archbishop of St. Louis Crossed a Line?...	19
BOOK REVIEWS .....	20
BOOKS RECEIVED .....	30
BOARD OF OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS .....	31
OF INTEREST .....	31
SED CONTRA .....	32

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**NOTE:** The Archives of the University of Notre Dame would like to preserve and make available to scholars a complete run of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Newsletter. We presently have only issues that happen to have come to us with personal papers (e.g., of Sister Rose Eileen Masterman, CSC, or Ralph McInerney). If you have back issues that you would be willing to donate, please write to [archives@nd.edu](mailto:archives@nd.edu)

### PRESIDENT'S PAGE

The last week of February presented plenty to talk about. (I write on March 1.) The President endorsed a federal marriage amendment. (By “President” I mean Bush, not me, though I favor an amendment, too.) Bush cited “activist judges” as the proximate cause of his endorsement, as well as the maverick Mayor of San Francisco. Last time I looked, the same-sex marriage license count out there was up to 3,200—and growing. Higher courts refuse to intervene and stop the lawlessness. Why is there never an activist judge around when you need one?

California’s new Governor vowed to terminate the San Francisco abuse. I entirely agree with Arnold Schwarzenegger on this one. But we must live in desperate times, when the actor who played Conan the Barbarian is our champion of (his words) “the rule of law”.

*The Passion of the Christ* opened to box-office success and mixed reviews. I’ve yet to see the film, but mean to soon. I’ve seen plenty of the run-up, though, and I am referring to the anti-Semitism charges. Maybe a case can be made that something in the film could have been handled more sensitively. I don’t know. I haven’t seen the picture. But of these propositions I am certain. First, Gibson’s *Passion* has been judged by standards so excruciatingly critical that, if applied to *any* other film, would be denounced by Gibson’s critics as fascistic. Second, they are applied to Gibson because of his subject – how Christ suffered death to redeem *all* of us from the consequences of *our* sins. Finally, Gibson refuses to be intimidated. And that is why the criticism grows more shrill.

Make no mistake about it. The struggle over *The Passion* is (whatever else it is) a power struggle. It’s a fight for cultural authority, about taboos, and about using a supposed moral higher ground to silence the recalcitrant.

Last Friday the USCCB released the John Jay studies of clergy sexual abuse. My Lenten mortification includes a commitment to read them both. I am giving up ice cream, too.

Dear Professor McInerny,

Please accept my compliments on another fine issue (26.4) of the Quarterly.

I write to correct an oversight. On page 40 of the issue, the late Father Lawler writes: "The name of [of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars] was suggested by an Australian layman who happened on the scene by chance."

Proper credit should be given where due! The name was proposed, not by some anonymous interloper, but by Karl Schmude of the University of New England (located in Armidale, New South Wales—there is more than one New England). He was a founding father of the Fellow-

ship of John XXIII, now known as the Campion Fellowship, an approximate Australian equivalent of the FCS. And he was on the scene not by chance, but surely by divine providence. He is one of the most mirthful of living Christians—Chesterton would have loved him.

I do hope you will see fit to give him proper credit in an upcoming issue.

With best wishes,

Robert J. Edgeworth,  
Professor of Latin and Greek,  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge

To: D. Q. McInerny:

I loved your essay on Edith Stein's phenomenology in the FCS Quarterly. I learned a great deal from it. Very thought-provoking, clearly written, incisive! Bravo!

Anne Gardiner, Brewster, NY

## ARTICLES

## On Curiosity

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

### I.

In the book of Genesis, we read the following lines: "God made man in His image and likeness." These words, "*Deus fecit hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem suam*" are cited by Thomas Aquinas in Question 163, article 2, of the too little studied *Secunda Secundae* of his *Summa Theologiae*. What Aquinas wants to know here is "whether the pride, the *superbia*, of our first parents consisted in this, that they desired the divine *similitudinem*, the "likeness" of God?"

We are "curious" about why we begin with a passage from the Book of Genesis, itself cited in the 12th Century, by Thomas Aquinas? Even more, are we intellectually curious about the exact nature of the sin of our first parents. What it meant to desire the divine "likeness?" Have we ever wondered whether we have had the same temptation? Chances are, we have.

The reason for recalling this famous biblical

passage is that I would like to consider a little attended to aspect of the virtue of temperance. It is called "*studiositas*" or sometimes "*curiositas*," though this latter, curiosity, usually, but not necessarily always, refers to the vice of which *studiositas* is the virtue.

*Studiositas* comes from the Latin word, *studium*, a word that sounds, at first sight, most appropriate for academic consideration. The Dominican Order, to which Aquinas belonged, calls their place and program of higher learning precisely a *studium generale*. The word *studium*, however, means rather intense "zeal" or "desire" for something, not what is studied or the place of study but the zeal to study, no matter what is studied or where it is studied.

We all have a general suspicion, furthermore, that "curiosity," while it can be a good thing, often has rather pejorative overtones. We are inordinately "curious" to know what is none of our business. We are even curious to know what is God's business and are loathe to think that His ways are not our ways. We would have made a much better world if we were only in charge. Instead we have this botched up mess

we see before our eyes.

It was this latter vice, *curiositas*, that had something to do with our first parents and their famous temptation and “Fall.” In fact, few more interesting intellectual and moral exercises can be found than to read carefully and thoroughly the account of the sin of our first parents as it unfolds in Genesis. We need to pay attention to the role played in this drama by an excessive “zeal” for knowledge, the “knowledge of good and evil,” the brooding curiosity about what is forbidden and why. The sin of our first parents was not a sin of concupiscence, for that disorder was something that they did not possess in their original status.

## II.

Let us do this reading of Genesis with the considerable help of Thomas Aquinas, a man who asked and answered more questions than any of us ever thought of, or thought possible. He did this because he too had “*studium*,” a zeal for knowing, a lively curiosity to know what things are and a discipline to go about it in an orderly and right way.

First, however, I want to cite two passages, one from St. Irenaeus and one from Peter Kreeft, to give us the higher background in which we are to consider aspects of the Fall, to consider how zeal for knowledge can be abused, can become a vice.

St. Irenaeus of Lyons (c. 200 AD), in his famous treatise, *Against Heresies*, tells us that “God is man’s glory. Man is the vessel which receives God’s action and all his wisdom and power. ... If man, without being puffed up or boastful, has a right belief regarding created things and their divine Creator, who, having given them being, holds them all in his power, and if man perseveres in God’s love, and in obedience and gratitude to him, he will receive greater glory from him.” (3,20). “Greater glory than what?” we might ask. Greater glory than we could give ourselves by our own powers.

Notice in this passage from Irenaeus that *man* is not said to be man’s glory. Man’s being and wisdom, however good, are primarily and initially received, gifts. Man does not make himself to be *what he is*. Evidently, according to Irenaeus, it is quite possible to be “puffed up” or “boastful” precisely about knowledge. “How so?” we wonder. Man does have revelational knowledge of the origin and preservation of his own

being. If he preserves in this knowledge and love of what did give him being, he can be greater than he is by himself, a rather remarkable notion, if we think of it. We can receive “even greater glory” if we are not “puffed up” or “boastful” about what sort of beings we are.

Peter Kreeft has drawn the consequences of these teachings about the kind of being we have given to us. Human beings, unlike the remaining creatures in the world, must choose to accept what they are and freely carry out what they are responsible for. “The self is not a given, an object, whose essential nature is unchangeable,” he wrote. “Triangles can never be non-triangular, and rocks are always guaranteed to be rocky, and grass grassy, and dogs doggy—but humans can be inhuman. We alone can fail to achieve our nature. Our nature is a task given to us to achieve, not a fact given to us simply to receive.”<sup>1</sup> We can fail to achieve what we are. These are momentous words.

We are interested here, however, in the role of knowledge in this failure, if it happens. But we do not deny the corresponding role of knowledge, even philosophy, in our knowing and choosing rightly about what we are. “The zeal (*studium*) for philosophy in itself, St. Thomas writes in an article on curiosity (167, ad 3), “is legitimate and laudable because of the truth which philosophers perceive, God revealing it to them.” This is approximately the teaching of *Fides et Ratio*.

Let me first, before stating more directly what this *studiositas* means, situate where we are in that most orderly of books, the *Summa Theologiae*. We are dealing with the different kinds of virtues, vices, and their relation to each other.

Question 162 of the *Secunda Secundae* of St. Thomas is entitled, *De Superbia*, “About Pride.” Pride, as we know, is the deepest root of sin, the radical source of all other sins, the capital sin, as it is therefore called. There is, in fact, no sin that does not have a touch of pride connected with it, a touch of our own effort to establish, not discover, the truth of the things we immediately deal with.

What does this mean? Aquinas tells us that “pride is named after the fact that someone by his own will tends to direct us to some level above (*super*) what he is in fact.” Basically, Aquinas continues, “pride implies something that is against right reason.” To follow “right reason,” of course, is one of Aquinas’ succinct

definitions of the natural law of human beings.

After considerable examination concerning the implications of pride, Aquinas goes to the next question, 163, which turns out to be *De Peccato Primi Homini*, “on the sin of the first parents.” Aquinas immediately wants to know whether this was a sin of pride? Since the first parents were still in the Garden, what else could it be? Their sensory powers were subject to their minds and wills. St. Thomas adds the interesting point that Adam and Eve could not have been tempted actually to be God, as they could not by their own powers know what God was really like. This was true of the angels also. The angels knew they were not God.

Did it ever occur to us how amazing and interesting it is that a man like Thomas Aquinas would think it important to inquire about how sin was possible in a being who had not yet sinned? Or how insightful he was to think that it did have something, though not everything, to do with knowledge?

The temptation thus had to arise from wanting to be “similar” to or in the “likeness of” God, that is, to exercise autonomously God’s powers as found in His image. This capacity could be desired because we could concentrate not on God but on God’s known effects. There is already here a slight deviation from the good.

Aquinas puts it delicately: Because we have intellects and wills, we, though not divine, do participate in the divine likeness. We know and we are free. “Whatever be the existing good (found) in creatures, it is a certain participated likeness of the divine good. It does not make itself to be good. And from this very fact that man desires some spiritual good above its proper measure, it follows that he will inordinately desire the divine likeness” (163, 2).

What does it mean to desire the divine likeness “inordinately?” Aquinas tells us that both the devil and the first parent desired

the divine likeness inordinately. The first man sinned principally by desiring the similitude (likeness) of God with regard to the knowledge of good and evil, as the devil suggested to him. He (man) desired that through the powers of his own proper nature, (a likeness of God), he would determine for himself what would be good and what evil in action. Through his own power he could establish what for him would be good or evil in the future.

No briefer explanation of what we do when we sin has ever been penned.

Since we know that we are like unto God in that we know and are free, we are tempted to exercise this power at a level higher than the being given to us. God, not us, has designated the distinction between good and evil. When we sin, we insert a knowledge or reason component. This factor is established solely by us, in forming our act. This insertion serves as a new definition of good and evil, one that suits our purpose, no matter whether it conforms to God’s distinctions or not. In act, we thus claim to be gods by judging that whatever we do is good or evil because we make it so.

## II.

Let me now, briefly, return to *studiositas* as it must be seen against the background of pride and the sin of the first parent. We need first to be clear to know what we are talking about. Aquinas tells us that *studium* means the “vehement application of the mind to something.” Clearly, this is what Eve and Adam experienced. Knowing the name of the tree, the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were deceived to think they would not die if they claimed this power by eating the fruit. They had *studium*, a zeal. They had a driving *curiositas* about what they were told not to do.

But we cannot properly apply our mind to something unless we know the thing to which we are applying ourselves. So this “zeal” is first directed to knowledge, not to the thing about which there is knowledge. We are the sort of beings who want to know the truth, who are made to know it. Yet, indirectly, we can look at this zeal or curiosity we have not in the light of the object known, but from the side of our desire to know it. We can focus on ourselves, in other words. How nice it is that we know it, not how nice is the thing known that we did not make. And this slight deviation is where all sorts of problems can arise as we can see, beginning with Genesis.

The reason that *studiositas* or *curiositas* in their positive meaning is an aspect of the virtue of temperance, the virtue by which we moderate our desires for pleasure, and not an aspect of the intellectual virtue of science or first principles or wisdom, is be-

cause there is a pleasure in knowing. Aquinas puts it, “just as man naturally desires the delights of food and sex according to his physical nature, so does he desire to know something according to his soul.” And since we are unique precisely because we know and desire to know, we can expect that some danger may arise if we can separate the thing we know from our desire or zeal to know it.

Thus, we can seek to know something, and really know it, but desire this knowledge, good in itself, to do something wrong with it. We can learn the hours of a bank, for instance, in order to rob it at an “appropriate” time, that is, when no one is there. Think for a moment of the thousand other instances in which this same principle can happen with regard to other vices. There is an objectively good knowledge component to every thing we do, including sin.

*Studiositas* is the moderation or guidance of our desire to know so that we steadily direct our minds to the knowledge of the thing, not to our desire to use it in any other way than to know *what is*. *Studiositas* does not directly concern knowledge itself, but the desire or zeal for knowing. “It is one thing to judge about the knowledge of the truth and another thing to judge about the desire or zeal for knowing this same truth,” Aquinas says.

I can, in other words, want to be known as someone who “desires” to know the truth, who has “zeal” for books and knowing the truth. There is a certain vanity, if not pride, here. But in fact, I am not concerned with the thing known or my knowledge of it, but my zeal for it. Thus, I am deflected. I cannot judge properly about it.

It is this zeal, the *studium*, that can be right or perverse and hence must itself have a proper virtue that rules it for our prudential guidance to our end. Curiosity, in so far as it refers to a vice, means the directing of our minds away from its fit or due object, either to something else or to itself in so far as it merely desires the desire to know and not the knowing itself.

#### IV.

**A**quinas helpfully gives us four examples of how we can use zeal or curiosity badly. Let me conclude with these troublesome possibilities. The first example seems quite modern. It

is directed to us clerics. This zeal for knowing can withdraw us from the necessary knowledge we ought to have towards something that is not quite so useful.

As an example, Aquinas cites the crusty St. Jerome who complained of priests who put aside the study of the Gospels and Scripture to pick up what he called *comoedias* or to sing *amatoria bucolicorum versuum verba*. Anyone aware of the nature of the unhappy scandals among the clergy cannot doubt that this vice of curiosity involves today something worse than the plays of Plautus or love stories of Ovid. Our use of the Internet, among other modern inventions, I suspect, constantly needs to recall this admonition of Jerome, whether we be clerics or not.

The second way there can be an inordinate zeal to know something would be a desire to know something that “is not permitted.” Here Aquinas mentions the desire to know the future. “Superstitious curiosity,” things like fortune tellers or dabbling in the occult, are, I suspect, rather more widespread and considerably more dangerous than the daily reading of our horoscope, though that too needs care. Actually the recent document from the Pontifical Council on Culture, “The Old Gnosticism and the New Age,” gives a healthy reminder of just how pertinent this warning of Aquinas is even in our own days. (*The Pope Speaks*, January, 2004, 8-59).

The third way that our zeal for knowledge can be misplaced is when “a man desires to know the truth concerning creatures but not referring them to their true end, namely, the knowledge of God.” While not forgetting the famous dictum *abstractio non est mendacio*, that is, “to deal with something by prescind from its whole being is not a lie,” still we deal here with the whole issue of modern science and its theoretical origins. Though not necessarily so in theory, in practice such disciplines often deal with man and the universe as if neither had an end, or no end that is related to God. It so happens, that in recent years, quietly, yet forcefully, we are seeing more and more endeavors to see that science does not have an objectively atheist or anti-rational basis. The universe and those within it do seem to have an order that is given not imposed by the human mind, something, as Socrates said, that Anaxagoras suspected long ago.

And finally, in so far as one is zealous for a truth

above power of his own genius, he can easily slip into errors. This conclusion is simply Aquinas' wise admonition to be content to know truly what we can know, but not to be upset at what we cannot know as finite beings. We are not gods. We are, with Socrates, to know that we do not know. It is all right to be a finite being who is zealous, who is curious about things. But these very powers can, when not ruled by a proper *studiositas*, a proper understanding that our zeal for knowledge, a zeal we all want and need, lead us to knowledge, not to ourselves, not to our own made-up

version of the knowledge of good and evil.

In reflecting on *studiositas* and *curiositas*, when spelled out, we cannot help but think of how Aquinas, who thought as well and as long about real things as any of our kind, still warns us to point our knowledge to what is worthy of knowing, and not merely to be impressed with our own zeal to know.

"God made man in his image and likeness." "Our nature is a task given to us to achieve."

"God is the glory of man."

1. Peter Kreeft, *The Philosophy of Tolkien*. (San Francisco: Ignatius, 2004), 104.

## The Laity in the Mission of the Church: A Neglected Truth

By Ralph Martin  
Sacred Heart Major Seminary,  
Ave Maria College  
Michigan

Russell Shaw's response (in the FCS Winter 2003 issue) to the remarks of Cardinal Ratzinger and Professor Glendon on the participation of the laity in the mission of the Church is very useful. It is an excellent example of the point he makes about the importance of appropriate lay involvement and shared responsibility in the Church today. However, there is an area of consistent magisterial teaching about the participation of lay-people in the mission of the Church that continues to be ignored that, I believe, needs to be part of this discussion.

Vatican II in its Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People identifies three fields of lay participation in the mission of the Church. 1. The mission of evangelization and sanctification. 2. The mission of renewing the temporal order. 3. The mission of mercy and charity. And while this document, and others, identifies the lay-person's unique presence in the secular order as irreplaceable, it goes on to make some remarkable statements about the priority of direct evangelization.

"The Church's mission is concerned with the salvation of men; and men win salvation through the grace of

Christ and faith in him. The apostolate of the Church therefore, and of each of its members, aims primarily at announcing to the world by word and action the message of Christ and communicating to it the grace of Christ... Laymen have countless opportunities for exercising the apostolate of evangelization and sanctification. The very witness of a Christian life, and good works done in a supernatural spirit, are effective in drawing men to the faith and to God... This witness of life, however, is not the sole element in the apostolate; **the true apostle is on the lookout for occasions of announcing Christ by word, either to unbelievers to draw them towards the faith, or to the faithful to instruct them, strengthen them, incite them to a more fervent life...**"<sup>1</sup>

Starting with the documents of Vatican II, and continuing with the subsequent pontifical documents on evangelization, the contemporary magisterial documents have been remarkably consistent in insisting on the priority of direct proclamation with a view toward conversion for everyone involved in the mission of the Church, specifically including laypeople. The documents make clear that even if a layperson's primary field of mission is in the political, economic or social sphere or in doing works of charity, he or she continues to have an obligation to directly proclaim Christ by word, with a view towards leading others to conversion or deeper faith.

“This apostolate...must not exclude any good, spiritual or temporal, that can be done for them. **Genuine apostles are not content, however, with just this: they are earnest also about revealing Christ by word to those around them.** It is a fact that many men cannot hear the Gospel and come to acknowledge Christ except through the laymen they associate with.”<sup>2</sup>

Paul VI continued to make this point strongly in *On Evangelization in the Modern World*.

**“There can be no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the kingdom and the mystery of Jesus of Nazareth the Son of God are not proclaimed.”**<sup>3</sup>

“Evangelization will also always contain—as the foundation, center, and at the same time, summit of its dynamism—a clear proclamation that, in Jesus Christ, the Son of God made man, who died and rose from the dead, salvation is offered to all men, as a gift of God’s grace and mercy.”<sup>4</sup>

John Paul II continues this emphasis on the priority of direct proclamation in his writings.

“I sense that the moment has come to commit all of the Church’s energies to a new evangelization and to the mission *ad gentes*. **No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples.**”<sup>5</sup>

“Preaching constitutes the Church’s first and fundamental way of serving the coming of the kingdom in individuals and in human society.”<sup>6</sup>

John Paul II takes up the theme again in his inspiring vision for Catholic life in the new millennium. Drawing out the implications of baptismal spirituality the Pope roots his vision solidly in the universal call to holiness and the universal call to mission that each member of the Church receives by virtue of being a Christian.

**“Those who have come into genuine contact with Christ cannot keep him for themselves; they must proclaim him.** A new apostolic outreach is needed, which will be lived as *the everyday commitment of Christian communities and groups.*”<sup>7</sup>

It’s important to understand that direct proclamation doesn’t necessarily mean standing on a street corner (although it could!) and proclaiming Jesus. The

proclamation of Jesus needs to adjust itself to what’s appropriate in the various circumstances in which we find ourselves, and must be in some relationship to the preparation that the Holy Spirit (“the principal agent of evangelization”<sup>8</sup>) is doing in the hearts of those we are hoping to help discover Jesus. Given the necessary qualifications, what implications does this priority of direct proclamation have for the life of the Church today, and in particular, lay participation in that mission?

1. Understanding the priority of some form of verbal proclamation of Jesus has implications for the formation of lay-people. It is not enough to get lay people “involved”, “signed up” or “active” in various organizations or activities. They need to be led themselves to conversion, be brought into “genuine contact with Christ” so that they have the desire to share Him with others, whatever else they may be doing.
2. When it is understood that direct “proclamation” is the mission of everyone it’s clear that this has implications for spirituality. There’s an essential link between evangelization and spirituality that is also very consistently presented in the magisterial documents. John Paul II makes the perhaps startling statement:

**“The future of mission depends to a great extent on contemplation. Unless the missionary is a contemplative he cannot proclaim Christ in a credible way.** He is a witness to the experience of God, and must be able to say with the apostles: ‘that which we have looked upon...concerning the word of life...we proclaim also to you.’ 1 Jn 1:1-3).”<sup>9</sup>

This is perhaps why he has so strongly called the Church to reconnect with the mystical tradition—mentioning specifically John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Siena and Therese of Lisieux—as a way of getting the help we need to respond to the universal call to holiness, and its link with mission.<sup>10</sup>

3. Clergy and laity, working together in various ways, to make Christ known, helps keep an appropriate spiritual focus in the whole atmosphere of the parish.
4. The ability of the Church to influence the “temporal order” and to be heard on the important issues facing society today has a definite relationship to the

quality and fervor of our life as a Church and our success in drawing others to conversion. Numbers do matter. You've got to have Catholics to have a "Catholic vote."

I'd like to end these preliminary reflections with a quote from Avery Dulles that I think sums up well some of the points we have been making.

"In my judgment the evangelical turn in the ecclesial vision of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II is one of the most surprising and important developments in the Catholic Church since Vatican II...All of this constitutes a remarkable shift in the Catholic tradition...Today we seem to be witnessing the birth of a new Catholicism that, without loss of its institutional, sacramental, and social dimensions, is authentically evangelical...Catholic spirituality at its best has always promoted a deep personal relationship with Christ. In evangelizing we are required to raise our eyes to him and to transcend all ecclesiocentrism. The Church is of crucial importance but is not self-enclosed. It is a means of drawing the whole world into union with God through Jesus Christ...**Too many Catholics of our day seem never to have encountered Christ. They know a certain amount about him from the teaching of the Church, but they lack**

**direct personal familiarity...The first and highest priority is for the Church to proclaim the good news concerning Jesus Christ as a joyful message to all the world. Only if the Church is faithful to its evangelical mission can it hope to make its distinctive contribution in the social, political, and cultural spheres."**<sup>11</sup>

## Endnotes

1. Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People, 6. Bolding in this and subsequent quotations is mine.
2. *Ibid.*, 13.
3. Evangelization in the Modern World, 22.
4. *Ibid.*, 27.
5. Mission of the Redeemer, 3.
6. *Ibid.*, 20.
7. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 40.
8. Mission of the Redeemer, 21.
9. *Ibid.*, 91.
10. *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 32, 27.
11. Avery Dulles, S.J., *John Paul II and the New Evangelization* (New York: Fordham University, 1992), p. 3. Originally given as a lecture at Fordham and then printed in pamphlet form (cited here) versions of this address have been given and published elsewhere as well. Another version of this talk can be found in:  
Martin, Ralph & Williamson, Peter ed. *John Paul II and the New Evangelization* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1995) pp. 25-39.

# The *Virginitas in Partu*

by Msgr. Arthur Burton Calkins

Msgr. Calkins is an official of "Ecclesia Dei," The Vatican. [Editor: Msgr. Calkins' response to an earlier article by Dr. Catherine Brown Tkacz was printed in the Winter 2003 FCS Quarterly, without accompanying footnotes. They are included here.]

In her interesting article "Reproductive Science and the Incarnation" (*Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly* Vol. 25, No. 4, [Fall 2002] 11-25) Dr. Catherine Brown Tkacz offers a number of interesting correlations between the discoveries of reproductive science and the Church's belief in the mystery of the Incarnation. Just as the Holy Spirit has continued to bring forth deeper insights into the meaning of this mystery (cf. Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation [*Dei Verbum*] #8), so also the data of biological science,

evaluated in the light of Scripture and Tradition, can help us to marvel at the inexhaustible richness of the mystery. The point is, of course, that the mystery can never be simply explained either by theology or by modern science. At the end of her essay Dr. Tkacz appropriately comments that "the mystery of Jesus's Incarnation remains ineluctable and eternal" (p. 22).

Without taking away from the valuable insights which her article provides, I would nonetheless take issue with Dr. Tkacz' treatment of Mary's virginity in giving birth to Christ (commonly referred to as the *virginitas in partu*) on p. 21 and in endnotes #76 and #78 on p. 25. It must be admitted that the datum of the faith that Mary gave birth as a virgin, unfortunately, receives virtually no attention in contemporary catechesis or preaching. Indeed, who can remember having heard of the "virgin birth" of Jesus

(and not of his “virginal conception” or of his Mother’s “life-long virginity”) in a homily in the last forty years?

### I. Datum of the Tradition

The fact is that the mystery of Mary’s virginity in giving birth to the Savior was preached and taught consistently by the Fathers and Doctors of the Church. One finds beautiful expositions of it in the homilies and catecheses of St. Gregory of Nyssa (+ c. 394)<sup>1</sup>, St. Ambrose (+ 397)<sup>2</sup>, St. John Chrysostom (+ 407)<sup>3</sup>, St. Proclus of Constantinople (+ 446)<sup>4</sup>, Theodotus of An-cyra (+ before 446)<sup>5</sup>, St. Peter Chrysologus (+ 450)<sup>6</sup>, Pope St. Leo the Great (+ 461)<sup>7</sup>, Severus of Antioch (+ 538)<sup>8</sup>, St. Romanos the Melodist (+ c. 560)<sup>9</sup>, St. Venantius Fortunatus (+ c. 600)<sup>10</sup> and Pope St. Gregory the Great (+ 604)<sup>11</sup>

This preaching and teaching was not a mere matter of pious fantasizing, but rather it was a careful “handing on” of what had been received. The miraculous birth of Jesus in time was seen as a reflection of the mystery of his eternal generation by the Father.<sup>12</sup> As with all of the most important data which touched on the person of the Son of God, it became progressively clarified by the magisterium. Already during the pontificate of Pope St. Siricius (384-399) this matter was dealt with in the Plenary Council of Capua (392) and in the Synods of Rome and Milan in 393<sup>13</sup> with St. Ambrose’s teaching on Mary’s “incorruption” in giving birth emerging as authoritative.<sup>14</sup> In his *De institutione virginum* St. Ambrose introduced this mystery by quoting the beginning of the forty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel:

“Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, facing the east; but it was closed. He said to me: This gate is to remain closed; it is not to be opened for anyone to enter by it; since the Lord, the God of Israel, has entered by it, it shall remain closed.” ... Who is this gate, if not Mary? Is it not closed because she is a virgin? Mary is the gate through which Christ entered this world, when he was brought forth in the virginal birth and the manner of His birth did not break the seals of virginity [*quando virginali fusus est partu, et genitalia virginitatis claustra non solvit*].<sup>15</sup> ... There is a gate of the womb, although it is not always closed; indeed only one was able to remain closed, that through which the One born of the Virgin came forth without the loss

of genital intactness [*per quam sine dispendio claustrorum genitalium virginis partus exivit*].<sup>16</sup>

St. Ambrose’s defense of the “virgin birth”, especially in this treatise, is so definitive that those who have subsequently sought to “re-interpret” the doctrine in the light of the criticism of Dr. Albert Mitterer<sup>17</sup> have found it necessary to take him on.<sup>18</sup>

### II. The Magisterium

In 649 the Roman Synod which convened at the Lateran, whose teaching was approved as authoritative by Pope St. Martin I, anathematized anyone who would deny that Mary “gave birth to [God the Word] without corruption”.<sup>19</sup> In his Constitution *Cum quorundam hominum* condemning the errors of Unitarianism Pope Paul IV admonished all those who deny that the Blessed Virgin Mary “did not retain her virginity intact before the birth, in the birth, and perpetually after the birth.”<sup>20</sup> *The Roman Catechism* also known as *The Catechism of the Council of Trent* followed suit with this clear teaching:

For in a way wonderful beyond expression or conception, he is born of his Mother without any diminution of her maternal virginity. As he afterwards went forth from the sepulcher while it was closed and sealed, and entered the room in which his disciples were assembled, although “the doors were closed” (Jn. 20:19), or, not to depart from natural events which we witness every day, as the rays of the sun penetrate the substance of glass without breaking or injuring it in the least: so, but in a more incomprehensible manner, did Jesus Christ come forth from his mother’s womb without injury to her maternal virginity. ...

To Eve it was said: “In pain you shall bring forth children” (Gen. 3:16). Mary was exempt from this law, for preserving her virginal integrity inviolate, she brought forth Jesus the Son of God, without experiencing, as we have already said, any sense of pain.<sup>21</sup>

The Second Vatican Council presented this mystery succinctly by speaking of “the birth of Our Lord, who did not diminish his mother’s virginal integrity but sanctified it”<sup>22</sup> and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* repeats that statement after clarifying that

The deepening of faith in the virginal motherhood led the Church to confess Mary’s real and perpetual virginity even in the act of giving birth to the Son of God made man.<sup>23</sup>

Those who would say that these recent professions of the mystery are minimal and non-binding need only examine the footnotes appended to each of them to discover that they are based on previous major declarations of the magisterium which have been considered definitive since the Patristic era. The text of *Lumen Gentium* cites the Lateran Synod of 649, the *Tome* of St. Leo the Great to Flavian<sup>24</sup> and the *De institutione virginum* of St. Ambrose. The *Catechism* gives two citations to the *Tome* to Flavian,<sup>25</sup> as well as citing the Second Council of Constantinople,<sup>26</sup> the Letter of Pope Pelagius I to Childebertus,<sup>27</sup> the Lateran Synod of 649, the Profession of Faith of the Synod of Toledo of 693<sup>28</sup> and Pope Paul IV's Constitution *Cum quorundam hominum*.

### III. Dr. Tkacz' Comments

#### A. The Miraculous Nature of Christ's Birth

Now back to Dr. Tkacz. She states that

He [Christ] chose to traverse the birth canal. ... He passed through her [Mary's] cervix. Its strength had kept him securely in the uterus throughout gestation and now it widened to deliver him to wider life. He passed through the vagina, the organ with which every wife knows her husband. Jesus emerged through the labia, the vulva [21].

The good doctor reports as if she were an eyewitness, precisely on the assumption that there was nothing miraculous in the birth process of the Son of God. On the other hand Father Peter Damian Fehler makes this very trenchant comment:

But on this question, viz. whether the virginity of our Lady in childbirth involves miraculous elements distinct from the virginal conception, there is an even more basic consideration. The Church has always insisted on this, antecedently to any theological reflection on the point. *Belief precedes analysis; indeed sets very severe limits on our intellectual curiosity about the details of this singular birth.*<sup>29</sup>

In this he is in fact echoing a major address which Pope John Paul II gave on 24 May 1992 in Capua where he had gone to address a Mariological Congress organized to commemorate the 16th Centenary of the Plenary Council of Capua which had dealt specifically with Mary's virginity in childbirth. On that occasion the Pope stated:

The theologian must approach the mystery of Mary's fruitful virginity *with a deep sense of veneration for God's free, holy and sovereign action.* ...

The theologian, however, who approaches the mystery of Mary's virginity with a heart full of faith and adoring respect, does not thereby forego the duty of studying the data of Revelation and showing their harmony and interrelationship; rather, following the Spirit, ... he puts himself in the great and fruitful theological tradition of *fides quaerens intellectum*.

When theological reflection becomes a moment of doxology and latria, the mystery of Mary's virginity is disclosed, allowing one to catch a glimpse of other aspects and other depths.<sup>30</sup>

#### B. The Patristic Testimony

In Dr. Tkacz' endnote #76 she rather lightly dismisses an article by Father Stanley Jaki on the virgin birth because he does not cite any Patristic texts in making his case. She opines that the miraculous nature of the birth of Christ "seems to me essentially modern, based on a pietistic thought that to honor Jesus one must dissociate him from human birth, as if birth were indecent" (p. 25). I trust that by now the reader will recognize that this doctrine is clearly taught by the Fathers. (For reasons of space we must forego discussion of the Scriptural bases of the doctrine.) Further, the miraculous nature of Jesus' birth is not an indictment of human birth as being "indecent", but rather fully congruent with the saving purposes of the Incarnation. As Pope St. Leo the Great preached:

The Lord Jesus Christ came to take away our maladies, not to contract them; to bring a remedy to our vices, not to succumb to them. ... That is why it was necessary for Him to be born in new conditions [*propter quod oportuit ut novo nasceretur ordine*]. ... It was necessary that the integrity of the One being born preserve the pristine virginity of the one who gave birth.<sup>31</sup>

John Seward's excellent study, *Cradle of Redeeming Love*, provides several illuminating pages on the fittingness of the miraculous nature of Jesus' birth.<sup>32</sup>

#### C. The Seal of Virginity

In endnote #78 Dr. Tkacz states "Legend attributes an intact hymen to the Theotokos" and then goes on to quote from *Taber's Cyclopedic Medical Dictionary* that the "rupture or absence [of the hymen] is not evidence of loss of virginity". While a certain sense

of delicacy, inspired by the 1960 *Monitum* of the Holy Office of 1960,<sup>33</sup> makes me hesitate a moment before taking issue with this statement, it needs to be dealt with. On this matter the late Father Juniper Carol, O.F.M. summarized quite clearly how the approach of the Fathers and the magisterium had come to be understood:

At the appropriate time, Our Blessed Lord left the womb of His Mother through the natural channels but in a miraculous way, that is, without in any manner opening any part of Mary's body. In other words, there was no dilatation of the normal passage, no opening of the vagina, no breaking of the virginal hymen.<sup>34</sup>

In less specific biological language the Holy Father treated this issue in his discourse at Capua in 1992. He stated:

It is a well-known fact that some Church Fathers set up a significant parallel between the begetting of Christ *ex intacta Virgine* [from the untouched Virgin] and his resurrection *ex intacto sepulchro* [from the intact sepulchre]. In the parallelism relative to the begetting of Christ, some Fathers put the emphasis on the virginal conception, others on the virgin birth, others on the subsequent perpetual virginity of the Mother, but they all testify to the conviction that between the two saving events—the generation–birth of Christ and his resurrection from the dead—there exists an intrinsic connection which corresponds to a precise plan of God: a connection which the Church, led by the Spirit, has discovered, not created.<sup>35</sup>

With regard to Dr. Tkacz' specific insistence, John Saward provides clarification from the Angelic Doctor:

St. Thomas says that the hymen pertains to virginity only *per accidens*, and that its rupture by any means other than sexual pleasure is no more destructive of virginity than the loss of a hand or foot (cf. *ST* 2a2æ q. 152, a. 1, ad 3). However, he also holds that bodily integrity belongs to the perfection of virginity (see *Questiones quodlibetales* 6, q. 10, prol).<sup>36</sup>

Could we expect that God would do less for His Virgin Mother?

#### IV. Virginity of Flesh—Virginity of Heart

What does this doctrine mean? It certainly shouldn't be taken in any way as lessening "the value and dignity of marriage"<sup>37</sup> asserts the Holy Father. Rather, he insists, it should be seen as pointing to the fact that the bodily integrity of Mary is a physical sign of her total spiritual virginity, that the virginity of her flesh is an indication of the virginity of her heart:

Therefore, she fulfils in herself the ideal of perfect adherence to God's plan, without compromise and without the defilement of falsehood or pride; the ideal of faithful fulfilment of the covenant, the violation of which on the part of Israel is compared to adultery by the prophets; the ideal of sincere acceptance of the Gospel message, in which the single-hearted are called blest (cf. (cf. Mt. 5:8) and virginity for the kingdom is extolled (cf. Mt. 19:12); the ideal of rightly understanding the mystery of Christ—the *Truth par excellence* (cf. Jn. 14:6) —and his doctrine, because of which the Church is also called a virgin since she preserves the deposit of faith whole and incorrupt.<sup>38</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Luigi Gambero, S.M., *Mary and the Fathers of the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary in Patristic Thought* trans. Thomas Buffer (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1999) 154–156, 158–159.
2. Gambero 192.
3. John Saward, *Cradle of Redeeming Love: The Theology of the Christmas Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002) 209.
4. Gambero 252–253.
5. Gambero 265.
6. Gambero 294–295.
7. Gambero 304–309.
8. Gambero 314.
9. Gambero 331–332.
10. Gambero 364.
11. Peter Damian Fehlner, F.I., *Virgin Mother The Great Sign* (Washington, NJ: AMI Press, 1993) 13.
12. Cf. John Saward, *Cradle of Redeeming Love: The Theology of the Christmas Mystery* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2002) 212–213.
13. Cf. Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 6–9.
14. Cf. Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 8–11.
15. Domenico Casagrande, *Enchiridion Marianum Biblicum Patristicum* (Rome: Figlie della Chiesa, 1974) 368 [W.A. Jurgens, *The Faith of the Early Fathers*, Vol. 2 (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1979) 172 (#1327)].
16. Casagrande 369 [Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 9 (trans. slightly altered)].
17. Cf. Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 1
18. Cf. Karl Rahner, S.J., "Virginity in Partu: A contribution to the problem of the development of dogma and of tradition" in *Theological Investigations* 4 (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1966) 134 ff. and the response by James T. O'Connor, "Ambrose and Karl Rahner: Reflections on the "Virginity in Partu" in *Mater Fidei et Fidelium: Collected Essays to Honor Theodore Koehler on His 80th Birthday* (*Marian Library Studies*) (n.s.) Vol. 17–23 (1985–1991) 726–731; John R. Meyer,

“Ambrose’s exegesis of Luke 2, 22–24 and Mary’s *virginitas in partu*” *Marianum* 62 (2000) 169–192 and the response by Peter Damian Fehlner, F.I., “*Virginitas in Partu*” in *Immaculata Mediatrix* 2 (2002) 241–246.

19. Heinrich Denzinger, S.I., *Enchiridion Symbolonum Definitionum et Declarationum de Rebus Fidei et Morum: Edizione Bilingue (XXXVII)* a cura di Peter Hünermann (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2000) #503 (henceforth referred to as *D-H*); J. Neuner, S.J. & J. Dupuis, S.J. (eds.), *The Christian Faith in the Doctrinal Documents of the Catholic Church Sixth Revised and Enlarged Edition* edited by Jacques Dupuis (NY: Alba House, 1998) #703 (henceforth referred to as *TCF*). For commentary, cf. Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 14–16.

20. *D-H* #1880 [*TCF* #707].

21. Robert I. Bradley, S.J. and Eugene Kevane (eds.), *The Roman Catechism* (Boston, MA: St. Paul Editions, 1985) 49–50.

22. *Lumen Gentium* #57.

23. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* #499.

24. *D-H* #294; *TCF* #612.

25. *D-H* #291 [*TCF* #609]; *D-H* #294 [*TCF* #612].

26. *D-H* #427 [*TCF* #620/6].

27. *D-H* #442.

28. *D-H* #571.

29. Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 4.

30. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (henceforth referred to as *AAS*) 85 (1993) 664 [*L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition, henceforth referred to as *ORE*) 10 June 1992, p. 13].

31. *In nativitate Domini, sermo* 2, no. 2. *Enchiridion Marianum* 924 [English translation in Saward 213, n. 133].

32. Cf. Saward 212–217.

33. Cf. *Ephemerides Mariologicae* 11 (1961) 137–138 [René Laurentin, *A Short Treatise on the Virgin Mary* trans. Charles Neumann, S.M. (Washington, NJ: AMI Press, 1991) 328–329] and commentary in Fehlner, *Virgin Mother* 19–21.

34. *Homiletic & Pastoral Review* 54 (1954) 446.

35. *AAS* 85 (1993) 665 [*ORE* 10 June 1992, p. 13].

36. Saward 212, n. 128.

37. *AAS* 85 (1993) 669 [*ORE* 10 June 1992, p. 14].

38. *AAS* 85 (1993) 668–669 [*ORE* 10 June 1992, p. 14].

## Carl Rogers, Vatican II, and the Person of Tomorrow

by John F. Kobler, C.P., Chicago

Recently I came across a talk delivered by Carl Rogers on March 20, 1970, at Atherton High School in Louisville, Kentucky. The topic of the talk was “The Person of Tomorrow”. As you may recall, Rogers was the founder of “client-centered” or “non-directive” therapy. In 1956 he received the Distinguished Scientific Achievement Award for his research from the American Psychological Association. Among his major works are: *On Becoming a Person* (1961), *Encounter Groups* (1970), *A Way of Being* (1980), and *Freedom to Learn* (1969, 1983, 1993).

It was in the early ‘60s that I first became acquainted with Rogers’ teachings through the work of some of our Passionist priests. They had established a few “communication centers”, where they engaged in Rogers’ style of non-directive counseling. This was some pretty heady stuff. I remember a lay brother of ours returning from one of their sessions on a truly emotional “high”. I regret to say all of these priests and the lay brother in question left our religious congregation eventually.

I left college-level teaching in 1967 and was transferred to Los Angeles to give laymen’s retreats. That was the era when the Immaculate Heart of Mary Sisters were at the height of their controversy with Cardinal McIntyre, and this widely publicized event was disrupting the atmosphere of the men’s retreats. I wrote to the IHM headquarters for a copy of their new constitutions. As I read the spiritual vision embodied in these experimental adaptations, I had the queasy feeling that the Sisters’ three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience had metamorphosed into liberty, equality and fraternity. I sent a brief critique of this rule to *Herder Correspondence*, only to learn that this newsletter had ceased publication. It was also the first indication I had that Catholic publications were already in trouble after the Council.

I did not penetrate to the core of this dispute until 1994 when Dr. William Coulson, a Catholic assistant to Rogers, contritely admitted that his work with the IHMs overcame their traditions and faith. “It took about a year and a half to destroy the order”. What Coulson was referring to was the 1967 program conducted by Carl Rogers and fifty-eight facilitators to get all the IHMs into non-directive self-exploration. Because of this experience Coulson

left his profession and now devotes his life to lecturing religious groups on the danger of psychotherapy. But for Rogers such episodes were a triumph! As he notes in “The Person of Tomorrow”:

[...] For the past five years I’ve had the very real privilege of being associated in various ways with priests, nuns, ministers, theological students, mostly men and women in their 30’s and 40’s. It’s been fascinating to see person after person among them slowly coming to trust himself rather than external authority; coming to perceive the pretense in his own institutionalized religion; developing a growing willingness to risk himself in various ways and gradually separating himself from his ties with institutional religion. Sometimes the person has stayed within the framework of the Church and sometimes he has left it. In either case, it is clear that his experience constitutes the guidelines for his living, not the dogmas or authority of his religious institution. So priests have married, nuns have left their orders, ministers have sought to promote significant experiences out the church.

What Rogers is promoting here is that “The Person of Tomorrow” (i.e., the individual man with his personal convictions and feelings) is the measure of all things. He goes on to describe this person:

[...] he is active—sometimes violently, intolerably, self-righteously active in the causes in which he believes. [...] I think that he can see no reason why [all our imperfect institutions] should be allowed to remain unchanged. He has a sustained idealism which is linked to his activism. He doesn’t hope that these things will be changed in 50 years, he *intends* to change them *now*.

In retrospect we can recall such idealism as the erratic romanticism in the student demonstrations of the ‘60s and ‘70s. This was the era of person-centered classrooms where courses were formed in some places by the faculty and students working together; when people were intent on the enrichment and improvement of their lives as “whole persons”, maturely understanding what constitutes authentic enrichment and fulfillment. Looking back, what strikes me about this type of thinking is that it was taking place in an environment of intellectual relativism and in an affluent society pursuing personal self-fulfillment. This “triumph of the therapeutic” could (and did) provide an academic justification for self-centered individualism.

What is the shocker I am building up to here? “The Person of Tomorrow” is the central theme of

Vatican II! Both Rogers and the Council are engaged in constructing a new anthropology (*humanism*) in order to remedy the shortcomings of the modern world. Karl Marx and Max Scheler called this vision of a new humanity the paradigm of Total Man. Studying the differences between Rogers’ paradigm and that of the Council should illumine the positive content of “The Person of Tomorrow”.

Unlike Rogers’ view shaped by the affluent culture of the U.S., John XXIII called the Council because mankind was facing a world crisis. Three components made up this crisis: (1) the danger of nuclear war; (2) the corruption of human values by atheistic materialism and the conspicuous consumption of the affluent; and (3) the urgent need for a reorganization of the world’s economy so that the poor can rise above subsistence levels and start living a more humane existence. These are more the sentiments of Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* and Pius XI’s *Quadragesimo Anno* (“On the Restructuring of the Social Order”), than those of Marx or Rogers.

Rogers and the Church differ widely on their therapeutic intent for mankind. His view of maturity is based on an individual’s subjective convictions; the Church’s view, as expressed by John XXIII, is based on the objectivistic corporate consciousness of the Church as illumined by the Light of Christ (*Lumen Gentium*). John XXIII writes:

Thus, though the world may appear profoundly changed [i.e., in crisis], the Christian community is also in great part transformed and renewed. It has, therefore, strengthened itself socially in unity, it has been reinvigorated intellectually; it has been interiorly purified and is thus ready for trial.

Since in John XXIII’s opinion the Church was already renewed, in a remotely analogous way he resembles Rogers who believed every man is totally good and mature enough to diagnose society’s short-comings in an authentic way. Like Rogers, the Council’s participants relied on experience to formulate their pastoral (practical, therapeutic) statements. But, unlike Rogers’ subjectivistic, individualistic, and culturally specified experiences, the Council’s experiences focus on a corporate set of ecclesial experiences illumined by the Light of Christ. In no way does the Council’s style of analysis and description overlap with

Rogers' naturalistic psychotherapeutic analysis. Vatican II is a very sophisticated analysis of the ecclesial *communio* (i.e. the group-consciousness of its shared truths and mutual love). What makes the Council's methodology so *avant-garde* is that it is employing a 20<sup>th</sup>-century Continental style of philosophy known as phenomenology. It is using the style of analysis and description, not for dogmatic purposes, but pastoral, humanistic ones. At his last talk to the bishops Paul VI called this holographic image in the ecclesial consciousness, *Totus Homo Phaenomenicus*, "The Whole Man as a phenomenological entity".

The objective of this style of reflection was to understand the functioning of our religious consciousness "from within" as a demonstration model of authentic human experiences transfigured in the Light of Christ. Since there is no stain of sin disfiguring this model of authentic humanity, this is an eschatological theophany, a teleological paradigm of "The Person of Tomorrow" in the process of being built. In the context of today's destabilized world, it answers that primordial question: "What does it mean to be a human being?" This sophisticated methodology intends to achieve a very rich psychic growth process. As John XXIII said, "It leads [men], therefore, to discover in themselves their own nature, their own dignity, their own end".

Lastly, we may point out two prominent differences between the therapeutic programs of Rogers and Vatican II. Since Rogers trusts the potential maturity of individual humans, he has a strong anti-establishment mind-set, or—as they say in Europe—he is in the grip of a hermeneutics of suspicion. Thus,

his focus is on *things*: i.e., structures, orthodoxy, the modern industrial economy, the educational establishment at every level, the institution of marriage, the military, and every form of government. He candidly admits that the New Man or "The Person of Tomorrow" hardly fits into this arrangement of *things*.

Vatican II's teachings, however, are only indirectly on *things*. The status of things, in the Council's thought, are only symptoms of the "human condition". The Council's reflections are focused on *people*. It is human beings who are causing the modern world crisis, and human beings have to rethink their moral values if this crisis is to be confronted in a realistic way. This matches a bedrock conviction in my own life: "Better worlds do not make better men, but better men make better worlds".

Vatican II has placed a heavy burden on the Catholic "Person of Tomorrow". In no way will this whole Man resemble Rogers' "free spirit" who

Likes to be close to elemental nature, to the sea, and the sun, the snow, flowers and animals and birds, to life and growth, and death. He rides the waves on his surf board. He sails the sea in small craft. He lives closely with gorillas or lions studying their lives. He soars down the mountains on his skis.

The Catholic "Person of Tomorrow", formed in the image and likeness of Christ, will take up the heavy responsibilities imposed by Vatican II and work for the restoration of man by building a new, global civilization of love in the tradition of the Good Samaritan. This is a call to moral heroism, not the self-centered individualism of Carl Rogers.

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# Ethical Issues in the Disposition of Frozen Embryos by Divorcing Couples.

by Eugene F. Diamond, M.D., Professor of Pediatrics  
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When the “right to privacy” was discovered in the “shadows” of the Constitution’s meaning (*Griswold v. Connecticut*), and the “right to abortion” was discovered in the “penumbras” of the same august document in *Roe v. Wade*, we might have prepared ourselves in the medical profession to be confronted by other ephemeral rights that would have to be dealt with and presumably honored in our dealings with patients.

The right “not to reproduce” is the latest of such previously unrecognized points of law which has arisen in the context of disputes related to the disposition of frozen embryos generated by couples who have divorced prior to implantation (1,2). The so-called “right not to reproduce” was logically and obviously effectuated in the pre-In Vitro Fertilization (IVF) era by choosing celibacy, sterilization or some effective means of birth control. The American Bar Association Section on Family Law in proposing a policy for the disposition of frozen embryos has stated with what would seem biologically to make eminent good sense “the right not to procreate is extinguished at the moment the embryo is created”. This supporting statement is used to buttress a proposed ABA policy which would declare with what would seem again to be impeccable logic “the party wishing to proceed in good faith and in reasonable time with gestation to term and to assume parental rights and responsibilities should have possession and control of all the frozen embryos”.

Reminiscent of the Wizard of Oz’s declaration to Dorothy to “pay no attention to the man behind the curtain” is the failure of Forster et al (2) and Robertson (1) to admit that there is an existing third party who must be taken into consideration when these matters are litigated. Surely all of the arguments as to when life begins are rendered moot when we are able

to make life begin in a Petri dish in the IVF procedure. The embryo is thus an existing human being despite attempts by the authors to dehumanize it as “genetic material” to be “passed” or “gametes” to be implanted (obviously gametes cannot be implanted unless and until fertilization occurs). Human beings are unique and irreplaceable. Another human being, either existent or theoretically to be conceived does not replace the embryo whose life is ended by what Robertson calls a “policy of non transfer or discard”.

There is a cavalier discussion of the future procreative ability of the parent whose petition to preserve the embryos is rejected. Unless she is a woman over 40, or he an azospermic male, it is stated that no injustice is being done because they can just go ahead and reproduce again. No obstetrician with empathy would attempt to assuage the sorrows of the mother of a stillborn to “go ahead and have another one”. Obviously if there was a recourse to IVF in the first place, there was a problem of infertility in one or both partners. Couples don’t choose to spend thousands of dollars on IVF willy nilly if they were able to “reproduce genetically with another person” without difficulty.

It is interesting that the alleged “right not to reproduce” does not conjure up a corollary “right to reproduce”. The same father (as in the Davis case) who can overrule his wife’s desire to preserve their progeny after IVF cannot, in another context overrule his wife’s decision to abort their child. In the real world it is impossible to “use one’s unique genetic material to create a child against one’s will”. The father must willingly cooperate since there is no way to steal his sperm. It is not at all unusual for a father to wish to be rid of his child after it is conceived either extramaritally or within marriage. Does anyone seriously argue in that kind of situation that he can assert that the continued existence of the child is a “violation of his bodily integrity and personal choice”? (2)

It is clearly possible for a parent offering a child for adoption to waive all future visitation rights and

to be relieved of future responsibility for child support. Surely similar disclaimers could be legally formalized in the IVF conflict situation. It is problematic to assert as Forster et al have done (2) that a man appropriately should have a “right not to reproduce” which precludes and transcends his ex-spouse’s ability to carry their child and raise it individually or with another man.

Prior agreements at the time of application to the IVF clinic could, as Robertson states, solve some of the problems. It would prevent such anomalies as the New York Court of Appeals holding in the Kass

v. Kass case that the wish of a divorcing husband to have embryos “donated to an IVF clinic for research” should prevail over the wife’s desire to use them for reproduction. The use of embryos for “research” is arguably against the law or certainly contrary to the 1995 Federal Regulations on the use of embryos for experimentation.

(1) Robertson, J.A., Disposition of frozen embryos by divorcing couples without prior agreement. *Fertil. and Steril.* 71:996, 1999.

(2) Forster, H. et al, Comment on ABA’s proposed frozen embryo disposition policy. *Fertil. and Steril.* 71:994, 1999.

## Leading His Flock: Has the New Archbishop of St. Louis Crossed a Line?

By Robert P. George and Gerard V. Bradley

**T**he Catholic Church proclaims the principle that every human being without regard to age, size, stage of development, or condition of dependency is entitled to the protection of the laws. In line with the indisputable facts of human embryogenesis and intrauterine human development, the Church teaches that children “hidden in the womb” are human beings. It is the obligation of legislators and other public officials to honor and protect their inalienable right to life. Yet many Catholic politicians, including the Democratic leaders of both houses of Congress, are staunch supporters of a “right to abortion.” What should the leaders of the Church do about such people?

Raymond Burke, who was installed this past Monday as archbishop of St. Louis, has an answer. He has declared that public officials who act to expose the unborn to the violence of abortion may not receive Holy Communion, the sacramental symbolic of Church unity. Pro-life citizens of every religious persuasion have applauded the bishop’s action. Many commented that it is long past time for religious leaders to show that they are serious about their commitment to the sanctity of human life. Believers in “abortion rights,” by contrast, were quick to condemn Bishop Burke. They denounced him for “crossing the

line” separating church and state. In one of the wire stories we read, the partisans of abortion branded the rather mild-mannered Burke a “fanatic.”

The “crossing the line” charge is silly. In acting on his authority as a bishop to discipline members of his flock, Bishop Burke is exercising his own constitutional right to the free exercise of religion; he is not depriving others of their rights. No one is compelled by law to accept his authority. But Bishop Burke has every right to exercise his spiritual authority over anyone who chooses to accept it. There is a name for such people: They are called “Catholics.”

By demanding that Catholic legislators honor the rights of all human beings, the unborn not excluded, Bishop Burke may cause them to reconsider implicating themselves in the injustice of abortion. (Surely he hopes to do that.) But not even his harshest critics charge that the bishop said or implied that the law of the state should be used to compel anyone to accept his authority. Catholic legislators remain legally free to vote as they please. Bishop Burke, in turn, enjoys the legal right to exercise his spiritual authority as a bishop to order them to refrain from receiving communion so long as they persist in what the Church teaches are acts of profound injustice against their fellow human beings. Freedom is a two-way street.

What about the allegation that Burke’s actions show that he is a fanatic? The bishop said that he acted for two reasons. One was to warn Catholic leg-

islaters that their unjust acts were spiritually harmful to them “a grave sin.” The other was to prevent “scandal”: that is, weakening the faith and moral resolution of others by one’s bad example. Having made every effort to persuade pro-abortion Catholic legislators to fulfill their obligations in justice to the unborn, Bishop Burke articulated the obvious: Any Catholic who exercises political power to expose a disfavored class of human beings to unjust killing sets himself against the very faith he claims to share. The Church cannot permit such a person to pretend to share in the faith he publicly defies. By receiving communion, the sacrament of unity, pro-abortion Catholics are pretending exactly that. The bishop has called a halt to the pretense.

Scandal is not a peculiarly Catholic or even religious concern. Business executives who wink at accounting shenanigans or racist humor permit a corrupt or racist corporate culture to flourish. We have all heard of cases where male employees’ sexual bantering was tolerated, despite a firm’s pretense of wholesomeness and sexual equality. Actions speak louder than words. Where leaders do not act to uphold stated principles, everyone concludes that the principles are nothing more than cynical propaganda. No one need take them too seriously.

Scandal occurs in religious communities in the same way, and has the same effect. When Catholic Church officials did nothing about priests who abused children, those who knew the facts had to wonder: Do church authorities not really mean it when they say these acts are immoral? Are such acts really wrong, if nothing happens to those known to perform them? If they are wrong, wouldn’t the bishops act decisively against those who commit them?

The same concern underlies the discussion of what Church leaders did and failed to do during the

Holocaust. No serious person suggests that the German bishops or Vatican officials actively supported the Nazis’ murderous policies. The suggestion, rather, is that by their (alleged) failure to denounce those policies and to excommunicate those Nazi leaders who had Catholic backgrounds, Church officials signaled that Catholics could legitimately support Nazi policies without peril to their souls or to their standing in the Church. Critics of those Church leaders suppose precisely what Bishop Burke supposes: If the Church is to be in solidarity with victims of injustice, bishops must not permit those Catholics who commit or abet the injustices to pretend to be Catholics in good standing with the Church.

What Bishop Burke’s critics have failed to see is that he is not acting as a political partisan or lobbyist. He knows perfectly well that his actions might, in fact, rebound to the political advantage of the legislators to whom his order is directed. His specific aim is not to win specific legislative battles over abortion (however much he would agree that these battles should be fought and won); his purpose, rather, is to defend the integrity of Catholic teaching on the sanctity of life and to confirm in the minds and hearts of the Catholic faithful their solemn moral obligation to oppose the killing of the innocent.

Most of Burke’s critics—Catholic and non-Catholic alike—are liberals. Many insist that “separation of church and state” means that no religious leader may presume to tell public officials what their positions may and may not be on matters of public policy. But if we shift the focus from abortion to, say, genocide, slavery, or segregation, we see how implausible such a view is. When, in the late 1950s, the Catholic archbishop of New Orleans excommunicated Catholics who opposed desegregation, liberals applauded him. They were right then; they are wrong now.

# 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention

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Michael Rose, **Priest**  
 Sophia Institute Press, Manchester,  
 N.H., (2003), 185 pp., \$14.95

*Reviewed by Valerie A. Brown, S.T.L.*

**A**lbert Lauer, C. John McCloskey III, Myron Effing, Patrick Rohen, James Gould, Eduard Perrone, William Hinds, Timothy Vaverek, James Mary Sullivan, Paul Berschied. Ten men, ten different ministries, yet all with the same unwavering fidelity to the Catholic Church: they are all Roman Catholic priests. Michael Rose brings to the forefront a sampling of the thousands of priests who, with courage, humility, and charity, serve the laity faithfully through lives of service. After reading this author's latest book, *Priest*, one walks away knowing exactly why the priesthood is worth defending.

Simply put, *Priest* is a book about the priesthood in today's world as seen through the eyes of these ten men. Unequivocally, each of these men understands and accepts the teachings of the Catholic Church, each understands and accepts his role as priest faithfully serving the Church through the sacraments and the teaching of the Faith, and each understands that his calling in life is "not for the faint of heart."

Rose, early in his book reiterates what he said in *Goodbye, Good Men* that all is not well in the priesthood today. Yet he is clear when he says it is not the priesthood that is the problem, not today, not even in apostolic times, but rather, the problem lies in a failure of young men to hear and faithfully answer their calling. He places blame on the seminaries and bishops who failed to educate their priests properly, on the men ordained who failed to focus on their duties, and on the laity who failed to offer the proper support for their pastoral leaders. In the stories of these ten men, Michael Rose deals

with some of the most controversial issues facing the priesthood today but he does so without scandalizing – because, through these men, he is able to focus on what is right in the priesthood.

These ten stories, all of them true, show us that, in this time of seemingly constant media attacks, the virtues of courage, humility, charity and piety do exist in rectories today. The quantity of priests may be less, but the quality remains nonetheless.

None of these men were extraordinary, but rather, they did the ordinary extraordinarily well. It's worth looking at a few of the men that Rose highlights.

We are introduced to a young man who spent twenty years preparing to be a priest. Once ordained he did what he was trained to do: said Mass and he preached. It was his parishioners who taught him how to be a priest. He took their encouragement and support and ran with it taking as his responsibility the evangelization of all those he met along the way. Circumstances caused him to become the "hitch-hiking priest"; caused him to become a conscientious objector to the paying of his federal income taxes in part because it helped fund Planned Parenthood, the perpetrator of millions of abortions; and caused him to travel around the country preaching missions on evangelization.

Throughout his life, this football-couch-potato-turned-evangelist conducted a radio ministry, served as editor of several publications, served as chaplain to a home-school community, published a Catholic newspaper, and organized week-long Bible conferences each summer. A priest doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

Rose also introduces us to a priest who served as campus chaplain at the nation's fourth-oldest college, Princeton. Here he faced one of the most difficult tasks as a Catholic priest – faith versus state. "Almost unques-

tioningly in the elite universities, the environment is generally not hospitable to Catholicism." Noting that the values propounded by such schools are in fact "radically anti-Christian," this chaplain knew he had his work cut out for him from the very beginning. Standing his ground, and not agreeing to water down Catholicism on campus, he attracted vocal opponents who claimed his approach to religion was offensive and oppressive, because he dared, as they said, "to disagree with the politically correct views propounded in the academic world."

What bothered his detractors, and what helped to fuel this man's zeal, was that many Catholics found his authentic Catholic message attractive and young people were converting or rediscovering their faith in Christ and His Church. Pressure within the ranks of the University took its toll, and in 1990, this champion of students, was fired. Not to be deterred, this evangelist was determined to bring to campus ministry a coherent plan for evangelization and catechesis from a lively, orthodox perspective. He was working, he says, in the "most exotic pagan mission territory in the world" and his goal was to "re-evangelize" in a society where so many were not properly educated in the Faith.

Moving from Princeton to Yale to director of the Catholic Information Center, he continues in his ministry of winning the hearts of busy and often cynical Washingtonians. Almost as his motto, this priest states proudly, "I have a product to sell; I find prospects, and then I go after them—and my product is the Catholic faith." He's armed and dangerous—armed with the Catholic faith and dangerous to all its enemies. Again, a priest doing ordinary things extraordinarily well.

The priesthood would be nothing without vocations. Rose introduces us to a priest he describes as "one of the most successful vocations directors

in the United States since the Second Vatican Council.” From 1985 until 2000, this priest was charged with promoting and fostering vocations to the priesthood for his diocese. During this fifteen year period, his diocese grew, on average, by eight priests a year with the average age of priests in the diocese at forty two years—twenty years below the national average! When asked his formula for success, this young vocation director said, “Unswerving allegiance to the Pope and magisterial teachings.” In his quest for vocations, he decided on the simplicity of one rather than the complexity of a vocations team citing that “teams tend to be a bureaucratic burden.” He traveled to parishes around the diocese preaching on vocations, he met with groups at grade schools, high schools, and colleges, Knights of Columbus councils, and even military bases. His goal, and his gift, was to look into the eyes of those individuals, both youngster and parent, to whom he was appealing. Citing that the greatest malady in the priesthood was not ‘liberals’ or ‘conservatives’ but rather, laziness and indifference, he sought out young men who demonstrated prayer, generosity, hard work and sacrifice—qualities he defined as the “four marks of a vocation.”

Rose uses the issue of vocations, and the program outlined by this vocation-director-priest-now-pastor, to discuss the issue of homosexuality in the priesthood stating that no matter how you frame the subject, this issue has come to dominate most discussions on the priesthood. To acknowledge that there is a problem within the ranks of the priesthood is to accentuate the duties of a priest—that is, to raise people to a higher standard of holiness, to enhance the consciences of all, and to understand that virtues will always attract and vices will always divide and to know that the grace of God will always win. Doing the ordi-

nary extraordinarily well.

The other men Rose highlights are equally as valiant in their ministries. One is a priest in the Russian Far East—a land without churches in a country that had vanquished God. During his time in Russia, the Catholic population under this priest’s care grew from eight to over three hundred bringing with this growth, parishes that were located fourteen hours away from each other. Besides serving as missionary, this determined priest established a new religious order, the Canons Regular of Jesus the Lord, which includes himself, three ordained priests and several seminarians to help with the evangelization of the Russian people.

Another is a forty-five year old priest who was serving in the shadows of the Montana Rockies when the United States Army recruited him as a Catholic chaplain, a position he gladly accepted. For another, it was the Church’s traditional liturgical music that inspired him to return to his childhood aspirations to become a priest. For yet another, it was the adoption of a parish in the Archdiocese of Cali, in Columbia, that strengthened and dedicated his priesthood. He spends half his time in his parish in Maysville, Kentucky, and with the support of his parishioners, the other half of his time making missionary trips to Cali. Or another, who through his homilies, and his pro-life stance, caused his parish numbers to grow by leaps and bounds. Believing that it’s through individual conversion that changes are made, he led prayer groups, not only in front of abortion centers, but delivered this same message from the pulpit.

All ordinary men.

Rose tells us these stories and portrays these ten lives to show us that the institution of the priesthood is good, it’s alive, and it will survive. In the reading of *Priest*, one is able to see,

through the lives of each of these men, that the issues rocking the Church today are touched on, and overcome through men such as these “doing their jobs.” Rose further points out that the problems in the priesthood will not be solved by redefining or eliminating the priesthood as it is NOT the priesthood itself that is the problem, but rather the abuse within the ranks. The solution must be rooted in fidelity to the Church’s teachings on faith and morals in particular.

Moreover, Rose points out that the priest shortage is acute in too many places, and yes, there is a need for good men who are not afraid to preach the teachings of Jesus Christ. We need good men who are willing to oppose the secular world that is invading the Church—and that sometimes means they will have to stand alone. The future of the priesthood is as much about attracting the “right men”—those both courageous and heroic—as it is about weeding out those who do not belong. Thus, the greatest formula for a strong priesthood is fidelity and fortitude. The souls of many are placed in the care of the priest and if the shepherd is not willing or is unable, the sheep will falter.

Yet, at the same time, it must be pointed out that the seeds of vocations lie in the hands of the laity. Fidelity and fortitude are just as important among the laity as they are among the clergy. The laity are being called to be supportive of their priests.

In *Priest* this is what we are shown. Men who were called, who overcame adversity either personally or professionally, and who put on their armor to do what they were called to do: To teach as Jesus taught.

Ten men, ten different ministries, ten priests doing the ordinary in an extraordinary way.

William R. Shea and Mariano Artigas. **Galileo in Rome: The Rise and Fall of a Troublesome Genius.** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. xi + 226; hardcover, \$28.00.

reviewed by Jude P. Dougherty

The Galileo story has been told time and again, but perhaps never in so entertaining a way. This is an account drawn mainly from the correspondence of Galileo with his many friends, with his Florentine patrons, the Tuscan Court, and the Vatican. There are no heroes or villains, only human beings, subject to pride, bullheadedness, and intransigence.

The genius of Galileo is well established. His perfection of the telescope enabled him to view mountains on the moon, the satellites of Jupiter, the phases of Venus, and the rings of Saturn and to chronicle the movement of sunspots. What he viewed and the inferences he made led him to endorse publicly Copernicus's view of the universe. This created opposition on two fronts, from the philosophers committed to an Aristotelian cosmology and from the theologians committed to a literal interpretation of the Hebrew scriptures. It was commonly assumed that the heavenly bodies were incorruptible and that they moved in perfect circles. Galileo's observation of sunspots alone proved otherwise. Concluding that the Earth was not unlike the planets he observed, the Earth with one moon, and Jupiter with its four revolving "Medician stars," Galileo was convinced that the Copernican interpretation of astronomical observation made sense. If it could be proved that the Earth traveled around the Sun, Sacred Scripture would have to be reinterpreted for the Bible clearly stated the opposite. Even the uniqueness of the redemptive act of Christ could be called into question.

Galileo did not strengthen his case by calling the philosophers he was supposed to convince as being too stupid to understand that physics as found on the Earth is applicable to the heavens above or by his *Discourse on the Tides*, which was offered as compelling proof of the heliocentric interpretation. Galileo's explanation of the tides ran something like this. The waters of the oceans are contained inside a moving vessel that turns on its axis once a day and goes around the Sun once a year. The combination of these two motions, which are periodically in the same or in opposite directions, causes the flow and ebb of the seas. If the Earth is at rest, the tides cannot occur, but if the Earth moves with the motions described, the tides necessarily follow with all that is actually observed. The seabeds are basins of water, and the diurnal and annual motions of the Earth combine to speed up their oscillations or slow them down every twelve hours. Local features such as orientation (north/south or east/west) or the configurations of seabed and shore were presumed to account for variations from place to place. The trouble with this theory is that Galileo assumed a 24-hour cycle and not the 12-hour cycle reported by seamen. Galileo's faith in his theory was greater than his trust in the eyewitness accounts of contemporary sailors.

Galileo's espousal of a philosophical atomism did not strengthen the confidence of either philosophers or theologians because of atomism's repudiation of an Aristotelian understanding of human nature and because of its theological implications of an understanding of the Eucharist by denying the distinction of substance and accident.

Given its theological import and in the absence of compelling proof, Galileo was advised to defend Copernicanism as a likely hypothesis and not

as a demonstrated fact (demonstration in the Aristotelian sense was to await the early 19th century). Well-disposed theologians from Bellarmine to Pope Urban VIII urged such a course. Had Galileo been able to demonstrate the truth of Copernicanism, all would have been well, but he did not have and never was to have such proof. Urban VIII made it clear that Copernicanism was not a heresy even though it went against the common-sense view that the Earth is at rest and the theological view that it is the center of the world. No one in the Vatican's Holy Office believed that the theory of the motion of the Earth had been or was likely to be condemned as heresy. In the view of the ecclesiastical authorities Copernicanism was a clever theory, useful for making computations, but the evidence for it was weak and controversial.

Galileo himself saw no conflict between science and religion: "Scripture cannot err," he wrote, "but its interpreters can." Both Sacred Scripture and nature, he was convinced, derive from the Divine Word. Galileo was willing to stick to his own subject, but what was he to do when others used Scripture to reject what he was saying.

The plot, of course, is thicker than that described above. As Shea and Artigas present him, Galileo is at times noble and at times venal. He is presented as both a scientific and a literary genius. The letters alone would establish such quite apart from his masterpiece, *Dialogue of Two Chief World Systems*, and his *Sidereus Nuncius* and *Letter to Grand Duchess Christina*. But the ecclesiastical authorities, whose imprimatur Galileo sought in order to publish his theory, were no fools. Galileo was asked politely to prove that the Earth really moved before expecting everyone to reinterpret the Scriptures. Instead of making a gesture to comply, he became annoyed and bristled at what seemed to him the pigheadedness of the academic world. He pushed

too hard to get his views accepted and eventually forced the hand of the authorities who found him guilty of duplicity and of going back on his word. Even convicted, he was treated with utmost respect, and his so-called “imprisonment” was house arrest under conditions most of us would pay to experience.

David B. Currie, **Rapture: The End-Times Error that Leaves the Bible Behind**, (Manchester NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2003) 486 + xxiv, quality paperback, \$19.95.

by John F. Kippley

Most of us Catholics are Bible-believing Christians who do not read the Bible very frequently despite ecclesial exhortations and our own good intentions. We especially don't read the last book of the Bible whether it is titled the Apocalypse or the Book of Revelation. One reason for our non-reading is that we like to think that we understand what we read, and there are few of us who dare to say that we understand the Apocalypse or other apocalyptic portions of the Bible such as sections of the Book of Daniel. My reaction to the biblical apocalyptic literature is similar to that of the Ethiopian in Acts 8:30. How can I understand what I am reading unless someone guides me?

In *Rapture*, David B. Currie fulfills the role of that guide. He succeeds in making the reader actually *want* to read Daniel and the Apocalypse. As Scott Hahn writes in his Foreword to this work, “I am tempted to describe it as a virtual summa of apocalyptic texts and prophetic positions.” In my opinion, Chapter 4, “Biblical Ground Rules” is a very important chapter. It is the key that opens the locks. This is particularly true for those of us who tend to be literalists. Currie provides nine ground rules for the interpretation of apocalyptic texts, and he closes the chapter by suggesting that the

reader place a bookmark at that page where he summarizes these ground rules to which he makes reference in the text. Good advice.

The author grew up in a devout fundamentalist Protestant home. Both his parents taught at the Moody Bible Institute, and his father was the pastor of a large fundamentalist church in Illinois. He grew up with the rapture theology. Eventually he earned his Master of Divinity degree at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and he taught others the pretribulation rapture in which he believed. When friendship with a European Protestant theologian helped him to see that the rapture theology wasn't taken very seriously in Europe, he began a reflection that resulted in his entering into full communion with the Catholic Church. He has described this in his previous book, *Born Fundamentalist; Born Again Catholic*.

What is the Rapture? For many of us, our only acquaintance with this belief is a bumper sticker that tells us that if the car is suddenly driverless, the driver has been raptured into heaven. Currie defines the Rapture in the first sentence of his Preface: “The purpose of this book is to answer a simple question: ‘Is it possible that at any moment a secret rapture could occur that will take believing Christians to Heaven, while plunging the rest of the world into an inescapable Great Tribulation for seven horrendous years?’ The answer is important, because if this rapture is about to happen, you might be among those left behind!”

Is the rapturist belief important? The “Left Behind” novels have stirred interest in this belief, even among Catholics. According to Currie, “thousands of young Catholics have left the Faith after being exposed to rapturist ideas about the end times.” So it's important to understand the rapturist belief, its sources, its errors, and the truth about the biblical statements dealing with the end times.

The book starts with a short his-

tory of the-end-is-near movements. In Chapter 2, he presents the arguments for the rapturist belief, starting with a quotation from a key rapturist theologian who admits that the rapturist belief is not an explicit teaching of the Bible.

The body of the book, almost 300 pages, is devoted to a very careful analysis of Daniel, the words of Jesus about the end times, the epistles, and the Apocalypse. Currie makes it clear that the last cannot be understood except in the light of the first. What I found particularly interesting is his interpretation that much of the Olivet Discourse was fulfilled in the events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. That is, we can take literally the words of Jesus that many events that he was prophesying would be seen by the generation that heard him, much more than I had previously imagined. The world of Temple-based Judaism did come to an end.

Some scholars might quibble with his system of referencing. At the end of the book, he lists an extensive bibliography (139 items) and assigns each a 2- or 3-letter code. In his text, he refers to the code but does not give page numbers. As he explains, however, he wrote this book “specifically for the lay reader acquainted with the Bible and its overall message, whether Catholic or Protestant. My goal is to help the average interested Christian understand the issues as presented in Scripture and make a reasonable, informed decision. Rather than being the last word on this topic, I hope to be for some readers the first word.”

I think he has succeeded masterfully. He writes well, frequently in the first and second person. He writes informatively but avoids even the hint of a tirade against fundamentalists. It's a must-read for everyone interested in Bible studies, and I think it's a book that can be used in college and high school courses as well as by the average reader. It deserves wide readership.

Michael P. Carroll, **The Penitente Brotherhood: Patriarchy and Hispano-Catholicism in New Mexico**. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002. viii+260 pages. \$45.00 hardcover. ISBN 8-8018-7055-0.

Review by David Paul Deavel

“Revisionism” is often taken as a term of derision. It connotes the reinterpretation of a subject not out of desire for truth—and against the evidence—but for political or other types of gain. In its neutral sense, however, it is simply the work of scholarship: looking from another angle at old evidence or at a familiar angle with new evidence to gain a more accurate and more complete understanding of the subject at hand. “Sociology,” on the other hand, is a slippery term that to many people doesn’t have any connotation at all. For those for whom it does, however, it is viewed simply as the accumulation of cultural and psychological informational tidbits for the purpose of creating more of Mark Twain’s celebrated third category of lies: statistics. The “logy” in the name should lead one to expect that its practitioners will provide some sort of rationalization of the material leading the reader to a clearer understanding of the kinds of social and psychological dynamics operating in a given society. If the topic is set in the past, sociology can just as easily be called social history.

One of the problems that plagues some works of social history or sociology is the tendency for it to become revisionism of the derisive sort. The rationalization seems to be *a priori* and either not provable, or worse, not falsifiable in any way. In Michael P. Carroll’s new study of the Penitente brotherhood, a New Mexican confraternity known primarily for its lavish devotional displays of flagellation and even mock crucifixions during holy week, we see primarily an example of good revisionist social history, but a disquieting underlying theory behind

the whole work in the final chapter. This is approximately 6/7 of a very good book.

A sociologist of religion at the University of Toronto, Carroll talks a bit in his introduction and his brief epilogue about the modern political implications of the historiographical trail of the Penitentes as well as other marginalized groups. Much of this meta-talk, particularly in the epilogue, is quite confused and banal. Carroll seems to endorse the view that the views of what he calls “subaltern groups” should be privileged to those of outsiders from the larger “Anglo” world because what is at stake is “discursive authority, that is, the ability of activists and scholars from subaltern populations to speak authoritatively on matters of concern to those populations” (219). Why should native “activists and scholars” (note the linkage) be authoritative on these topics? Because, says Carroll, the subaltern populations “are often locked in a struggle with powerful groups over entitlements to land and other scarce resources” (ibid.). Why does Carroll’s largely revisionist work, in the neutral sense, commend itself to us over the views that Carroll admits Hispano New Mexicans hold? Well, because his work “shatters many of the stereotypes about Hispano society on which Anglo oppression relies” and will ultimately be politically useful (222). There is something very worrying in all this worry over politics. Can’t Carroll just say that his work gives a better account of the facts at hand?

In fact, readers who skim the beginning and end will be fooled into thinking this is simply another book of pretentious politico-cultural ax-grinding. What is inside is much more interesting. The real questions that drive this book concern the historical origins and development of this group and their effect on Hispano society. The traditional scholarly accounts of the early nineteenth-century rise of the Penitentes emphasize their conti-

nunity with a medieval past, either as an “indigenous development” arising out of other religious organizations (usually the Franciscan Third Order) or as a “late transplant” from similar groups in Spain and the New World (28–29). Whichever story one accepts, the Penitente rise is invariably linked to a scarcity of clergy, meaning that the Brotherhood came about to provide an outlet for a religious people with little access to the sacramental life of the Church. Carroll convincingly shows that: a) particular devotional practices like group flagellation had died out in the previous century eliminating a direct continuity hypothesis (chapter three); b) the Brotherhood’s origins are in places where there was no clergy shortage (chapter two); and c) there is little evidence that the Hispano Catholics of New Mexico were a religious people either from the standpoint of the sacramental life of the Church or with regard to popular religious practices in Mexico and Spain (chapter two). In short, to concentrate on the Penitentes as organically tied to medieval religious groups is to miss their newness.

Carroll suggests that the reason the original stories gained so much traction was a combination of two factors. First, Protestants desired to believe that an odd group like the Penitentes was in fact the heir to ages of superstitious and brutal faith. Second, bishops and priests like Jean Lamy, who oversaw the group in its rise and used it as the focal point of inculcating a more serious sacramental faith, thought it obvious that as good Catholics they would only turn to such an extraordinary form of devotion as a result of a scarcity of clergy.

But if the origins of the Penitente brotherhood are not in religious devotion carried down or resorted to out of desperation, what were they? Carroll’s theory, laid out in chapter four, “Suffering Fathers and the Crisis of Patriarchal Authority in Late Colonial New Mexico,” is that the communal/cooperative system of agriculture found in late 18<sup>th</sup> century New Mexico was being

threatened by the Bourbon Reforms. The old system, based in large measure on the stability of families headed by fathers was threatened by the rather free-wheeling economics of the Bourbon system, leading to loosening social mores and the loss of authority based in the family and fathers in particular. Thus the central thesis is that the rise of the all-male Penitentes, centered around devotion to the suffering Jesus the Nazarene, Our *Father*, can be seen in large part to be a phenomenon of resistance to a father-led culture being lost to a market system based on the individual. Carroll very carefully denies making the deterministic argument used by some social scientists:

Cultural innovations like the emergence of the Penitentes do not come into existence simply because they are “needed” or “useful.” On the contrary, it is always the case—and must always be the case—that cultural innovations come into existence in the first place because they are shaped and promulgated by particular individuals. (116)

While there is little evidence as to what particular individuals first came together, there is a great deal of evidence as to the role Bernardo Abeyta played in organizing the Brotherhood. Abeyta formulated the rules appearing in most Penitente constitutions and seems to have had a personal authority in the area that helped to popularize the Penitente brotherhood.

What is intriguingly laid out in chapter five is the continuation of Carroll’s revision: while the Penitente movement seems to have been at root a movement of broadly cultural opposition to the onset of modernity, it was transformed into a more strictly speaking cultic movement by the priests and bishops who were to integrate it into the life of the community. Carroll rehabilitates Antonio José Martínez, the priest vilified by name in Willa Cather’s *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, by showing his own impeccable ortho-

doxy as it manifested itself in publishing books and catechizing the community of Taos where the Penitentes were first known. Along with Archbishop Lamy (“Latour” in Cather) and the French clergy who were to take over the mission of the Southwest, Martínez brought a previously nominal Catholic population to a vigorous and fully sacramental faith. In short, the organization of the Penitentes became the instrument by which the reforms of Trent came to New Mexico only two hundred years late. Again, Carroll is fairly careful to add that he is not reducing the phenomena and their causes to simple automatic reactions to a reductive set of economic “forces.” The cultural reaction was real and so was its insertion into the bigger story of Catholic faith.

As economic changes continued to occur, however, the Penitentes, even though now fully organized, did not deter the changes from happening. The old agricultural system (namely the system of the middle ages with its blending of private and communal lands and its primarily self-sufficient market) and its corresponding juridical philosophy emphasizing the common good and the relative versus absolute rights of property were both swept away by the Anglo-American system with less resistance than one might think. Carroll believes that in the transformation of the Penitentes into a fully organized confraternity conforming to Tridentine rules the people of New Mexico were subsequently “modernized.” That is, they were given the exterior and interior formation that made them ready to accept American authority and conform to its largely bureaucratic standards.

What is so ironic about this reading of (particularly to distributists and Catholic third-way proponents who are orthodox theologically) is that Carroll is arguing that the Council of Trent and its reforms in great measure paved the way for modernity and the defeat of the old agrarian system in at least this one place and possibly everywhere. This thesis

raises a number of questions about how to view the connection between the way the Church operates on the inside and the way the Church operates in the world. It certainly points to the conclusion that if Catholics want the world to be a certain way, then ecclesial life must be lived that way. It also points to a certain historical and eschatological humility (and hope) one must have about the present. Historically, as great as the Council of Trent was its reforms didn’t reach many parts of the world for two centuries. Despite today’s speed of communication, a certain patience must be exercised about why the true vision of Vatican II has been so long coming; after all, with the speed of communication there is infinitely more junk floating across our vision as we cruise the information highway. Eschatologically, as great as Trent was, if Carroll is correct, its reforms may have contributed to a modernity which has been as bad as it is good for the Church. We are still pilgrims; infallibility is not the instrument of utopia, but the compass that can keep us on the right path though the fog and storms threaten.

A word of caution. I said this book was 6/7 of a very good book. The seventh chapter, like the pretentious meta-talk of the introduction and epilogue, is largely silly and un-useful. To clear up some aspects of Penitente life unexplained in the main body of the book, Carroll uses a modern and refurbished Freudian master myth. That myth, however refurbished, is shaky on its own terms, but more importantly is in competition with the Catholic story of what human brokenness and human dignity consists of. The Catholic master myth (by which I mean dogma) is not in need of a revision. The chapter is not necessary to an understanding of the book as a whole.

For the rest of the book, the attention paid will be worth the effort.

Servais Pinckaers, O.P., **Morality: The Catholic View**. preface by Alasdair MacIntyre, translated by Michael Sherwin, O.P., South Bend, IN: St Augustine's Press, 2001, viii + 141 pp. *Reviewed by E. Christian Brugger, D.Phil.*

Father Servais Pinckaers, O.P., is an extraordinary author, and this is an extraordinary book." So begins Alasdair MacIntyre's preface to the English translation of Fr. Pinckaers' 1991 French text *La morale catholique*. Pinckaers, professor of moral theology at University of Fribourg in Switzerland, became well known in the U.S. when he published in English in 1995 his masterful work *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (1985 French). That text is nearly 500 pages, difficult to work through in places and assumes a basic familiarity with the subject matter. It is more suited to the needs of scholars and educators in theology. *Morality: The Catholic View* is an abbreviated version of that text. Its lively and limpid prose, many helpful examples from primary texts and elegant use of metaphor make it more accessible to a wider non-specialized audience.

Pinckaers sets out to sketch the contours of an account of the Christian moral life that remains faithful to the sources of Christian moral tradition in Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers. He argues that the Church's moral teaching should not be seen simply as the domain of obligations and legal imperatives, but rather as the authoritative proposal of a way of life that best corresponds to the human heart's deepest yearning for happiness. Sacred Scripture offers us through literary means, which are at once didactic, narrative and poetic, the story of Christian discipleship. It illustrates what Christian life looks like, that morality is not simply about ethically good actions, but about bringing every dimension of one's life, from thoughts, words and deeds, to the

freedom of the will, to the memory, imagination and understanding of the intellect, from one's strengths, weaknesses, feelings and desires, to one's health, relationships and possessions, bringing everything from past, present and future into relationship with Jesus Christ as the source of all wisdom and goodness and placing it under his Lordship. And in so doing to find fulfillment for the heart's deepest yearnings.

According to Pinckaers, the history of Catholic moral thought can be divided between two alternatives, a choice between an ethic of happiness and an ethic of obligation, between the offspring of St. Paul, which include the Fathers and Aquinas, and the offspring of Ockham, which include the nominalist and manualist traditions. The sons of St. Paul propose a Christianized *eudemonism*, a view of the moral life where morality and happiness are correlative, where Christian morality corresponds in a deep metaphysical sense to the authentic possibilities of human nature. Human freedom, an important theme for Pinckaers, is only truly free when it is exercised in accord with those possibilities and hence with human fulfillment, with *eudemonia*. It is not merely *freedom from* wrongdoing, sin and self-disintegration, but more significantly *freedom for* human excellence. In both *The Sources of Christian Ethics* and *Morality: The Catholic View* Pinckaers provides a striking exposition of this theme of "freedom for excellence." Using St. Thomas as his starting point he argues that we all have inclinations toward the good, for example, an inclination to preserve ourselves in being, to get married, to know the truth, to engage in friendship, and to be fully reasonable (i.e., to be good). When these inclinations are cultivated through good choices, lifestyles and communities, they become in us fixed dispositions for the good. When at length everything within us inclines

toward the good, when doing good is second nature, it is then that we are truly free to *live the good life*.

The sons of Ockham on the other hand prioritize the moral act over the moral actor, and will over reason. Freedom is the ability to choose between contraries while the will stands indifferent. The first principle circumscribing human freedom is the prior willing of God, since God's freedom is the ground for all goodness and badness. The heart of moral normativity therefore is the obligation to conform our freedom to the prior freedom of God; the moral law confronts human freedom in the form of law as issuing from the command of God, primarily found in Sacred Scripture. Human freedom is not a freedom for excellence but is a "freedom of indifference."

At the waning of the Middle Ages, a morality of obligation gradually came to dominate Catholic moral reflection. It spread through European universities and eventually found its way into the manuals of moral theology which arose after the Council of Trent. The Council fathers, aware of the desperate need of the Catholic priesthood for spiritual formation and formal education, took corrective action by introducing formal seminary training. The teaching of moral theology was adapted to what was necessary for seminary training, which effectively meant what priests needed to know to hear confessions, in particular questions of the gravity of sin and how to resolve doubts of conscience. Thus arose the much maligned "manuals for confessors" or simply "moral manuals" prominent between Trent and Vatican II. Fr. Pinckaers refrains from the fashionable "manual" bashing so common in the academy, and even defends the works as profoundly learned and faithful in their transmission of Catholic moral tradition. But he criticizes them for reducing the richness of Catholic moral life to the

realm of law and obligation.

Responding to the call of Vatican II for a renewal in moral theology, Pinckaers suggests that we must re-discover the spontaneous yearnings of human nature, yearnings for truth, goodness and ultimately for happiness. But we must be careful, he cautions, to avoid a debased conception of happiness, of the kind which drew such fire from Protestant critics of *eudemonism* like Kant, Anderes Nygren and Helmut Thielicke. Such an inadequate conception, in the words of Thielicke, is sure to blunt the sharp edges of biblical agape “along quantitative lines”. (*Theological Ethics*, 337) A sound theory of *eudemonism*, in the tradition of Augustine and Aquinas, entails no attenuation of the radical demands of the Gospel command to love. Augustine and Aquinas were well aware of the problem of self-love and selfish happiness, but that did not deter them from integrating a proper conception of happiness into their accounts of morality. Pinckaers says we are dealing with two different conceptions of happiness, on the one hand pleasure, on the other joy: one is proper to the senses; the other to the moral and spiritual level of the human person; one is the offspring of Utilitarianism, the other of the classical tradition from Aristotle to Aquinas. *Eudemonistic* happiness is not the restless search for personal comfort or the fulfillment of egoistic feelings. It is what Augustine refers to when he writes: “The happy life is joy born of truth.” The reconciliation of morality and happiness, so essential to a renewal of moral theology, Pinckaers argues, is best begun by considering the centrality in the Christian moral life of the biblical concept of *joy*.

Pinckaers is one of the few moral theologians writing today concerned to integrate a thoroughly biblical morality with a vision of the moral life that richly incorporates the insights of natural reason and the natural law. In

the spirit of *Fides et Ratio*, he illustrates not only how faith and reason are not opposed but how they are in a deep sense complementary. His project in this regard is largely successful. The one place where criticism is due is in his discussion of the natural law, particular of natural inclinations.

In his discussion of human inclinations Pinckaers slides continuously and without signaling what he is doing between practical and theoretical descriptions. For example, he says the natural inclination to the good is “a primitive spiritual instinct and, as such, is indefinable. One can describe it in terms of what it causes within us: the spontaneous attraction and taste for the good as well as a repulsion from evil. . .” It is as if Pinckaers is referring to some existential non-rational drive within us towards the good. He says the attraction “is according to our perception of how things are”; but he does not say what would be more faithful to Aquinas, that the attraction is first and foremost a rational judgement about the desirability of human goods and the possibilities they promise by way of human fulfillment. (99) Or again, Pinckaers says the inclination to preserve ourselves in being is a ‘dynamism’ that “pushes us toward what fosters our thriving: toward food, clothing, housing, and so forth.” (102) Again, he appears to be referring to some primal drive that moves reason to pursue what corresponds to our self-preservation. And when he discusses the inclination to marry he is quite clear that the human inclination to which Aquinas refers is in part a biological urge (103). Now no doubt Aquinas would say that the human inclinations to recognize the first principles of practical reason have empirical counterparts in our feelings and emotions; but Aquinas is quite clear that the inclinations themselves, at least in their morally relevant sense, are *rational* inclinations. They operate not as dynamisms, urges or functions

of human nature moving us towards that which is good for us, but rather as rational directives singling out goods that correspond to the fulfillment of genuine capacities (real possibilities) proper to our nature. The goods they specify are recognized by human reason as desirable to have or attain. This is why Aquinas says the first principles are *per se nota*, they are self-evident, known in themselves, not derived from descriptions of human nature, or urges, dynamisms, instincts, or any more basic principles. The goods which they single out are understood to be good and choice-worthy in and for themselves. Pinckaers succumbs to the temptation characteristic of so many Thomistic commentators of Thomas’ treatment of the natural law to compromise a thoroughly practical consideration of the subject matter in favor of speculative considerations and materials thus illicitly deriving normative judgements from speculative starting points.

Greg Tobin, **Selecting the Pope: Uncovering the Mysteries of Papal Elections**, Barnes & Noble, 2003.  
*Reviewed by Donald Prudlo*

With the increasing age of the current pontiff, the appearance of books about the papacy and papal elections is inevitable. Mr. Tobin, who has previously written a novel about a papal election, has added his voice to the growing number of popular books released in preparation for the coming of the next pope. When he discusses the new rules promulgated by Pope John Paul II for papal elections, the book is a helpful and sometimes insightful guide. Unfortunately that section comprises only around 1/3 of the small work’s length.

Being a popular book, Tobin first gives a reasonably clear presentation of the Catholic concept of the papacy. It is when he gives a whirlwind history

of the institution that some problems crop up. He traces the turning point in papal elections to the constitution *Ubi periculum* of Bl. Gregory X in 1274. While true that this was the source of the word “conclave,” it is difficult to maintain that this was the decisive moment in electoral history. Cardinal electors had been locked in rooms before that date. Much more central was Nicholas II’s *In nomine Domini*, which restricted papal electors to members of the college of Cardinals. This text is mentioned only in passing by Tobin (and indeed is several times annoyingly misspelled as *In Nominee Domini* and then mistranslated as “In the name of the master”).

Tobin also repeats several unnecessary historical legends and prejudices. Against commonly accepted archeological evidence, the author claims no historical foundation for St. Peter’s residency in Rome. Regarding the unfortunate John XII, Tobin ought to have omitted unproven accusations in favor of more general disapproval on John’s character. The specific charges of sacrilege against that Pope are not historically verifiable. In John XII’s case, Tobin misses the opportunity to point out doctrinal rectitude, even in unworthy Popes. He also repeats the common rail against Gregory XVI: that he condemned locomotives. In actuality Gregory prevented railroads being built in the Papal States not out of some reactionary ideological whim, but because he was worried about its economic impact on the people he ruled. Finally, in his historical papal chronology at the end, Tobin includes “Pope Joan,” a completely unnecessary addition from the realm of polemical legend. These points are admittedly rather small when one considers Tobin’s purpose. Thirty pages is just too small a canvas on which to paint the history of the papacy. It is rather the next section on current election practice which demonstrates Tobin’s best work.

An in-depth analysis of Pope John Paul II’s constitution *Universi Dominici gregis* forms the backbone of part two. Tobin makes a very good overview of the key sections of the document, and he notes where it agrees with previous practice or makes an innovation. The key changes which the current Pope has made have to do with comfort and canonical process. The burgeoning college has begun to outstrip the capacity of the quarters formerly used during elections. For this reason the Cardinals will now be housed outside of the election area and bussed to the Sistine Chapel every day. Tobin also notes that the old electoral possibilities of 1) a small commission to break deadlocks and 2) quasi-inspiration (where the cardinals unanimously stand up and name a candidate) have been eliminated. Now there only remains election by 2/3 of the cardinal-electors. If the election lasts over seven days, a majority of the cardinals can vote to have the election accomplished with a simple majority vote. Tobin accurately and completely describes all of the various interesting details which come before and after a papal election, with well placed anecdotes.

Although there is little analysis of problems which are attendant upon the new manner of election, Tobin does make mention of one problematic scenario. If a simple majority of electors is unable to attain 2/3 of the necessary votes, they can simply delay for seven days. At that point they can motion to elect by a simple majority. That motion only needs to pass with 50% of the vote. In the past election by simple majority was precluded by the absolute 2/3 requirement, but it is now theoretically possible for a tenacious simple majority to hold out to win an election. Tobin does not mention other problematic issues. Under the new rules, simony will not invalidate an election. Originally intended to protect the integrity of an innocent

candidate, these rules will also confirm a Pope who buys his office. Finally the traditionally grave threat to secrecy is multiplied by bussing the Cardinals back and forth each day. Such issues ought to have been given a fuller hearing in Tobin’s text.

The most unnecessary section will unfortunately be the most read. This is the analysis of the current political situation, with its attendant “handicapping” of candidates. This section merely serves polemical ends and betrays the author’s prejudices. For Tobin, the number one problem facing the next Pope is the American clergy scandal. The leading problem is not the Third World, not the liturgy, not doctrine, not even ecumenism. With the quieting of the scandal in recent months, this book already seems faintly out of date. Compared with the rest of Europe, Latin America, much of Africa, and the Philippines, American Catholics are a very small percentage indeed. To imagine that our particular problems will need the complete attention of the next Pope is to overstate things a bit. Other issues Tobin sees percolating are collegiality (with John Paul’s presumed over-centralization as a key problem), gender, globalization, and ecumenism. Tobin traces current problems from the perspective of an American Catholic with tendencies towards democratizing the Church.

He makes no revolutionary pronouncements as to the next Pope and gives the standard list of papabile. I do believe that he underestimates one central fact of the next conclave. Like many Americans he believes the Third-World Cardinals to be on the progressive side. It will come as a shock that the liberal wing is mostly made up of American and European Cardinals. Those from Latin America and Africa are generally more conservative.

Nearly half of Tobin’s book is made up of appendices. These include

a useful glossary, a not very useful bibliography, a chronology, a time line, a list of current cardinals, and the text of John Paul's new constitution on Papal Elections. If one includes these with Tobin's second section, the book is a generally good reference and introduction to the machinery of papal elections. But as for the rest, skim the history, then skip the politics.

Christopher West. **Good News About Sex & Marriage.** *Answers to Your Honest Questions About Catholic Teaching.* Servant Publications, 2000  
*Reviewed by John Adam Moreau*

**B**ecause of its nature, not despite it, this excellent book is worthy of being reviewed in the FCSQ. It is so well done that it should be a keeper for people ranging from reflective teen-agers beset by the flames of curiosity to those on the frontier of geezerdom. With money and politics and whatever else polite company supposedly doesn't talk about, sex and love rank at the top. And most of us WANT to tackle the subject if the dinner guests are congenial and the sherry praiseworthy.

I did what you will do. I went first to the er-ummmm, er-ahhhh, yikes! parts—before starting at the beginning. The “good parts” are there all right, bluntly and impressively addressed. I wasn't ill at ease reading about them and their treatment makes sense in the context of the book.

Author West is an educator and advisor on sex, marriage and the family. His book is helped by his admission that from teen-age years into adulthood he was a sexual sinner. That he was, he says, actually made him less of a man not more.

The foreword is by the archbishop of Denver, the admirably orthodox Charles J. Chaput, who avers that the great vocational crisis of our time is marriage and family life. The love

between a husband and wife, he says, “is the foundation stone upon which every other Christian vocation is built.”

The background for the foreword and for West's book is traditional Catholic teaching and the writings of John Paul II on marriage, the body, and sexual love. Two-thirds of all that has been written on the subjects during the history of the church, West says, have been written by John Paul.

Those topics are crisply summarized by West. I have not trudged through the Holy Father's writings on these subjects. But the treatment of them by George Weigel in *Witness to Hope*, the biography of the pope, is so well done that I feel as if I have.

In a sense, the good news in West's book is old stuff. Sexual love, to be only in marriage, is a hint of paradise and mirrors Christ's marriage to the church. But in West's hands the old stuff is ever new, ever fresh.

For he says that sexual love is just plain fireworks wonderful, and always has been thought to be even if countless Catholic treatments of it by laymen and religious alike were clumsy and just dead wrong.

West calls this love “awesome,” “blissful,” something tied to the invisible mystery of God, a reflection of “the deepest desires of the human heart.” Who can fail to want to embrace the story line when we read him saying: “I'll never forget the sight of my bride processing down the aisle. She was glowing, radiant with feminine beauty. As I stood there by the altar waiting to receive her, our eyes met and filled with tears.”

Who wouldn't want to jump up with a fist in the air and shout “Yes!”? The romantic (as in violins) aspects of the book plus the startlingly intimate material hold up because the nuts and bolts subjects are solidly handled, in 167 pages plus endnotes, in an engaging way.

By the last page, the receptive reader feels it comforting to be told

that so much related to bumbling, failure, incompetence, and crazed feelings is ultimately spectacularly good and right. There is a kind of happy recognition that the Designer does have a plan about sexual love and that the church figured it out correctly.

You name it, it's here. Examples: (1) Where does the church get off telling us what to do with our bodies? (2) Homosexual acts. (3) How a marriage can be “unchaste.” (4) Isn't it twisted for a priest to be celibate? (5) Does natural family planning really work? (And what's the divorce rate among those who practice it?) (6) Who cares how we get a baby? The crucial thing is that we wanted a baby and got one. (7) The scandal of annulments. (8) How many ways can we make a sham of our marriage? (9) Isn't divorce sometimes the only recourse? (10) Hey! What about St. Paul's directive to a wife? (11) How can I repair it if I have been a sexual sinner? (12) We're in love, we are going to marry, so what's the matter if...? (13) What? Huh? masturbation is sinful? (14) Why it's wrong to have intercourse just to have a baby. (15) What is the dignity and what are the rights of the baby? (16) Isn't the church ignorant about sex? (17) Being moral erases loving sexual spontaneity, doesn't it? (18) How sexual intercourse can amount to a couple lying to one another. (19) Intercourse before marriage makes one ill-prepared for marriage? (20) What do you mean “use” another person? Of course you use another person in intercourse.

Certainly West is writing about weighty matters. Yet, the text is marked by compassion for those afflicted by deviance, who wrestle with all the sexual ghosts mature people are familiar with, who have been behaving poorly and wish to behave well.

His answer is the one any of us would wish to give to a spouse regarding loving that person with one's body: “I wish to speak to you of your goodness.”

## BOOK REVIEWS

I approached West's book curious but doubting anything "new" was at hand. I was rewarded by the "ever new" aspects I mentioned above and the crisp ways of thinking about the subject.

For West, the church's teaching, rightly seen, is not a kill-joy but a bring-joy. It is the answer to the bugaboo of men using love to get sex and women using sex to get love. Yet marriage is certainly NOT whatever one might wish to make of it. First, he says, one draws lines in one's heart about sex and one's beloved. That is the surest way to escape the bored attitude which society's and pornography's

perverted view of sex can inflict on us.

Further, it is timely to be reminded in his stark prose of the enormous and continuing degradation of women and of the family which our ages knows.

For whom is the book worth the money? He who rejects the church's teaching but who is willing to listen. He who accepts it and wants affirmation and underpinning. Most certainly the person who teaches the subject. Most surely that multi-patterned gaggle of us who want to do the right thing by ourselves, our beloveds and our children.

Love, West writes, can lead un-

avoidably to disputes. But, he says, disputes about sexual morality are disputes about "the very meaning of life." Of all the ways God chooses to reveal love in the created world, he says, "marriage—enacted and consummated by sexual union—is the most fundamental."

There is throughout the book no emphasis on either the male or the female. The book is about the human being and sexual love. But of course West, being who he is, has to write in his way. All readers can apply his admonition to themselves. He says: "If men are to be men, they must learn how to love women."

## BOOKS RECEIVED

*If you would like to receive and review a complimentary copy of one of these books, please email Alice.F.Osberger@nd.edu*

*A Key to the Doctrine of the Eucharist* by Abbot Vonier, Zaccheus Press, Bethesda, MD, (2003), 196 pp. paper.

*American Catholics and Civic Engagement: A Distinctive Voice*, edited by Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds, Volume 1 in the American Catholics in the Public Square series, Sheed and Ward, Lanham, MD, (2004), 290 pp.

*A Single Mom Talks to God*, by Karen O'Donnell Taylor, Liguori Publications, Liguori, MO, (2004) 96 pp, paper.

*The Breakable Vow: A Novel*, by Kathryn Ann Clarke, Avon Books, Harper Collins Publishers, NY (2004), pp. 472.

*Modern Physics and Ancient Faith*, by Stephen M. Barr, University of Notre Dame Press, (2003), 328 pp., cloth.

*Capital Punishment and Roman Catholic Moral Tradition*, by E. Christian Brugger, University of Notre Dame Press, (2003), 296 pp., cloth.

*Stem Cell Research: New Frontiers in Science and Ethics*, by Nancy E. Snow, University of Notre Dame Press, (2004), 219 pp., paper.

*Moral Theology in an Age of Renewal: A Study of the Catholic Tradition since Vatican II*, by Paulinus Ikechukwu Odozor, C.S.Sp., University of Notre Dame Press, (2003), paper.

*Restoring Faith in Reason: A New Translation of the Encyclical Letter FAITH AND REASON of Pope John Paul II together with a Commentary and Discussion*, edited by Laurence Paul Hemming and Susan Frank Parsons, (2003), 308 pp., paper.

*Reproductive Technologies: A Reader, ed.* Thomas A. Shannon, Rowman & Littlefield Publishing Group, Lanham, MD, (2003), 160 pp., paper.

*Half Truths: What's Right (and What's Wrong) with the Clichés You and I Live By*, by Montague Brown, Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, NH (2003), 174pp paper.

*Human Dignity and Reproductive Technology*, ed by Nicholas C. Lund-Molfese and Michael L. Kelly, University of America Press, Lanham, MD, (2003), 129pp. paper.

*The Impact on Philosophy of Semiotics*, by John Deely, St. Augustine's Press, South Bend, IN (2003), 267 pp, cloth.

*Bread of Life, Cup of Salvation: Understanding the Mass*, by John F. Baldovin, S.J., Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, (2003), 210pp. paper.

*Catholic Higher Education in Protestant America: The Jesuits and Harvard in the Age of the University*, by Kathleen A. Mahoney, Johns Hopkins University Press (2003), 347 pp, cloth.

*Understanding New Religious Movement*, 2nd edition, by John A. Saliba, AltaMira Press, Walnut Creek, CA (2003), 292 pp., paper.

*All Ye Lands: World Cultures and Geography, A Teacher's Edition, Catholic Schools Textbook Project*, Ave Maria University, Ignatius Press. General Editor Rollin A. Lassetter, (2003), 216 pp., Paper.

*Bernard Lonergan's Insight: A Comprehensive Commentary*, by Terry J. Tepakpe, University Press of America, Lanham, MD (2003) 439pp., paper.

*Introduction to Catholicism: A Complete course, the Didache High School Textbook Series*, Midwest Theological Forum, Chicago, Fr. James Socias, (2003) 388pp., Cloth.

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#### 2003–2006

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## OF INTEREST

### Thomas More College Sophomores Attend Semester in Rome. Qualified students from other institutions may apply.

The Rome Semester is offered each spring, and full-time sophomores participate. Transfer students are expected to enroll, and qualified students from other institutions may apply.

In Rome, students follow the same Humanities and Writing Workshop courses as on the home campus. They also study theology and the art and architecture of Rome. They take a full course load, taught by Thomas More faculty.

The residence in Rome is centrally located, with easy access to most major sites in the City. All classes are conducted on campus with the exception of Art and Architecture, which is supplemented by tours in the City itself. On most Saturdays, there are optional day trips to sites near Rome. Students attend a general audience with the Pope and participate in all Holy Week liturgies. Tuition, room and board at Thomas More College is \$9200 per semester. The cost of the Rome Semester is slightly higher. All transportation costs, airport transfers, and museum admissions are extra. Round-trip airfare from Boston or New York to Rome is generally \$550.

For more information about Thomas More College, see *The National Review College Guide: America's Top Liberal Arts Schools and Choosing the Right College: The Whole Truth about America's Top Schools*. Tel: (603) 880-8308.

## Schall We Applaud?

**A**mong the articles in this issue of the Quarterly is one by Father Jim Schall, longtime professor at Georgetown and one of our most prolific writers, both of scholarly and popular articles and books. It occurs to me that when a phenomenon has been long among us it can become invisible. Sort of like the mailman murderer in the Chesterton story, who went unnoticed and unsuspected because everyone saw him everyday. We have become so used to coming on a piece by Father Schall whenever we pick up a journal or magazine that we may take him for granted. What he writes is invariably interesting, coming at the familiar from a novel point of view,

making the esoteric familiar, always tapping into the wide and deep reading that sustains his thought.

But Father Schall is, after all, one of us, a professor, a teacher, and it is in his students that one detects the real influence of the man. I have met many of them over the years, men and women who have gone into various walks of life and who, when they speak of their student days at Georgetown, wax eloquent in their praise of Father Schall. Unlike Chesterton's mailman, Father Schall wouldn't harm a soul, so let's make sure we notice the next time he delivers an article or book to our doors. ✠

*Ralph McInerny*

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